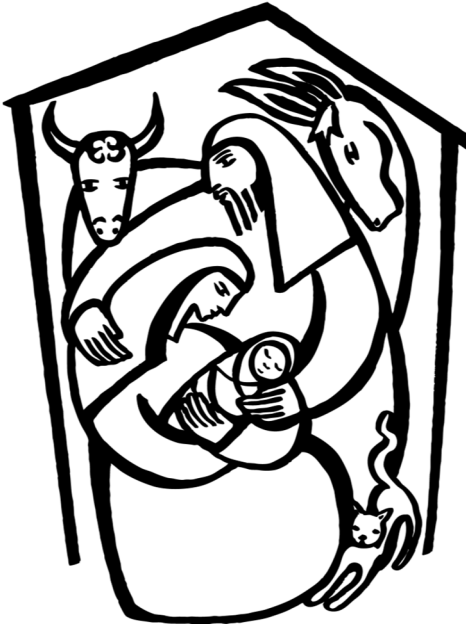


Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025

7:30 pm

Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church



Welcome to Messiah

We are a community of grace where we live out Jesus' commandment to love God with our whole heart and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We also seek to be a welcoming community for all people. This includes people of every race, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity, ethnic background, economic grouping, religious affiliation, and political persuasion. We do this simply because God created all people in God's own image and Christ Jesus came so all people might have abundant life. We may not always be perfect, but this is our intention—all are welcome!

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING HYMN

#283 "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

- 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*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

In a fearful world, where do you see the presence of God?

**We see God's fingerprints all around us.
We see God in the beauty of the stars.
We see God in the love of this community.
We see God in the dreams we hold for a better world.**

You are right. Even in a fearful world, God is here. God is all around us. On this holy night, we light the Christ Candle as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, God's love is all around us.

**May we rest in that good news.
Unto us a child is born.
A light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.
Glory to God in the highest heaven!
Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Let us pray,
**God of angel choruses,
you hang the stars in the sky,
but we do not see them.
You fill the night with angelic song,
but we do not hear it.
You send shepherds to tell the good news,
but we do not believe them.
You bring love into the world,
but we do not seek it.
Quiet the fear in us that works to rationalize, minimize, and distract
from the good news you put forth into the world.
Tune our hearts back to your song.
With hope we pray,
Amen.**

Family of faith, when the angels arrived in the field that night, the shepherds were afraid. But the angels said:
"Do not be afraid.
I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people."

*Please
stand in
body or
spirit as
you are
comfortable*

*The
presiding
minister
will read
the plain
print.*

*The
congregati
on is
invited
to read
the
print in
bold*

This good news is:
 love freely given,
 grace radically extended,
 welcome always offered,
 belonging never restricted.

In the name of Christ, you are seen, loved, welcomed, forgiven, called, and sent to serve.

Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

HYMN

#289 “Angels We Have Heard on High”

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*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of yesterday, today and tomorrow, we long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit. We cup our ears to hear the sound of the angel chorus. We turn our eyes toward the sky to see if we can find your star. We lean forward in our seat to see if we can feel your presence in our midst. We long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit, O God. So on this quiet night, on this holy night, on this joyful night, reveal yourself to us once more. Speak to us through the music and the children. Speak to us through starlight and candlelight. Speak to us through these ancient words once again. We long to catch a glimpse of you. **Amen.**

*Please
be
seated.*

FIRST READING

Luke 1:26-33, 46-56

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

⁴⁶ And Mary said,
 "My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
 Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
 and holy is his name.
⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him
 from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
 he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
 and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
 and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
 in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
 to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

HYMN

#270 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

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!"
- 2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*
- 3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth. *Refrain*

SECOND READING

Luke 2:1-7

2 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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 for them in the inn.

HYMN

#277 "Away in a Manger"

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

THIRD READING

Luke 2:8-20 ⁶

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

¹⁵When 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.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

SERMON

Pr. Andrew Plocher

HYMN

#267 “Joy to the World”

- 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.

