

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Wednesday, December 24th, 2025



Christmas Eve

10:30 pm

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

Prelude: Camarada Brass Quintet

The Angel Gabriel Old Basque Carol
Arr. Chris Hall

A La Nita Nana

Traditional Spanish Carol
Arr. Todd Marchand

Ye Merry Gents

Traditional English Carol
Arr. Gary D. Zick

The Holly and the Ivy

Traditional English Carol
Arr. David Marlatt

A Jazzy Christmas Tree

Traditional German Carol
Arr. Todd Marchand

Fum, Fum, Fum

Traditional Spanish Carol
Arr. William Ryder

Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

Martin and Blane
Arr. Todd Marchand

Infant Holy

Traditional Polish Carol
Arr. Chris Hall

Camarada Brass Quintet

Jeff Huston	Trumpet I
Chris Hall	Trumpet II
Phil Tryon	French Horn
Josh DeVore	Trombone
Jonathon Stuck	Tuba

CANDLE LIGHTING

CANDLE LIGHTING

We have watched; we have waited
in hope. *The first candle is lit.*

for peace. *The second candle is lit.*

in joy! *The third candle is lit.*

with love. *The fourth candle is lit.*

Now our redemption draws near! *The Christ candle (the center white candle) is lit.*

ENTRANCE HYMN OH, COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL ELW 283

Oh, come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!

Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;

Come and behold him born the king of angels:

Refrain

Oh, come, let us adore him, oh, come, let us adore him,

Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

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*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,

Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God in the highest: *Refrain*

CHRISTMAS DIALOG

P Jesus Christ is the Light of the world!

C **He is the Light no darkness can overcome.**

P At darkest night we gather to celebrate the great light of our salvation.

C **With the heavenly host we sing, "Glory to God in the highest heaven."**

P In Christ, God's Word is made flesh and lives among us.

C **With the shepherds, we will tell of the wonders we have seen and heard.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2–7

- ²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined.
- ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when
dividing plunder.
- ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.
- ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
- ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING: Titus 2:11–14

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Anthem

Night of Silence

John Ferguson (1941- 2025)

Chancel Choir

Cold are the people, winter of life. We tremble in shadows this cold endless night. Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping, flowers that will echo the sunrise. Fire of hope is our only warmth. Weary, its flame will be dying soon. Voice in the distance, call in the night. On wind you enfold us, you speak of the light. Gentle on the ear, you whisper softly rumours of a dawn so embracing. Breathless love awaits darkened souls. Soon will we know of the morning. Spirit among us, shine like the star. Your light that guides shepherds and kings from afar. Shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely. Rising in the warmth of your son's love. Star unknowing of night and day. Spirit we wait for your loving Son.

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1–14 [15–20]

The holy gospel according to Luke, the 2nd chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

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.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Rev. Mark Kreemer

HYMN:

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

ELW 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*

ext: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt.

CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

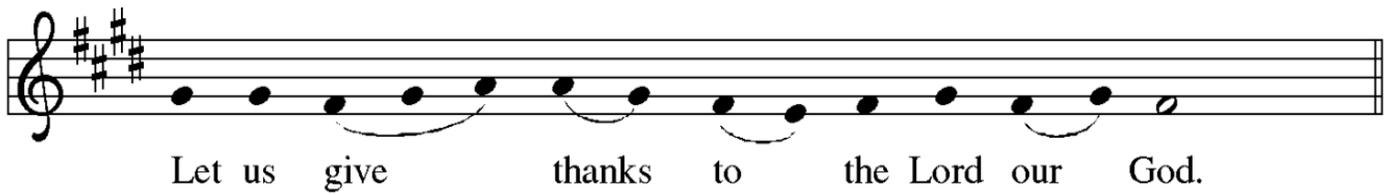
Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

After each petition the following response is given:

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

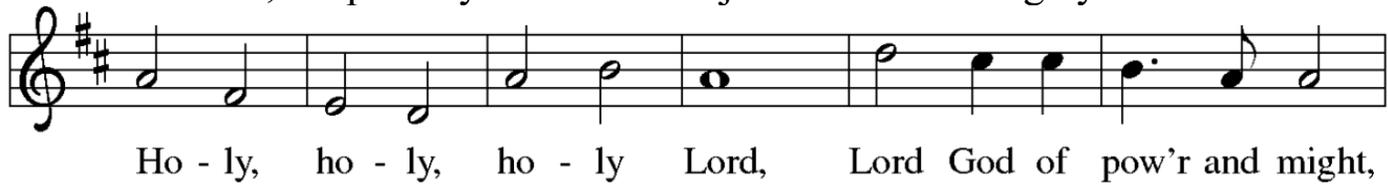


Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

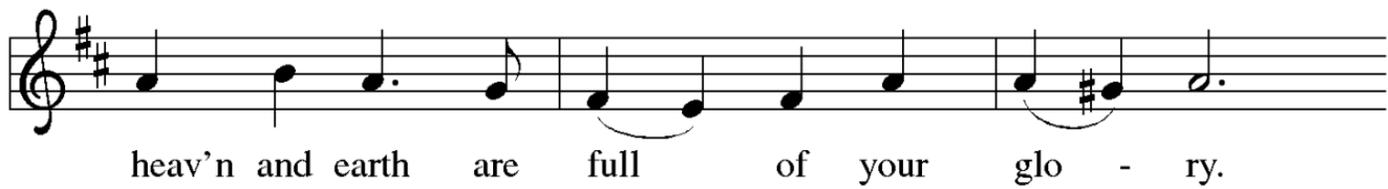


It is right to give our thanks and praise.

