

# ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD  
LITTLETON, COLORADO

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD—CHRISTMAS EVE

*December 24, 2020*

2:50, 4:50, & 6:50 p.m. —A WREATH OF CAROLS

3, 5, & 7p.m.—FESTIVAL HOLY EUCHARIST & CANDLE-LIGHTING





...you will find a babe  
wrapped in swaddling cloths  
and lying in a manger.  
Luke 2:12, NRSV

## A Wreath of Carols

### ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

LSB 368

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.

*Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

Shepherds why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heav'nly song?

*Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, Adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

*Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.*



### THE FIRST NOEL

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.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!  
Born is the King of Israel.

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.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

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.

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.

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;  
 O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!



✧ PREPARATION ✧

**PRELUDE** "Little Drummer Boy/Pat-a-Pan" Diane Bish

**PASTORAL GREETING** Pastor John Larson

**THE INVOCATION AND RESPONSORIAL**

Pastor In the name of the Father and of the ✧ Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**People Amen.**

Pastor Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:  
**People He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.**

Pastor But Mary treasured up all these things,  
**People pondering them in her heart.**

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 giv'n!  
 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!*

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor The time is fulfilled. Let us repent,  
 confessing our sins to God our Father.

People **Most merciful God, we confess that  
 we are by nature sinful and unclean.  
 We have sinned against You in  
 thought, word, and deed, by what  
 we have done and by what we have  
 left undone. We have not loved You  
 with our whole heart; we have not  
 loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
 We justly deserve Your present and  
 eternal punishment. For the sake of  
 Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy  
 on us. Forgive us, renew us, and  
 lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to  
 the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

Pastor In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His  
 only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. Almighty God in  
 His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all  
 your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I  
 therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩  
 Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People **Amen, so be it! Amen!**



✧ WORD ✧

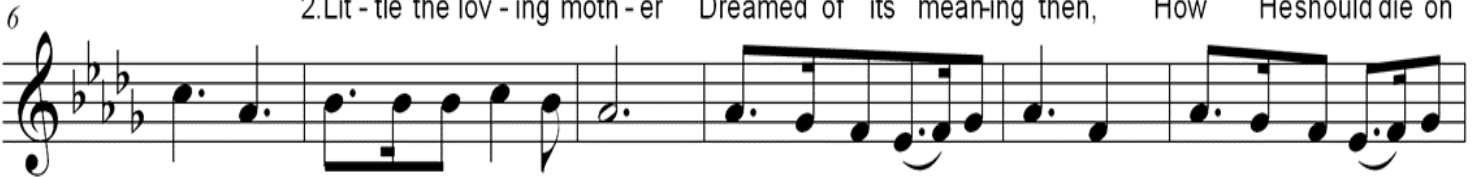
CHRISTMAS HYMN OF PRAISE

"Glory to God the Angels Sing"  
(Chorus is sung twice at the end.)

Kessel



1. Low in a hum-ble man-ger Lit - tle Lord Je - sus lay, Watched by the vir-gin  
2. Lit - tle the lov - ing moth - er Dreamed of its mean-ing then, How Heshould die on



6  
moth - er, There on a bed of hay, Keep - ing her lov - ing vig - il Far from the world-ly  
Cal - v'ry, Die for the sins of men Down thru the wea-ry a - ges, Out from the man-ger



12  
thongs, When thru the night\_\_ came ring - ing Glor - ri - ous an - gel songs.  
bed Streams all the light\_\_ of heav - en, Soon o'er the world to spread.



17  
"Glo - ry to God"\_\_ the an - gels sing; Prais - es to Christ, the new - born King;



21  
"Peace be on earth\_\_ good will to men" Hear we the an - gels sing a-gain



25  
"Glo - ry to God"\_\_ the an - gels sing; Prais - es to Christ, the new - born King;



29  
"Peace be on earth\_\_ good will to men, God will to men!"



## The Prayer of the Day

Pastor The Lord be with you.