*Please
stand
as you
are
comfort-
able in
body or
spirit.*

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe that on a night like this one,
a baby was born and placed in a manger.
We believe that baby was God's love in the flesh,
who grew up to love the outcast and change the world.
We believe that Jesus' love was so big and so personal
that the world will never be the same.
So despite the mystery of this holy night,
we believe that a star shone,
that the shepherds ran,
that the angels sang,
and that love was born.
Yes, we believe it when the prophets say
that unto you,
unto us, a savior is born.
Glory to God in the highest heaven!
We believe.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Thank you, God, for the joys of this season. Thank you for the candle lighting and the carol singing. Thank you for the bells ringing and the community gathering. Thank you for turning ordinary moments into holy reminders of your gospel promise. God of Hope, **hear our prayer.**

We are surrounded by so many gifts and we do not want to miss the opportunity to express Gratitude. However, despite the abundant gifts of this season, we also acknowledge the heartache of this season, and we bring those prayers to you as well. So Holy God, For individuals who long to be parents like Mary and Joseph but find themselves facing infertility or loss—be with them. For those who feel like they are going through the motions of faith but still feel far from you—be with them. For those who see the joy of this season, but cannot ignore the weariness in their hearts—be with them. God of Peace, **hear our prayer.**

God of this season, we could go on and on with our prayers of both gratitude and lament. The world is joyful and weary, and on either side of that coin, we long to tether ourselves to you. So meet us once again in the ordinary rituals of our faith—rituals like praying, singing, studying scripture, and gathering with community. Meet us at the Table and the Font. Meet us in the pews and in the Sunday school classrooms. Meet us when we pray before meals and when we pray before bed. Holy God, we don't care where you find us, we just ask that you would—over and over and over again. God of Joy, **hear our prayer.**

As we meet you in this Holy night, we promise that like Mary and Joseph we will do our best to bring our weary and hopeful spirits back to your temple, back to you. God of Love, **hear our prayer.**

God of this holy night when we await your coming into the world receive our prayers according to your abundant grace. **Amen.**

PEACE

The Peace of the newborn Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

Please be seated

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Still, Still, Still” *Messiah's Celebration Choir*

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Please stand as you are comfortable in body or spirit

Source of Love— They gave you gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold, because gold is for Kings. Frankincense, because frankincense was an scent for the gods. And myrrh, because even though you were divine, you were also human, and myrrh was the oil of death. We do not have gold, frankincense or myrrh here tonight, so today we give you our time, our hearts, our talents, and our money. We give you what we can. So we pray— Take these gifts, use them for your good, and mold in us more generous hearts. Gratefully we pray, **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to you, Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to praise you, Lord.

...we praise your name and join their unending hymn: (*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel v. 1*)

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,

and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

... Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

All are welcome to the Lord's Table. Communion will be served by intinction where you may dip the bread into the wine or ask for gluten free/ grape juice. Children are also welcome to the Table. If you would prefer to receive a blessing instead of communion please cross your arms over your chest.

COMMUNION HYMNS *All hymns can be found in the cranberry hymnal in your pew*

#279 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

#294 "In the Bleak Midwinter"

#300 "The First Noel"

#292 "Love Has Come"

Please
be seated

POST COMMUNION PRAYER AND BLESSING

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

#281 "Silent Night, Holy Night!"

- 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. *(sung twice)*
- 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! (*sung twice*)

- 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. (*sung twice*)

*Please
stand
as you
are
comfort-
able in
body or
spirit.*

THE BENEDICTION

May you go into the night with wonder in your step,
like the shepherds who heard good news.

May you carry hope in your heart,
like Mary, who pondered holy things.

May the light of Christ lead you,
the love of God enfold you,
and the joy of the Spirit sustain you—
this night and always.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

#290 "Go Tell It on the Mountain"

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*

SENDING

11

Go in peace, Christ is born! **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

“Gloria in Excelsis Deo”

Preacher:	Pr. Andrew Plocher
Liturgist:	Pr. Molly Hunter
Ushers:	Brenda Blett, Cathy Seblonka
Communion Assistants:	Laurel Kniskern, Kerry McGinley & Karen Burkman
Songleaders:	Sara Parks, Lane Parks
Pianist:	Kathy Strazinski
Musicians:	Darren Smith, Tom Bronken, Ross Larson
Audio Technician:	Dan Zini
Streaming Technician:	Traci Zini
Projection Technician:	Lesley Williams

Acknowledgements:

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messiahlutheranmqt.org/give**

**If you wish to designate your
donation to a specific fund, please be
sure to do so. Any undesignated
donations automatically go to our
general fund which supports the
entirety of our ministry.**

Thank you for your generosity!

Messiah Evangelical
Lutheran Church
@messiahlutheranmqt



venmo

Worship with us again!

- ◆ Saturdays at 5:00 pm in-person in the atrium
- ◆ Sundays 8:30 am in-person, on the radio at 101.9 FM, and live-streamed on Facebook, Vimeo, and YouTube
- ◆ Sundays at 10:30 am in-person and live-streamed.

An open & affirming congregation.

All are welcome. No exceptions.

305 W. Magnetic St., Marquette, MI 49855

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