



St. John Lutheran Church

Powellsville
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December 24, 2025

Christmas Eve
Festival Service of Holy Communion and Candlelight

Leader: People of St. John, what is our purpose?

All: **To live for the Lord who made us, to love as Jesus taught us, and to serve where the Spirit leads us.**

Prelude

Sanctuary lights will dim as the Christ candle comes up the aisle. When the candle is placed in the stand the congregation sings first verse of O Come O Come Emmanuel.

Oh, Come, Oh, Come Emmanuel

Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

P: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light: Those who lived in a land of the deep darkness – on them light has shined...For 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." Isaiah 9:2, 6

Congregation Stand

+ Entrance Hymn

Oh, Come All Ye Faithful

#45

1 Oh, come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! Oh,
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, oh, 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 the God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

Refrain
 Oh, come, let us a - dore him, oh, come, let us a - dore him,
 oh, come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2
 Music: ADIESTE FIDELIS, attr. John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786

Opening Prayer

P Let us Pray

P 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 only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen

Congregation may be seated

First Reading: Luke 2:1-7

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.

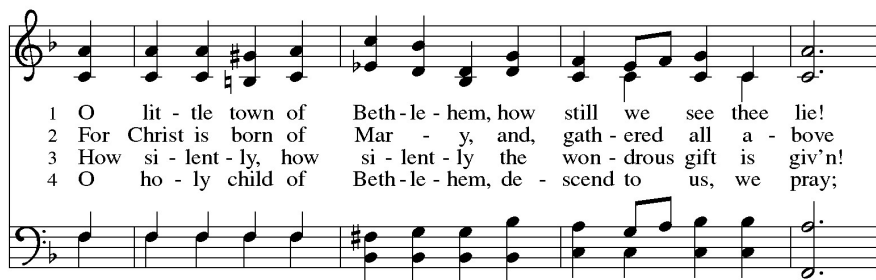
⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

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.

Hymn

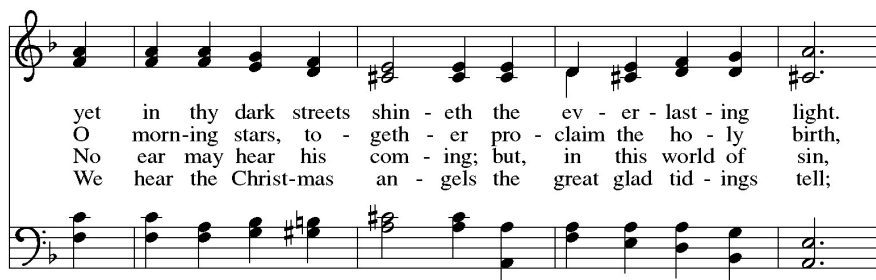
O Little Town of Bethlehem



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
 4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to-night.
and prais-es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re-ceive him, still the dear Christ en-ters in.
oh, come to us, a-bide with us, our Lord Im-man-u-el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893
Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

Second Reading: Luke 2:8-14

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

¹⁰ 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:

¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

¹³ And 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!"

Congregation stand

Hymn

Angels We Have Heard on High

#71

1 An-gels we have heard on high, sweet-ly sing-ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep-herds, why this ju-bi-lee? Why your joy-ous strains pro-long?
3 Come to Beth-le-hem and see him whose birth the an-gels sing;
and the moun-tains in re-ply, ech-o-ing their joy-ous strains.
What the glad-some tid-ings be, which in-spire your heav'n-ly song?
come, a-dore on bend-ed knee Christ the Lord, the new-born king.

Refrain

Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo

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

Text: French carol; tr. "Crown of Jesus," 1862
 Music: GLORIA, French carol; arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1887–1958

Congregation may be seated

Third Reading: Luke 2:15-20

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 But 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, as it had been told them.

Sermon

Pastor Kruse

Congregation stand

Hymn

Away in a Manger

#67

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

+ The Prayers

P 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.

P 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.

C Your mercy is great.

P 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.

C Your mercy is great.

P 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 (*especially in . . . specific instances of conflict may be named*). Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P Shepherd 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 (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P 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.

C Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P “Raise up and send to us our next pastor (deacon). We pray for our call committee, that your wisdom will rest upon them, that they may know and recognize the person you are sending. Grant us patience and faith as we wait. Amen”

“We pray for the our call committee as they continue their work, that they may know your will, and have the faith and courage to follow your leading.”

“Grant that your Holy Spirit may rest upon our call committee as they listen for your will. Grant us patience and hope that comes by faith in you.” Hear us, O God.

