

**Christmas Eve  
December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – 5 PM**

**Our Celebration of the  
Birth of Jesus, the Christ**

Officiating – Pr. Rudy Schneider

Preaching – The Reverend Wes Smith

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How happy we are to be able to gather on this Christmas Eve! Once again, we remember and celebrate the birth of God's own Son, Jesus Christ. He is born in a little town called Bethlehem. We will hear tonight as the Gospel story of Jesus' birth is told that the angels of God appear in the sky and announce to poor shepherds watching their flocks that Jesus Christ the savior of the world is born! And this new-born savior king comes to bring light and peace to our world, to each of us and to those we love.

**WORSHIP**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace. **Amen.**

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

Reconciling God, **we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; we have not always embraced your message of peace. We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear. We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones; our reluctance to embody your good news. Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.**

God's grace upon grace flows over you. ✙ Christ's presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad! **Amen.**

**HYMN: ELW #283 – 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 (**Chorus**)

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

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

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

**Chorus**

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



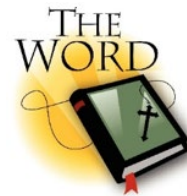
**Prayer of the Day** – Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with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

### **GOD'S HOLY WORD**

#### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 52: 7 - 10**

<sup>7</sup>How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." <sup>8</sup>Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices; together they shout for joy, for in plain sight they see the return of the LORD to Zion. <sup>9</sup>Break forth; shout together for joy, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup>The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

The Word of the Lord...**Thanks be to God!**



#### **Psalm 98: 4 - 9**

<sup>4</sup>Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

**<sup>5</sup>Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody.**

<sup>6</sup>With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.

**<sup>7</sup>Let the sea roar and all that fills it, the world and those who live in it.**

<sup>8</sup>Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy <sup>9</sup>at the presence of the LORD,

**for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with equity.**



### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

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.

### **HOLY GOSPEL**

A Reading from the Holy Gospel of Luke 2: 8 – 20; **Glory to You, O Lord!**

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>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: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup>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." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The 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, Lord Jesus Christ!**

## **LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

### **CHRIST CANDLE HYMN: ELW#270 – 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  
in the triumph of the skies;  
with angelic hosts proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!" **(Chorus)**

#### **Chorus**

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

## **SERMON – Good News Travels Fast**

**The Reverend Wes Smith**

### **HYMN: ELW#300 – The First Noel**

- 1 The first Noel the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep. **Refrain**
- 2 They looked up and saw a star  
shining in the east beyond them far;  
and to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night. **Refrain**
- 3 And by the light of that same star  
three wise men came from country far;  
to seek for a king was their intent,  
and to follow the star wherever it went. **Refrain**

- 4 This star drew near to the northwest,  
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;  
and there it did both stop and stay  
right over the place where Jesus lay.  
**Refrain**
  - 5 Then entered in those wise men three,  
full rev'rently upon their knee,  
and offered there in his presence  
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.  
**Refrain**
- Refrain**  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!  
Born is the King of Israel.

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

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

Gathering God, you bring your people from every corner of the earth together before the manger that you have made a throne. Unite the church in love as we rejoice in the news of your coming. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, you brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Join our voices with the roaring seas, the exulting fields, and the trees of the forest singing for joy on this holy night. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Transforming God, the world trembles amid violence and war. Empower our hands, feet, and hearts with your Spirit to shatter the rod of the oppressor and turn swords into plowshares. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Shepherding God, you lead us to your love in the face of our neighbor. Send us into the world to find your Word made flesh in one another, especially those who are sick or struggling. Grace those from our families and community in greatest need of our prayers and your blessings. *(Please name silently or out loud).* Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Nurturing God, you dwell with us in humble places. Sustain housing and clothing ministries in this community, that all find shelter and warmth. We pray especially for youth seeking safety and care. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Abiding God, you remain at the side of all the departed. Grant all who mourn hope in the resurrection and peace in Christ Jesus. 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. **Amen.**

### **OFFERING & 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.**

### **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

We give you thank, Father, through Jesus the Christ, your beloved Son, whom you sent in this end of the ages to save and redeem us and to proclaim to us your will.

He is your Word, through whom you created all things, and in whom you take delight. He is your Word, sent from heaven to a virgin's womb.

He took on our nature and our lot and was shown forth as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary. He fulfilled all your will and won for you a holy people; he stretched out his hands in suffering in order to free from suffering those who trust in you. As he was born to die, you raised him from death to life, so that we too know that we shall be raised from death to life.

We therefore remember that he took bread, and after giving thanks to you, said: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. And in the same way, 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.



Fill us with your Holy Spirit that we may praise and glorify you through him whom came among us at Christmastide; through whom all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

**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** – A child has been born for us, a Son given to us. Come, receive the gift of Jesus.

## **OUR TIME OF COMMUNION WITH THE LORD!**

### **COMMUNION HYMN 1: O Little Town of Bethlehem**

- 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.
- 2 For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
- 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!

### **COMMUNION HYMN 2: ELW#289 – Angels We have Heard on High**

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| 1 Angels we have heard on high,<br>sweetly singing o'er the plains,<br>and the mountains in reply,<br>echoing their joyous strains. <b>Refrain</b>     | 3 Come to Bethlehem and see<br>him whose birth the angels sing;<br>come, adore on bended knee<br>Christ the Lord, the newborn king. <b>Refrain</b> |
| 2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?<br>Why your joyous strains prolong?<br>What the gladsome tidings be<br>which inspire your heav'nly song? <b>Refrain</b> | <b>Refrain</b><br>Gloria in excelsis Deo;<br>gloria in excelsis Deo.   |

## **CONGREGATIONAL CANDLE LIGHTING**

## **CONGREGATIONAL CANDLE LIGHTING HYMN: ELW# 281– Silent 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,  
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** - 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.**

**BLESSING** – The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, ✝  
bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy. **Amen.**

## **CLOSING HYMN: ELW# 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. 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.

**DISMISSAL:** Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.  
**Thanks be to God!**



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