**People And also with you.**

Pastor *Let us pray.*

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that, as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People Amen.**

**CHRISTMAS SOLO (at 3, 5, 7 p.m.)** "Shepherd's Pipe Carol" John Rutter  
Rachel Becker, soloist

## OLD TESTAMENT READING: Isaiah 7:10–14

(The sign of Immanuel)

**Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, "Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights."**

**But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test."**

**Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."**

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**CHRISTMAS SOLO (at 3 & 5 p.m.)** "What a Glorious Night"  
McDonald/Brown/Frey/Smith  
Ben Williams, soloist

## EPISTLE: 1 John 4:7–16

(God is love.)

**Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.**

**We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him**

**and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.  
God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.**

**Lector:** This is the Word of the Lord.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

**CHRISTMAS SOLO (at 3, 5, & 7 p.m.)**

“O Holy Night”

Adolphe Adam  
Rachel Becker, soloist

*Congregation, please rise for the Holy Gospel.*

**HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18–25**

(The birth of Jesus Christ)

**Pastor:** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.

**People:** Glory to You, O Lord.

**This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.**

**But after he had considered 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 home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."**

**All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."**

**When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.**

**Pastor:** This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People:** Praise to You, O Christ.





1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their songs em -  
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor thorns in - fest the  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na - tions



King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him  
 ploy, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
 ground; He comes to make His bless - ings  
 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 and tune: Public domain

## SERMON

"Complicated and Confusing"

Pastor John Larson

TEXT: Luke 2:1-20

## A CHRISTMAS STATEMENT OF FAITH

**All:** I believe in God the Father, Creator of all things, who sent his Son as my Savior. I believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, announced by angels, worshipped by the Wise Men. He lived to suffer, die and rise again to free me from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, who has brought me to faith in Christ and by whose continuous work in my heart I am ever led to kneel before the manger and cross of Christ to worship, to pray, to praise and thank Him, and to live under him as my King and Master, now and forever. Amen.



## THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

- Pastor Let us pray for the Church around the world and all people in their various needs. That the coming of the Word in the flesh might open the eyes of all who are blinded by this world's sin and folly, let us pray to the Lord,
- People O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!**
- Pastor That the grace and mercy God has offered in giving His Son might turn the hearts of many to true repentance, joy, and hope, let us pray to the Lord,
- People O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!**
- Pastor That the Church here and around the world might find a renewed sense of purpose as we join the Christmas angels and the hosts of heaven in praising the name of our gracious God, let us pray to the Lord,
- People O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!**
- Pastor That an awareness of how much God loves us and what He has been willing to do for us since the beginning of time would bring comfort to all who face this bright new day through tears of pain or sadness, (*especially ...*), let us pray to the Lord.
- People O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!**
- Pastor That God, outside of time and space, would so move the leaders of this world that they use every opportunity to reflect His care for the nations and areas they serve, let us pray to the Lord,
- People O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!**
- Pastor Into Your almighty and gracious hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- People Amen.**



## OFFERING

*Offerings will be collected at the back, in the Narthex*

## HOLY COMMUNION AT ASCENSION

*The Lord, our Host, invites to his Supper those who are baptized into the Christian faith, confess him as Savior, have been instructed and have examined themselves, truly repent of sins, believe the Risen Lord is present in the sacrament with his true body and blood, and resolve to live faithfully and obediently. For those with an intolerance to alcohol, the center ring of the tray contains grape juice. Gluten free wafers are available to those with wheat allergies. Children who have not been instructed, yet desire a blessing, are invited to come forward with arms crossed. When receiving the bread and wine, the communicant may respond with "Amen!", a word of affirmation and belief.*



✘ SACRAMENT ✘

## PREFACE

Pastor: The Lord be with you. *2 Timothy 4:22*

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts. *[Colossians 3:1]*

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. *[Psalm 136]*

People: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

## PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; for in the mystery of the Word made flesh You have given us a new revelation of Your glory that, seeing You in the person of Your Son, we may know and love those things which are not seen. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

## THE SANCTUS *(Sung to the tune: Angels We Have Heard on High)*

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God by high-est hosts a - dored,  
Sing ho - san - na, saints a - bove, with the an - gels sing God's love.