C Your mercy is great.

P 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.

C Your mercy is great.

P 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.

C Amen.

+ The Peace [shared among the congregation]

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

Congregation may be seated

Choir Anthem

My Christmas Prayer

Offering

Congregation stand

Offertory

I am so Glad Each Christmas Eve

Jeg er så glad hver ju - le - kveld, ti da blev Je - sus født;
1 I am so glad each Christ-mas Eve, the night of Je - sus' birth!
2 The lit - tle child in Beth - le - hem, he was a king in - deed!
3 He dwells a - gain in heav - en's realm, the Son of God to - day;
4 I am so glad each Christ-mas Eve! His prais - es then I sing;
5 And so I love each Christ-mas Eve, and I love Je - sus too;

da lys - te stjer - nen som en sol, og eng - ler sang så sødt.
Then like the sun the star shone forth, and an - gels sang on earth.
For he came down from heav'n a - bove to help a world in need.
and still he loves his lit - tle ones and hears them when they pray.
he o - pens now for ev - 'ry child the pal - ace of the king.
and that he loves me ev - 'ry day I know so well is true.

Text: Marie Wexelsen, 1832–1911; tr. Peter A. Sveeggen, 1881–1959

Music: JEG ER SÅ GLAD, Peder Knudsen, 1819–1863

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+ The Prayer

P Let us pray. Blessed are you,

C **O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

+ Holy Communion

P The Lord be with you

C **And also with you**

P Lift up your hearts

C **We lift them to the Lord**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

C **It is right to give God thanks and praise**

P Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,

the Word made flesh.

P 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.

P 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.

P Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

C **Christ has died.**

C **Christ has risen.**

C **Christ will come again.**

P With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.

C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

**C 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

P: God-with-us has come to touch our world, our lives. God-with-us has come to bring us out of darkness into a glorious light. God-with-us invites us now to come to the table, believing in the promises of God fulfilled tonight. Here we hear angels, and see shepherds, and are transformed by a baby.

The Distribution

Tonight, we will be distributing communion continuously. Please come up the center aisle and return using the side aisle. Pastor will bring communion to those who cannot come forward. Here, at St. John we practice open communion. All are welcome at the Lord's table. Kid's too.

What Child Is This

#40

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.

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and lamb 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.

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.

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

It came upon a 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 men from heaven's all gracious king.
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled.
And still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing.
And ever o'er its babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

And you beneath life's crushing load whose forms are bending low.
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow.
Look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing.
Oh rest beside the weary road and hear the angels sing!

For lo, the days are hast'ning on, by prophets seen of old.
When with the ever changing years shall come the time foretold.
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling.
And all the world give back the song which now the angels sing.

The First Noel

The First Noel, the Angels 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!

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

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

Stand

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C **Amen**

Congregation stand

+ Post Communion Prayer

P Let us pray. Infinite, intimate God, in this Eucharist we have
celebrated your presence with us. May we grow in the divine life of Christ
who humbly shared human life. Fill us with joy and send us out to share
this good news with others. We ask this through Jesus Christ Emmanuel.

C **Amen**

+ Candlelighting

+ Closing Hymn

Silent Night

#65

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,

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,

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

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

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885
 Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

+ Christmas proclamation Lights

P: When the song of the angels is stilled.
When the star in the sky is gone,

When the kings and princes have gone home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner
To rebuild nations:
To bring peace among all people,
To make music from the heart.
(Howard Thurman)

Postlude

+Stand as you are able

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SERVING TODAY

Organist
Readers

Leigh Ann Henry
Dawn Scott

Emmett Salyers
Kendra Hughes
Daniel Mullins

Prayer Leader
Greeter

James & Kym Hayman

Altar Committee
Council President

Debbie Clevenger, Cindy Oakes
Rick Williams

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON is the fulfillment of the Advent expectations. The color of the Christmas season is white, a color associated with festivals of Christ, traditionally suggesting gladness, light, joy. The Christmas season lasts twelve days, from the evening of December 24 through January 5. This is time for Christmas hymns and anthems, decorations, and parties. (From the Lutheran Book of Worship)

WE HAVE battery operated candles for the young children who would like to hold a candle during Silent Night.

THE SPECIAL VASE FLOWERS are given to the glory of God in loving memory of Kathleen Oakes for her December 25th birthday by Cindy Oakes and Sherry Patterson.

Please pick up and take home any poinsettia(s) that you have ordered after worship this evening.

