

Family Christmas Eve Service
Carols, Communion and Candlelight

4:30 p.m. • Wednesday, December 24, 2025



*"Touched by the Gospel, we seek to be instruments of God's Peace,
for the sake of the World."*

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

Music for the Beginning of the Festival of Christmas

"Cold December Flies Away "
"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"
Sanctuary Organ

arr. Charles Callahan
arr. Michael Burkhardt

"Good-bye to Winter"
Julia Zaleski and Janet Hill, piano duet

Folk Song

Greeting and Welcome

Pastor: Christ is with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Merry Christmas! Welcome to this special worship service where we celebrate Christ's birth with singing, story, and the sharing of communion. During this service, everyone and children especially, will be invited to follow along in the story of Jesus' birth by listening carefully for when different characters appear in the story and responding with a special word or phrase. We'll explain that in more detail in a few minutes when I invite the kids to join me up front for the children's sermon. For now, let's begin by singing loud and strong!

Stand

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

No. 283

1 *O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; come and behold him,
born the king of angels:*

Refrain

*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

2 *The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes; Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing!*

Refrain

3 *Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest:*

Refrain

4 *Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n! Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:*

Refrain

The Christ candle is lit

Sit

Children's Sermon

WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

Luke 2:1-7

Reader: In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

"What Child Is This?"

No. 296

- 1 *What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!*
- 2 *Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!*
- 3 *So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!*

Luke 2:8-14

Reader: Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

No. 270

- 1 *Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"*

Refrain

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"



Reader: When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

No. 289

- 1 *Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.*

Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

- 2 *Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song?*

Refrain

- 3 *Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.*

Refrain

Sermon

Pastor Rachel Laughlin

Stand

Hymn of the Day

"Go Tell It on the Mountain"

No. 290

Refrain

*Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!*

- 1 *While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.*

Refrain

- 2 *The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.*

Refrain

- 3 *Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.*

Refrain



Nicene Creed

Leader: Joining the saints of every time and place, we confess our faith:

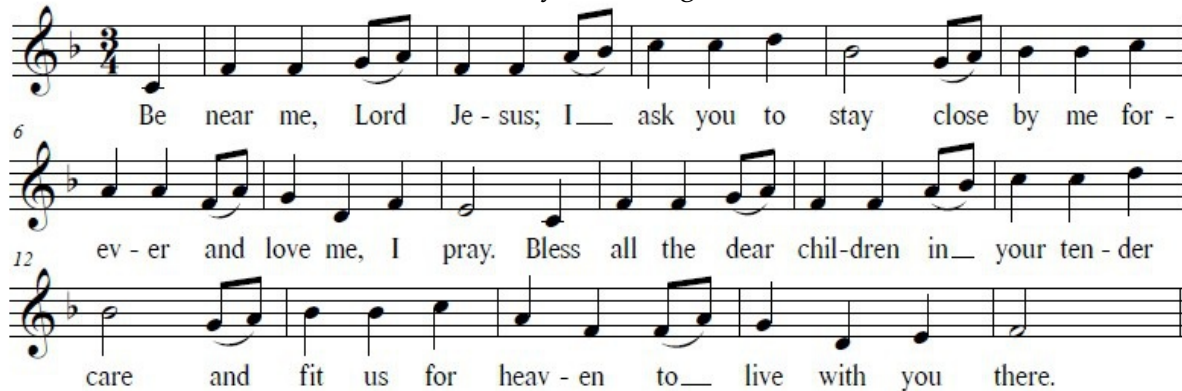
All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the Church

"Away in a Manger"



After "Generous God," worshipers respond **"Pour out your Love."**

Repeat **"Away in a Manger"** once after the completion of the intercessory prayers.

WE SHARE IN HIS MEAL

Sharing of the Peace

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: And also with you.

Worshipers share a sign of God's peace with one another, greeting each other with words like "Peace be with you. . . And also with you."

Sit

Offering

Please **date** and complete the fellowship registration pad.

Offering Response

"Love Has Come"

No. 292

Soloist Bette Stemaly will sing vs 1, 2, congregation will stand and sing vs 3

3 *Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free.*

Love is Jesus within and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.

Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas; Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Liturgical Hand Washing

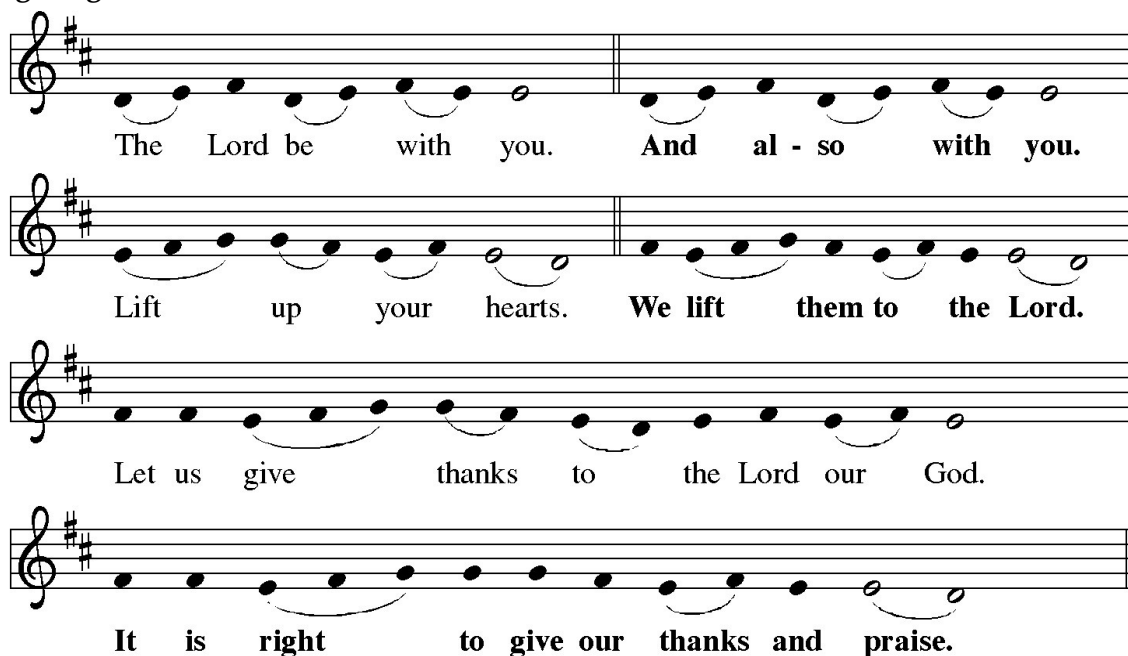
I wash my hands in innocence, and go around your altar, O Lord, singing aloud a song of thanksgiving, and telling all your wondrous deeds. – Psalm 26:6-7

Offering Prayer

Asst: Let us pray. Almighty and All-loving God, we are mindful of the life-changing gift that you gave us on that holy night in Bethlehem. Humbly we offer our gifts in joyful thanksgiving for the love you have shown us. Accept these gifts for the sake of your Son who was born to us, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Great Thanksgiving - Grace Before the Meal



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Santo, Santo, Santo

Sung first in Spanish, then in English



San - to, san - to, san - to, mi co - ra - zón te a - do - ra.
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, my heart, my heart a - dores you.

Mi co - ra - zón te sa - be de-cir: San - to_e-res Se - ñor.
My heart is glad to say the words: You are ho - ly, God.

Eucharistic Prayer

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

Pastor: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

All: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Meal

Pastor: If you desire to receive what God offers, come to this Table. Come with your faith and your doubt. Come with your questions and your hopes. Come with your grief and your love. Come taste the Lord's goodness. There is room for you here because this is Christ's table. You are welcome.

Sit

Holy Communion - the Lord's Supper

All are welcome at Christ's table regardless of age or membership status. All communion servers will have sanitized their hands before handling the communion elements. Ushers will direct you to come forward. The pastor and assisting minister will distribute the bread (gluten-free) and the other servers will distribute the wine (red) or grape juice (white). Individually packaged gluten free wafers and sets of completely sealed elements (wheat wafer and grape juice) are available on the stands near the bread distributors. You may pick on of those up yourself, if you prefer. You may place your empty cup in the baskets on the tables as you return to your seat.

If you would prefer not to receive communion, you are invited to come forward for a blessing. Please cross your arms over your chest to indicate your preference to the servers.

Lamb of God



1) O Lamb of God, — you bear the sin of all the world a - way; — you
2) O Lamb of God, — you bear the sin of all the world a - way; — you
3) O Lamb of God, — you bear the sin of all the world a - way: — e -



suf - fered death our lives to save: have mer - cy now — we pray. —
set us free — from guilt and grave: have mer - cy now, — we pray. —
ter - nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray. —

1 *Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!*

2 *Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!*

"It Came upon the Midnight Clear"
vs. 1, 3 & 4

No. 282

1 *It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.*

3 *And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow:
look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing;
oh, rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!*

4 *For lo! The days are hast'ning on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song which now the angels sing.*

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"
vs. 1, 3 & 4

No. 279

1 *O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

3 *How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.*

4 *O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!*



Table Blessing

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

All: Amen.

