

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church

The Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025
5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

O, Come let us adore Him



We gather this evening in the darkness of winter to proclaim the coming of God's Light. The prophet Isaiah announces that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light (Isaiah 9:2). In the familiar account of Jesus Christ's birth, the evening sky is bright with the angelic host singing, "Glory to God in the highest!" Amid the worry and stress of our world, we proclaim that the Prince of Peace is born among us. God comes to us in human flesh as a baby in a manger and comes again every time God's love is proclaimed in Jesus Christ. May we be bearers of divine light to all the world!

"Engaged in joyful service in God's world through faith in Jesus Christ"

Pastor Christian McMullan
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Welcome

Welcome to worship this Christmas Eve!

You may have entered this sanctuary on this holy day filled with joy and gratitude for all of God's blessings in your life...

You may have entered here with a particular concern or sadness, grief or worry, weighing on your heart...

You may have entered this space simply to participate in a tradition that connects us with something bigger than us—God's presence in worship with others...

Here you are in the presence of a forgiving God and among a community that tries to live out Christ's compassion.

Every Sunday of the year we gather here around the Good News of Jesus Christ that is proclaimed by the angels and shepherds.

Every Sunday the Holy Spirit is here, lifting hearts, challenging minds, renewing us for daily living.

Welcome!

St. Paul said, "In Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female... all are one in Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

Or as we say every Sunday here at Saint Matthew's, "Wherever you are in your journey of faith, you are welcome here!"

God's peace be with you, and Merry Christmas!

PRELUDE MUSIC

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

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

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

The four outer candles will be lit during the Dialog.

L: A virgin shall conceive and bear a Son! The child to be born will be holy.
C: He will be called the Son of God, Emmanuel, God with us.

L: He will be named Jesus, for he will save God's people from their sins.
C: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son..."

L: "...God sent him into the world not to condemn it but to save it through him." (John 3:16-17)

C: God in Jesus Christ comes among us in weakness and vulnerability.

L: Through him we have peace with God. Jesus, the light of the world, is born.
C: Let Christ's light shine in the darkest corners of our lives and in our world. God is with us!

Light the Christ Candle

**O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way.**

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

C: Let us pray: God of grace and glory, as we celebrate Jesus Christ's birth, transform our hearts and our lives so that your Good News is not an old story but a fresh truth lived out every day through the power of his Spirit. Amen.

Please stand

ENTRANCE HYMN

O Come, All Ye Faithful

**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;
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God, in the highest.
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

P: Let us pray.

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory, transformed into his heavenly nature just as he transformed our human nature; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Please be seated

I. AT HOME

A: The Lord himself will give you a sign.

C. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.

A: And they shall name him Emmanuel,

C. Which means, God is with us.

Isaiah 7:14

THE STORY OF MARY

Luke 1:26-35

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words, and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God. "Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

A. The word of the Lord.

C. Thanks be to God.

PRAYER

A: Let us pray.

Almighty God, in choosing the virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son, you made known your gracious regard for the poor and lowly. Grant us grace to imitate her willingness and to receive your Word in humility, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

HYMN

What Child Is This

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!

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!

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!

II. ON THE ROAD

A: A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse.

C: And a branch shall grow out of his roots.

A: The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him.

C: The spirit of wisdom and understanding.

A: The spirit of counsel and might.

C: The spirit of knowledge and awe of the Lord.

Isaiah 11:1-2

THE STORY OF JOSEPH

Matthew 1:18-21

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

A. The word of the Lord.

C. Thanks be to God.

PRAYER

A: Let us pray.

O God, from the family of your servant David you raised up Joseph to be the guardian of your Son and the spouse of his virgin mother: Give us grace to imitate his uprightness and his obedience to your commands; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem

**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.**

**For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all the earth.**

III. IN BETHLEHEM

A: But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah

C: from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel

A: whose origin is from old, from ancient days.

C: And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord.

A: For then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth,

C: And he shall be the one of peace.

Micah 5:2-5a (excerpts)

THE STORY OF JESUS' BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor 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 for them in the inn.

