

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LITTLETON, COLORADO

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD—CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2025

6:50 p.m. —A WREATH OF CAROLS

7:00 p.m.—FESTIVAL HOLY EUCHARIST & CANDLE-LIGHTING



Christmas
EVE



A Wreath of Carols

(Pre-Service Sing-a-long)

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

LSB 361

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!

INFANT HOLY, INFANT LOWLY

LSB 393

Infant holy, Infant lowly, For His bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, Little knowing Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, Angels singing, Bells are ringing, Tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!

Flocks were sleeping, Shepherds keeping Vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, Heard the story, Tidings of a Gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, Free from sorrow, Praises voicing, Greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

⌘ PREPARATION ⌘

PRELUDE “For Unto Us a Child is Born” (from “The Messiah”) G.F. Handel

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.**



The Processional Cross symbolizes the Christ who takes on human flesh and comes into our midst. Please turn to face and follow the cross.

THE CAROL IN PROCESSION “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

LSB 379

vs. 3, descant arr. Willcocks
Ascension Chorale

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!

Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son 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!

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

(Chorus is sung twice at the end)

"Glory to God the Angels Sing"

Kessel

6

1. Low in a humble 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

12

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

17

throns, 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.

21

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

25

"Peace be on earth__ good will to men" Hear we the an - gels sing a-gain

29

"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, Good will to men!"

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 ANTHEM

"All is Well"

arr. Lloyd Larson
Ascension Chorale
Ann Westra, flute



CHRISTMAS INTROIT

Psalm 2:1–2, 4–6; antiphon: Liturgical Text

Pastor: When all was still, and it was midnight, Your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne.

People: Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

Pastor: The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His anointed. He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then He will speak to them in His wrath, and terrify them in His fury, saying, “As for Me, I have set My King on Zion, My holy hill.”

People: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Pastor: When all was still, and it was midnight, Your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne.

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Isaiah 7:10-14

(Immanuel will be born to a virgin mother.)

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

CHRISTMAS JUBELLATION

“Realms of Glory”

arr. Matthew Compton
Gloria Dei Handbell Ringers

EPISTLE: 1 John 4:7-16

(God sent His Son into the world as Redeemer.)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 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. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide 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. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Congregation, please rise for the Holy Gospel.

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

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

(The birth of Jesus)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for



he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

**“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”**

(which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY “Joy to the World” **LSB 387**

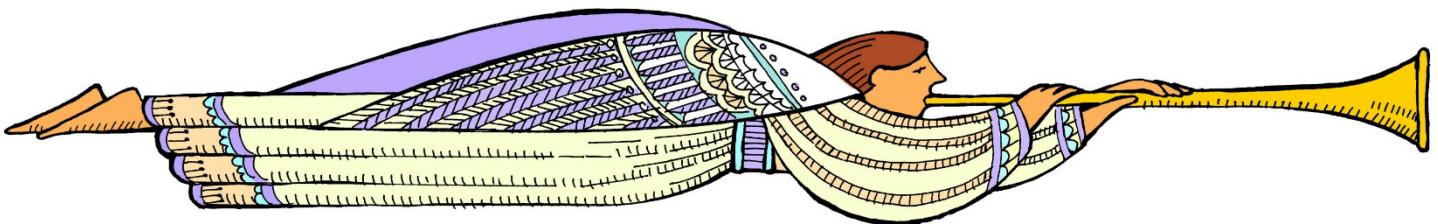
SERMON "Today I Will Choose Joy" Pastor John Larson
Text: Luke 2:8-14

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!

(other intercessions may be added here)

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.

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: **And also with you.**

OFFERING

CHRISTMAS ANTHEM

“Fum, Fum, Fum”

arr. David Shaler
Ascension Chorale
Dave Olsson, guitarist

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.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

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

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

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:



**Christmas Eve
Communion**

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

Glo - ri - a

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

in ex - cel - sis De - o.

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

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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 (*Tune: "On Jordan's Bank"*)

PUER NOBIS

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

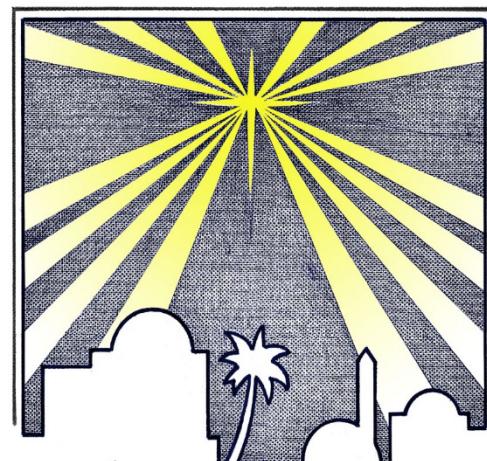
Piano Solo "Still, Still, Still" arr. Joseph Martin
 Diana Gaide, pianist

"Gentle Mary Laid Her Child" *LSB 374*

"O Sing of Christ" *LSB 362*

Improvisations on Christmas Hymns Paul Manz

GENERAL COMMUNION BLESSING



*the
 Light shines in
 the Darkness*

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 (with Strings vs. 3)

LSB 363

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, receive by His great mercy, unending life at His second advent.

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.