Heav'n and earth Your glo - ry sing; With them we our prais - es bring.  
Bless-ed He, the com - ing One, God the Fa - ther's on - ly Son.

*Refrain*

Glo - - - - - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - - - - -

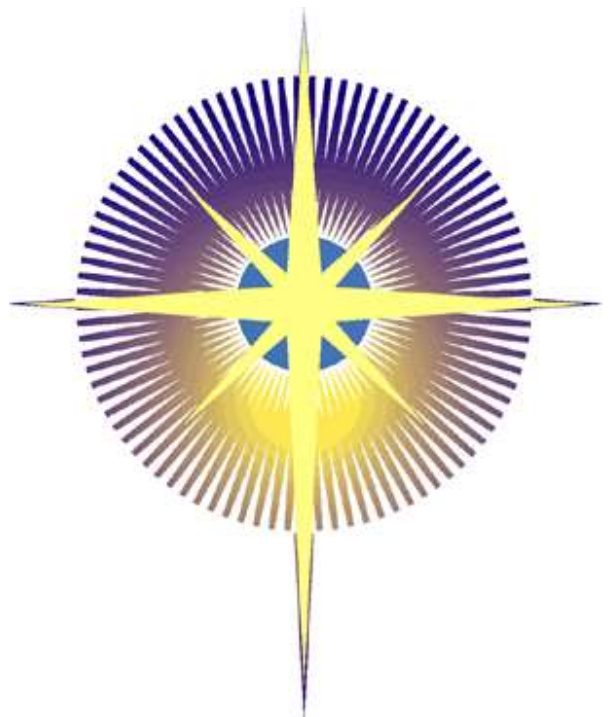
- - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

The image shows a musical score for 'The Sanctus' in G major, 3/4 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first two staves contain the main melody with lyrics. The third staff is the start of a 'Refrain' with a long note for 'Glo' and a melodic line for 'ri - a'. The fourth and fifth staves continue the refrain with 'in ex - cel - sis De - o.' and 'ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.' respectively.

## THE WORDS OF OUR LORD *Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; I Corinthians 11:23-25*

### LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9-13*

**People:** 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.





O Lamb of God, who takes a - way The whole world's  
sin, now hear us pray: Have mer - cy on us,  
grant us peace, From all our sins give us re-lease.

## DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

LSB 366

It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth To touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, From heav'n's all-gracious King."  
The world in solemn stillness lay To hear the angels sing.

For lo! The days have come to pass by prophets seen of old,  
When down into the circling years came Christ as was foretold,  
His word of peace shall to the earth God's ancient promise bring,  
And all who take this gift will hear the song the angels sing.

Christmas Organ Music "He Whom Shepherd Men Came Praising"  
(and others as time permits)

Paul Manz

## GENERAL COMMUNION BLESSING



### The Lighting of the Candles

*Candles are lit from the center aisle; please pass the light to one another being careful to hold the candle upright as not to burn yourself with the wax. Let Christ's light be shared! The candles may remain lit through the end of the service.*

**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 thy holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

**BENEDICTION**

**Pastor** May Almighty God, by whose mercy our Savior the Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of His blessing.

**People** **Amen.**

**Pastor** May He whose second coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love.

**People** **Amen.**

**Pastor** May you, who rejoice in the first advent of our Redeemer, at His second advent receive, by His great mercy, unending life.