WE ARE SENT OUT TO SERVE

The Service of Light

The Congregational Candles are Lit

Pastor: In the Gospel of John, one of the books in the Bible, we learn that Jesus is the light of the world and there is nothing that can put out Christ's light. The darkness of night can be scary sometimes, but with Jesus the Light of the world in our lives, we never have to be afraid. God is always with us. God always loves us. On Christmas Eve, we remember that Christ is born in our world to be our Light. The candles we hold are reminders of Christ's light in our lives and in our world. So please go ahead and turn on your candles as we sing together.

Stand

"Silent Night, Holy Night!"

No. 281

- 1 *Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.*
- 2 *Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight; glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia! Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!*
- 3 *Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light radiant beams from your holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.*

Closing Prayer

Pastor: O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the true Light. You have given us Jesus, who is born to be our light, the light that shows us the truth of your glory and grace. As you have given this gift in love, may we receive it with joy like the shepherds – wow! With delight like the angels – don't be afraid! And with reverence like Joseph and Mary – Love has come! Grant that we may be renewed by your Holy Spirit and help us reflect the Light of Christ in all the places in our world where people are hurting, lonely, or afraid. We pray this through the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Blessing

Pastor: And now may the blessing of Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, be upon you this day and remain with you always.

All:. **Amen**

The candles are extinguished (turned off)



- 1 *Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.*
- 2 *Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*
- 3 *No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.*
- 4 *He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.*

Music for the Close of a Festival

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

arr. David Cherwien



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Tonight's Servers

Worship Asst.: Em Witteveen

Reader: Judson Stemaly

Ushers: Pete Eldridge, Erin & Ron Leversee, Paul MacNellis

Technology: Paul Guthrie, Paul Swodzinski, Mike Whately

Greeters: Tom & Jen Palarz, Sheryl Swodzinski

Sacristy Asst.: Gail MacNellis

Communion Asst.: Jen Deming, Kathleen Robinson, Bette Stemaly, Idy Stemaly,
Beth Whately, Cassie Whately

Altar Guild: Gail MacNellis



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Prince of Peace Lutheran Church Staff

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Administrative Asst: Tamara Preston ext 10

Accountant: Marilyn Storch ext 14

Technology Manager: Mike Whately ext 13

Engagement Coor: Em Witteveen ext 12

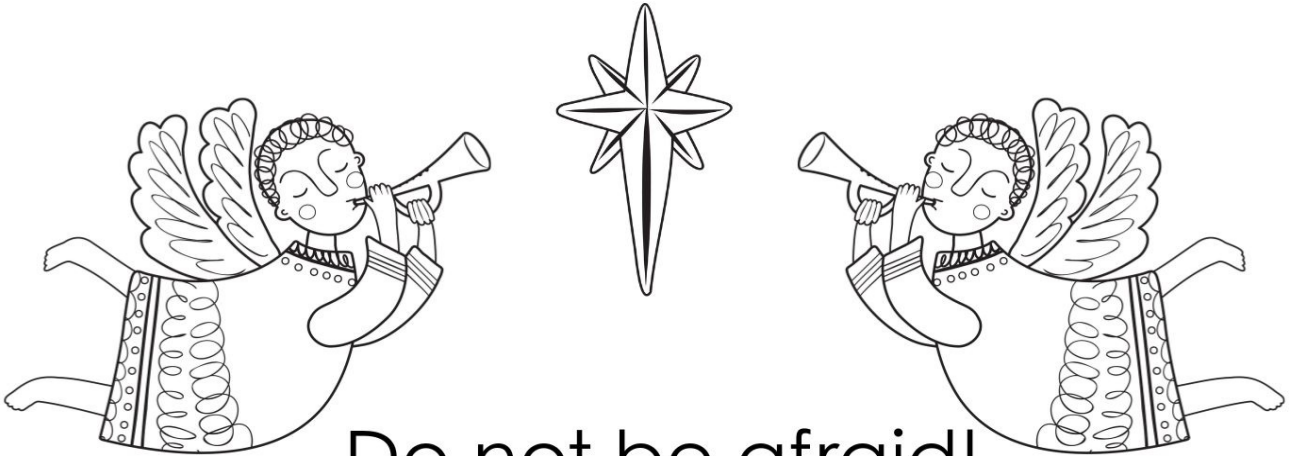
Intern: Kathleen Robinson ext 15

Music Director: Janet Hill ext 16

Custodian: Steve Haddix ext 20

Nursery: Melissa Copeland & Megan Zimmerman ext 17

Care Team Email: prayer@popportage.org



Do not be afraid!



Wow!

Love has come!