



December 24, 2025

2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA

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CALL TO WORSHIP

On this holy night, we come,

dazzled and awe-struck, ready to sing alongside the angels.

On this holy night, we come,

eager and hopeful, ready to journey alongside the shepherds.

On this holy night, we come,

quietly and tenderly, ready to worship alongside Mary.

On this holy night, we come,

singing, trusting, believing, proclaiming: good news is louder than fear.

Let us worship our good news, with-us God.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Christmas Eve is one of the most joyful and hopeful days of the year. The candles are lit! The children are antsy with anticipation. The music is joyful. It is a good night! But even here, on this good night, we know that we are works in progress. Even here, on this good night, we know that we could love more deeply. So join me in the prayer of confession, not because we have to, but because naming that truth out loud allows us to receive God's grace.

And God's grace only makes a good night better. Let us pray:

Loving Christ, when the shepherds heard that you were born, they dropped their things and ran. They trusted the angels' invitation. They believed that your love existed for them. We wish that we were more like that. Instead, somewhere between the angels' song and the manger, we tend to lose our way. We doubt ourselves. We doubt the invitation. We doubt that love could know our names. Remind us that your love is personal and specific. Remind us that the good news of this day is for us. With hope we sing, we pray, and we run. Amen.

Family of faith, the angels are singing: unto you a child is born. It is a love that is personal. It is a love that knows your name. So hear and believe the good news of the Gospel: You are seen. You are claimed. You are forgiven. You are loved.

Glory to God in the highest heaven! Glory to God here and now.

Alleluia! Amen.

O, Come, All Ye Faithful



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
 2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of light e - ter - nal,
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
 born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!
 Je - sus, to thee be . . . glo - ry giv'n!



come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:
 Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
 Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

Refrain

Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,
 O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.
 O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

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.**

SPECIAL MUSIC St. John Immanuel Choir (4:00 service only)
Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

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. Word of God Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

READING: Romans 8:31, 38-39

If God is for us, who is against us? ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Word of God Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**



Al - le-lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.



Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹In 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!”

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

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE & SERMON

ELW 290

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born;

Refrain



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

PEACE May the peace of Christ be with you. **And also, with you.**

Watch, O Lord

Watch, O Lord, with all those a - wake this night,
watch, O Lord, with all those who weep; give your
an - gels and saints charge o - ver all who sleep.

1 Tend your ail - ing ones:
2 Soothe your suf - f'ring ones: in your love, Lord.
3 Hold your griev - ing ones:
4 Guard your lit - tle ones:

Rest your wea - ry ones:
Heal af - flict - ed ones: in your love, Lord.
Raise your fall - en ones:
Guide your search - ing ones:

Refrain
Bless your dy - ing ones:
Shield your joy - ous ones: in your love, O Lord of all.
Mend your bro - ken ones:
Grant us all your peace:

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, based on a prayer attributed to Augustine

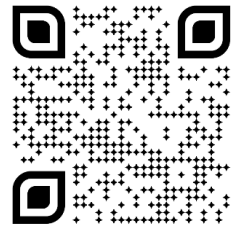
Music: WATCH, O LORD, Marty Haugen

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INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Let us offer our gifts tonight as a response to God's good news of great joy for all people.



Scan to Donate to St. John's

Give Thanks

Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,
give thanks be - cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.

Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,
give thanks be - cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.

And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am
rich," be - cause of what the Lord has done for us. And
now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am
rich," be - cause of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks!

The musical score consists of eight staves of music in a single system. The first two staves correspond to the first line of lyrics, the next two to the second line, and the final four to the third line. The music is written in a single melodic line on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are printed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes.