**People** **Amen.**

**Pastor** And the blessing of the Almighty God, the Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever.

**People** **Amen.**

**CONGREGATIONAL CONCERNS**

**DISMISSAL**

**Pastor:** Go in peace as you serve the Lord, and Merry Christmas!

**People:** **Thanks be to God for His wonderful gift! Merry Christmas!**

**POSTLUDE**

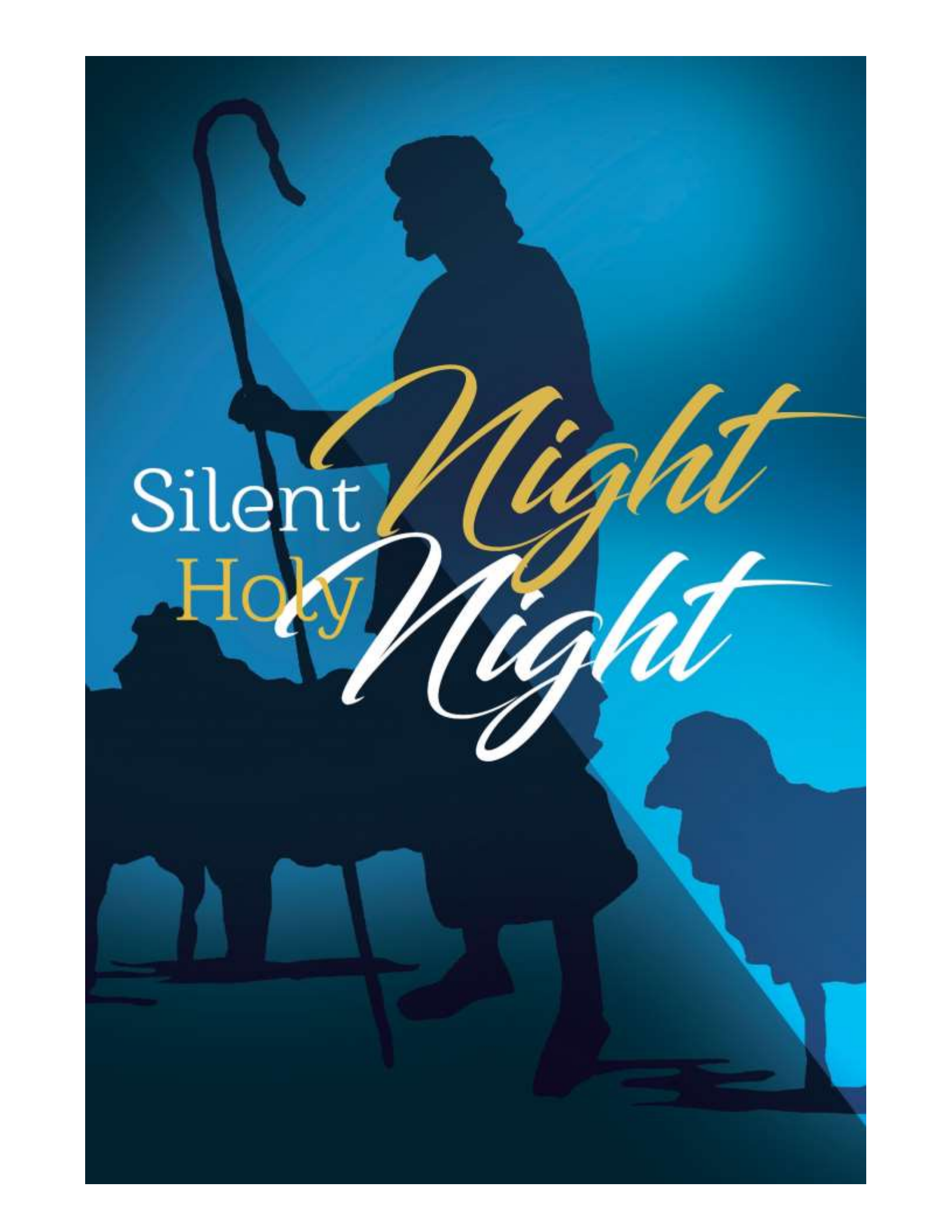
“Toccata on ‘Adeste Fidelis’”

David Hegarty





*Christmas*  
**EVE**

A silhouette of a shepherd with a long staff and two sheep against a blue gradient background. The shepherd is in the center, facing left. One sheep is on the left, and another is on the right. The background is a gradient from dark blue at the top to a lighter blue at the bottom.