A. The word of the Lord.

C. Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

IV. IN THE FIELDS

A: Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings.

C: Lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings.

A: Lift it up, do not fear.

C: Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

Isaiah 10:9

THE STORY OF THE ANGELS AND SHEPHERDS

Luke 2:8-14

In that 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 a 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, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

A. The word of the Lord.

C. Thanks be to God.

PRAYER

A: Let us pray,

Gracious Lord, in coming down from heaven into our world you humbled yourself, and the news was given first to humble shepherds. May we humble ourselves that we may see and hear the angels' song in the world and people around us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Please stand

HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

**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!"**

**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)**

**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)**

V. AT THE MANGER

P: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

C: **Those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined**

P: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us.

C: **authority rests on his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God.**

P: Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

C: **The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.**

Isaiah 9:2-7 (excerpts)

THE STORY OF JESUS

Luke 2: 15-20

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.' 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.

A. The word of the Lord.

C. Thanks be to God.

Please be seated

SERMON

Please stand

HYMN

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!

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

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

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

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Each prayer petition will end, "Lord, in your mercy," and the congregation's response will be "Hear our prayer".

PEACE

P: The peace of Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

*The ministers and congregation may greet one another with a gesture of peace.
"Peace be with you."*

Please be seated

OFFERING

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Please stand

P: Gracious God, you provide everything we need. Receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels and gather us at your table where you give us your very self. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

C: Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: Gracious God, you are the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

Who in the night in which he was betrayed,
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.

Together let us proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.

We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit among us. Bless this meal.
May your Word take flesh in us, awaken us, and fill us with light.
Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Almighty God, Word of God incarnate, Spirit of Life,
One God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray:

C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Please be seated

COMMUNION/SPECIAL MUSIC

*This is God's table so all are welcome to participate.
Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available.*

Please stand

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

PRAYER

C: Let us pray. Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us. Amen.

THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

*The ushers will light the candle of the first person in each pew who will, in turn, light their neighbor's candle, etc. Please do not tip a lighted candle!
Extinguish candles at the conclusion of the blessing.*

CANDLELIGHT READING

John 1:1-5, 10-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

¹⁰ The true light was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

HYMN

Silent Night

**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.**

**Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ the Saviour, is born! Christ the Saviour, is born!**

**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.**

THE BLESSING

P: The God of love,
Creator, † Son, and Spirit,
lavish you with grace, illumine your path, and increase your joy,
today and always.

C. Amen.

(Extinguish candles)

HYMN

Joy to The World

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come! Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare him room.
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

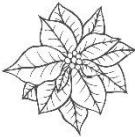
**Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**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.**

**He rules the earth 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 and wonders of his love.**

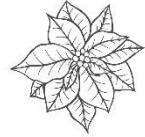
DISMISSAL

P: Glory to God in the highest!
C: And peace to God's people on earth!
P: Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.
C: Thanks be to God.



Thank you to the members of St. Matthew's congregation who assisted with worship this Christmas Evening.

Thank you to the members and friends of Saint Matthew's for contributing to the beauty of the sanctuary this Christmas Eve by purchasing poinsettias.



Laura Desrocher:

In memory of Judy Chmielenski and Walter Chmielenski

Randy and Kathryn Endsley:

*In memory of our brothers,
Richard Endsley and Timothy Endsley*

Katie Felmlee:

In memory of Mary Jane Shields and Helen Shields

Sue & Don Hummerston:

In honor of our St. Matthew's Family

Bob & Harriet Johnston:

In memory of Charles & Ada Givens and Robert & Elizabeth Johnston

Leslie Krienke:

In memory of Lynn Willey

Kathy Meltzer:

*In memory of
Cathrynn Jean McCann*

The McMullan Family:

*In memory of Ron Danielson and Gloria McMullan
In honor of Elliot Peter*

Bernie & Mary Ellen Roth:

In memory of our parents

John & Peggy Smith:

In memory of our parents

Melinda Weisgal and Chris Schiavino