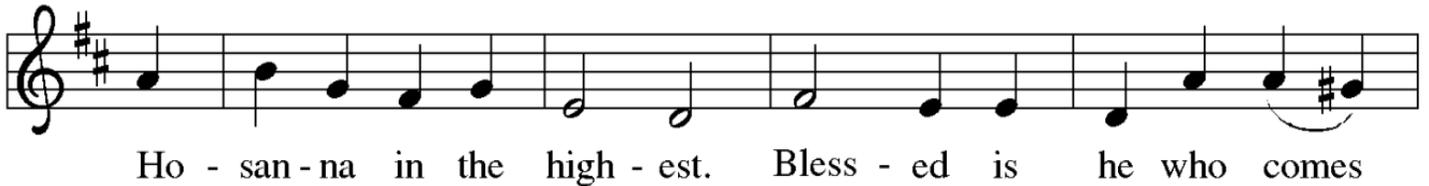
It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places.... And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



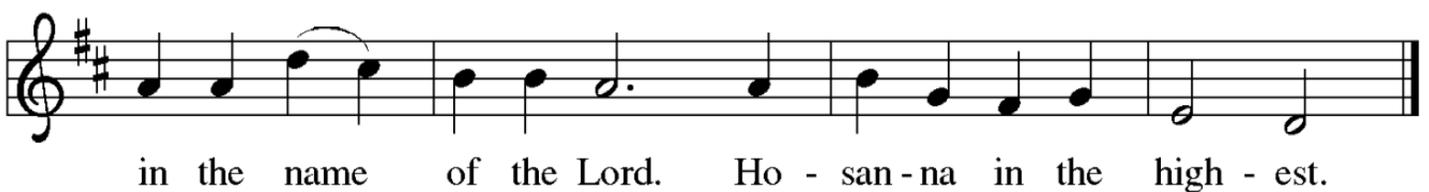
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world.

In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him. By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

Invitation to Communion

God is now in flesh appearing.

Come to the feast of joy!

Anthem

Sweet Little Jesus Boy

Robert MacGimsey (1898-1979)

Dwight Butler, baritone

Sweet little Jesus Boy, they made you be born in a manger. Sweet little Holy Child, didn't know who You was. Didn't know you come to save us, Lord; to take our sins away. Our eyes was blind, we couldn't see, we didn't know who You was. Long time ago, you was born. Born in a manger low, Sweet little Jesus Boy. The world treat You mean, Lord; treat me mean, too. But that's how things is down here, we didn't know t'was You. You done showed us how, we is trying. Master, You done showed us how, even when you's dying. Just seem like we can't do right, look how we treated You. But please, sir, forgive us Lord, we didn't know 'twas You. Sweet little Jesus Boy, born long time ago. Sweet little Holy Child, and we didn't know who You was....

COMMUNION**WHAT CHILD IS THIS****ELW 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!

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

May the body and blood of our lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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.

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

On this Christmas Eve we remember God's promise to our world: Christ, our Light and our Hope, will come. Listen to the words of Isaiah the prophet:

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; on those who lived in a land as dark as death a light has dawned. You have increased their joy and given them gladness; they rejoice in your presence as those who rejoice at harvest, as warriors exult when dividing spoil. (Isaiah 9:1-2)

Let us pray

O God, rejoicing, we remember the promise of your Son. As the light from this candle, may the blessing of Christ come upon us, brightening our way and guiding us by his truth. May Christ our Savior bring life into the darkness of our world, and to us, as we wait for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

SOLO

O Holy Night

Adolphe Adam (1803-1856)

Sammy Kay Smith, soprano

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining; it is the night of the dear Savior's birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining, till He appeared and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn! Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices! O night divine! O night when Christ was born! O night divine! O night, O night divine! Truly He taught us to love one another; His law is love and His gospel is peace. Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother, and in His name all oppression shall cease. Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we, let all within us praise His holy name. Christ is the Lord! O praise His name forever! His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim! His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!

CONGREGATIONAL SONG SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT!

ELW 281

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,
heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, 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.

BLESSING

The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh.
Amen.

SENDING SONG HARK, THE HERALD ANGELS SING ELW 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!"

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

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest!
And peace to God's people on earth!

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude: Carol of the Bells arr. Arthur Frackenpohl (1924-2019)

The Camarada Brass Quintet & Dr. Haake

Thank you to those serving today:

Presiding Minister	Rev. Mark Kreemer
Director of Music	Dr. Abigail Haake
Assisting Minister	7 pm Karl Kalk 10:30 pm Scott Larson
Communion Assistants	7 pm Kathryn Myers & Barb Palmer 10:30 pm Kathryn Myers & Sue Reid
Ushers	7 pm Craig Maurer & Gary Collard 10:30 pm Tracie Schmolt, Greg Klein, Dan Farrar, & Gary Collard
Lector	Sydney Johnson
Sacristan	Kathryn Myers
Soundboard	7 pm Tracie Schmolt 10:30 pm Jim Johnson
Video/Live-Stream	John Stanko



Images in the Readings

Luke's gospel presents images of **the poor**: those oppressed by Roman government, women giving birth in a place that houses both people and barn animals, newborns wrapped only in strips of cloth, the socially despised and religiously unclean shepherds. In our society where Christmas suggests unrestricted spending and continual feasting, Luke's image of the poor is striking.

Both the gospel and the first reading suggest the image of the **mother** bearing new life. Often in the Bible, childbirth is credited to God's power. All Christians are now Mary, bearing Christ for the world.

The Hebrew word **Bethlehem** means house of bread. From this historic city famous for its connection to King David comes the one who

will feed the people forever. In the liturgy, we enter that house of bread and eat.