(Lighted candles may now be extinguished)

CONGREGATIONAL CONCERNS

DISMISSAL

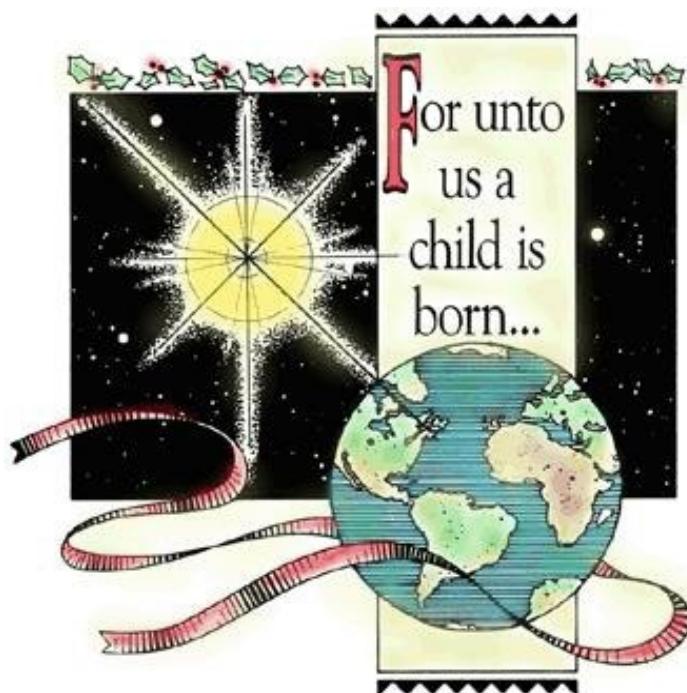
Pastor: Go in peace as you serve the Lord.

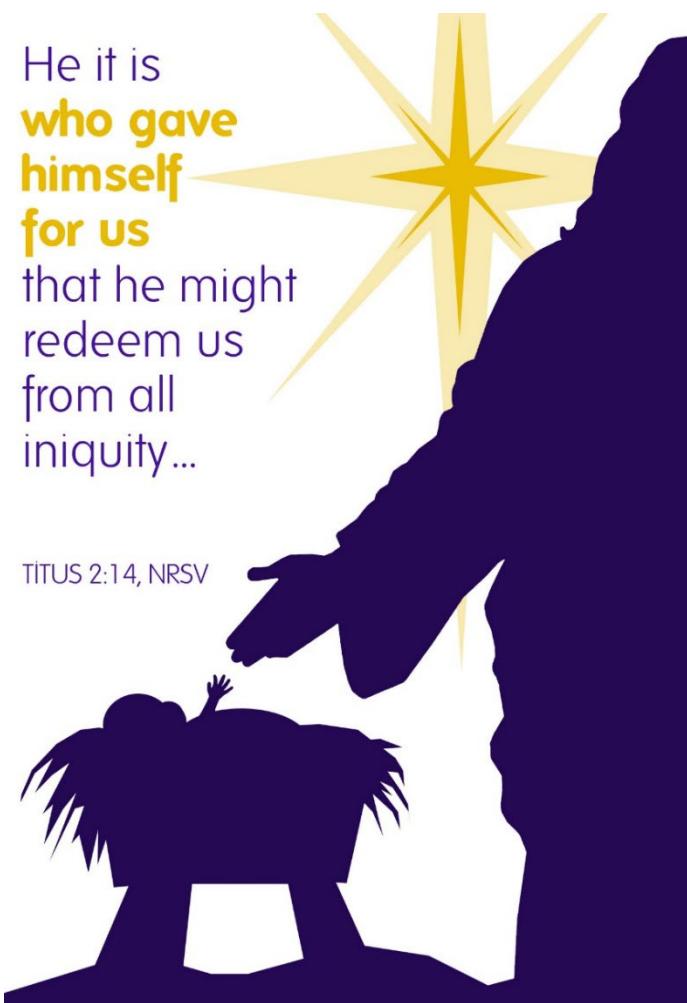
People: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

“Break Forth into Joy” (from “the “Christmas Cantata””)

J.S. Bach





Serving in Worship

OFFICIANT and PREACHER

MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP / ORGANIST

ACOLYTE

CHOIR AND BELL CHOIR DIRECTOR

CHOIR ACCOMPANIST & PIANIST

CHOIRS

FLUTE

GUITAR

ELDER 4:00

7:00

LECTOR 7:00

ALTAR GUILD

Pastor John Larson

Michael Zehnder

Juliette Dallet

Stephanie Roettjer

Diana Gaide

The Ascension Chorale

Gloria Dei Handbell Ringers

Ann Westra

Dave Olsson

Jeff Dunker

Benjamin Dallet

Pastor Larson

Gloria Mielke, Tanya Schmitt

Charmaine Rohde

***Many thanks to all those who purchased the beautiful poinsettia plants
that decorate our sanctuary for Christmas:***

The Huggins family, Kim & Dan McCormick, Ron & Ann Kaneko, Gary Selzer,
Gloria Gaudreault, Ken & Diane Cole, Carolyn Helstrom, Andy & Mavis Slifka,
John and Lori Rolling, Pastor John and Marilyn Larson



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