Text: Henry Smith

Music: GIVE THANKS, Henry Smith

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OFFERING PRAYER

God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. **Amen.**

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

With-us God, we live in a fragile world. If we're honest, we come to this table tonight with the taste of uncertainty on our tongues. We come carrying our anxiety. We come asking for guidance. We come filled with all of life's "what-ifs." But you do not disregard our fear. You do not brush it under the rug or call us foolish. You do not ignore the realities in front of us. Instead, you meet us here. You listen to our fears. You remind us that we are not alone. You surround us with people who love us. You show us where we are strong. You walk beside us. And you give us a new song to sing. As we come to this table, pour out your Spirit on this bread and cup. Remind us that even in an uncertain world, you are on the move. Living even here, in the Words that Jesus said.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION & 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 & ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The night we have been waiting for is here! And while we humans are good at many things, waiting is not high on that list. Maybe that's why this table is such a gift. For when we come to this table, for just a moment, the waiting stops. For just a moment we get a glimpse of God's promised day. For just a moment we can believe the angels when they say, "Be not afraid." We have seen the longest night, and still we believe. We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow. We believe that good news is louder than fear. So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, we will hold onto that good news. *We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst. We will proclaim: Unto us, love is born.* Love that meets us here. Where light shines in the darkness, where hope takes on flesh in bread and wine. Where there is space for all that we carry. So come, all who are weary, all who rejoice, all who doubt, and all who dare to stubbornly hold onto hope.

The First Noel



1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to
 2 They look - ed up and saw ... a star shin - ing
 3 And by the light of that ... same star three ...
 4 This star drew near to the ... north-west, o'er ...
 5 Then en - tered in those wise ... men three, full ...



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where
 in ... the east ... be - yond ... them far; and to the
 wise ... men came ... from coun - try far; to seek for a
 Beth - le - hem ... it took ... its rest; and there it
 rev - 'rent - ly ... up - on ... their knee, and of - fered



they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's
 earth it gave ... great light, and ... so it con -
 king was their ... in - tent, and to fol - low the
 did both stop ... and stay right ... o - ver the
 there in his ... pres - ence their ... gold, ... and



Refrain
 night that was so deep,
 tin-ued both day and night.
 star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -
 place where Je - sus lay.
 myrrh, and frank - in - cense.



el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Text: English traditional

Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional

It Came upon the Midnight Clear



1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
 2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,
 3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,
 4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
 and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.
 who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow:
 when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king.”
 A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,
 look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;
 when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
 and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
 oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!
 and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810–1876

Music: CAROL, Richard S. Willis, 1819–1900

Away in a Manger



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord
 2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -



Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked
 Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus; look
 ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in



down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
 down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
 your ten - der care and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

Music: AWAY IN A MANGER, James R. Murray, 1841–1905

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of starlight, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life.
 As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace.
 Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ.
Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

The lighted candle is never tilted, but is always held upright when giving light to another. Join together in lighting candles and sharing Christ's light.

Silent Night, Holy Night!

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!

Stille Nacht heil'ge Nacht! Alles schläft,
 1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,

einsam watch Nur das heilige eltern paar
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,

das im stalle zu bethlehem war bei dem himmlischen
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your

Kind. bei dem himmlischen Kind
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace,
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your born!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

May the stillness of this holy night quiet your heart and rest your soul.

May the child laid in straw and starlight teach you again the courage of tenderness, the quiet strength of love made small, the grace of being met—fully, mercifully—exactly where you are.

May you be given the wisdom to lean on one another, the faith to hold fast to hope, and the compassion to do the good that is yours—and only yours—to do. And as you step into this holy dark, with angels still humming at the edges of the sky, may the light you carry be gentle, may it be stubborn, and may it be enough to guide your way.

In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Joy to the World



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re-
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

DISMISSAL

Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace—tell it on the mountain—and proclaim that good news is louder than fear.

Thanks be to God.

Thank You, Louie Reissman for the beautiful Christmas Tree!



Sunday, January 11 at 10:15 a.m. Town Hall Meeting - Meeting to discuss name change.

Welcome to all! “Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright” (Joseph Mohr). Silent and calm, until a newborn wails and angels illumine the fields! Holy indeed. Merry Christmas, and welcome to worship!

Please remember to silence pagers and cell phones during services.

To those who are visiting: Welcome to St. John and thank you for joining us! You are welcome to sign our registry in the narthex. May God bless you today and all days.

Reminder! If you are in need of Pastoral care, please contact St. John’s at (715) 675-6950

Holy Communion All are welcome to the Lord’s Supper.

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