Silent  
Holy

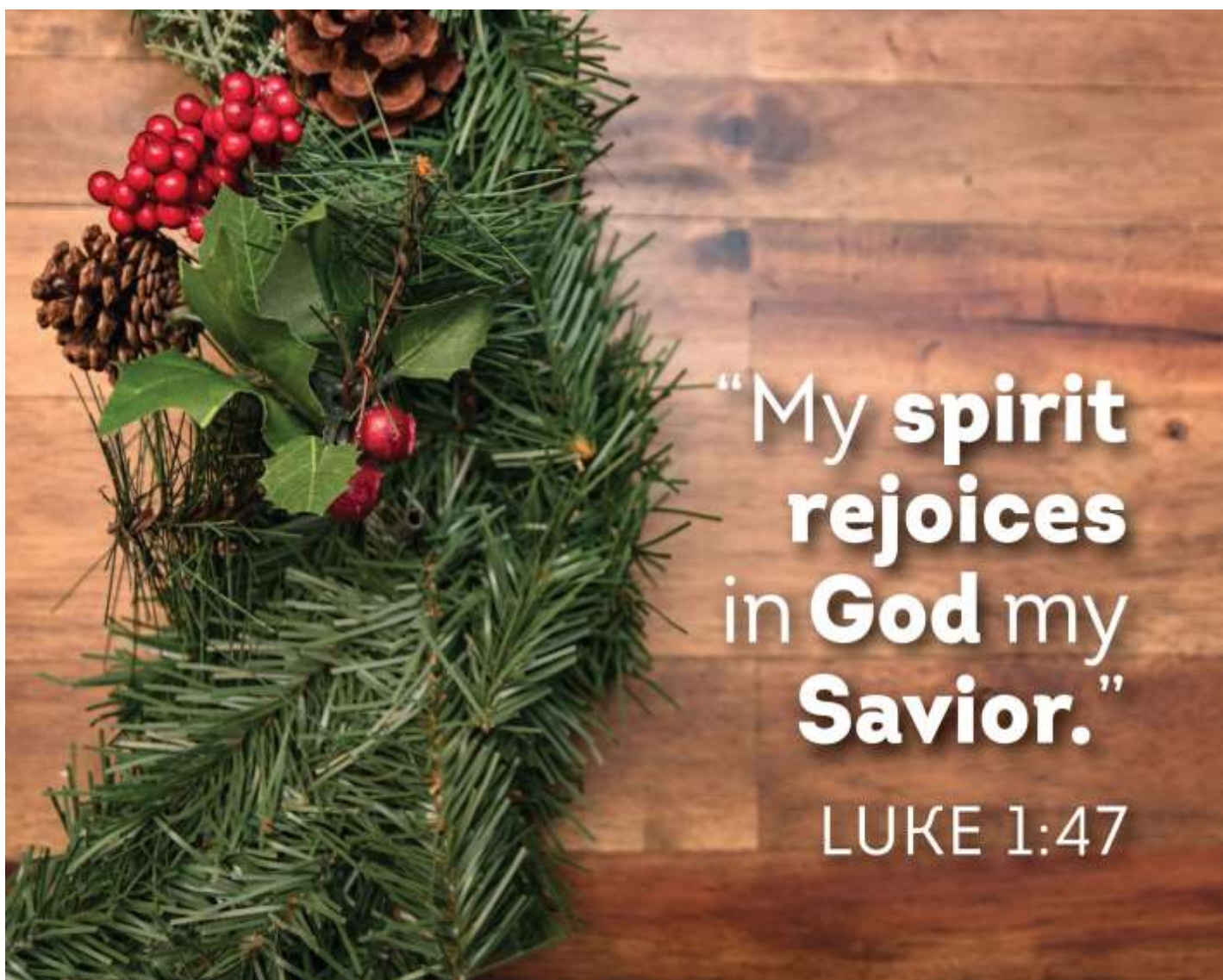
*Night*  
*Night*

## Serving in Worship

OFFICIANT and CELEBRANT  
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES  
SOLOISTS

Pastor John Larson  
Michael Zehnder  
Rachel Becker  
Ben Williams

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**"My spirit  
rejoices  
in God my  
Savior."**

LUKE 1:47