



PROCLAMATION

The Birth of Christ

Many ages after God created the heavens and the earth,
when man and woman were formed in God's own image;
long after the great flood, when God set the rainbow
in the clouds as a sign of the covenant;
twenty-one centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah;
thirteen centuries after Moses led God's people to freedom;
eleven centuries from the time of Ruth and the judges;
a thousand years from the anointing of David as king;
in the sixty-fifth week as Daniel's prophecy takes note;
in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;
the seven hundred and fifty-second year
from the founding of the city of Rome;
the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;
in the sixth age of the world, all earth being at peace,
Jesus Christ, eternal God, Son of the eternal Father,
willing to hallow the world by his coming in mercy,
was born of the virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea.
Today is the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.

WELCOME!

Everyone is welcome. As a community of the people of God, the members of Central Lutheran Church are called to welcome all people regardless of age, economic status, ethnic background, gender, physical or mental ability, race or sexual orientation. We affirm that in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male or female" (Galatians 3:28). Christ has made us one.

Guests are welcome. We are pleased you are worshiping with us today. We invite guests to complete the "Welcome to Central" card found in the pew racks and leave it with an usher or place it in the offering plate. If you would like more information about Central, please speak to a staff member or call the church at 612-870-4416.

Children are welcome at all services. Worship bulletins for children and activity bags are available at Sanctuary entrances. Central's nursery will be open for your use, but there will be no attendant on duty.

Welcome to the Lord's Table. All are welcome at the Lord's Table. Please follow the guidance of the ushers and instructions in the order of service. During communion, ministers will bring bread and wine to persons in designated access seating areas. If you are not in a designated access seating area and desire to commune where you are seated, please notify an usher who will direct communion ministers to come and serve you.

We envision becoming a thriving, vibrant model of urban Lutheran ministry for the 21st century. This lofty vision requires us to ask each day if our goals for worship, learning, and service are clearly reaching a diverse neighborhood and city in language and action that reflect the world as well as our heritage.



Large print service folders,
assisted listening devices, and access seating
are available to aid your participation in worship.
Please inquire with an usher.



HOLY COMMUNION

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD



Christmas Eve
December 24, 2009 + 10:30 p.m.

Central - in the heart of the city, welcomes all people to celebrate, discover and share the love of Christ

On God's throne we see the prince of peace

On a long winter evening we gather to proclaim the coming of the light. Isaiah announces that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. In his letter to Titus Paul reminds us that the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all. In the familiar account of Christ's birth, the evening sky is bright with the heavenly host singing, "Glory to God in the highest." Amid our broken world we proclaim that the prince of peace is born among us. God comes to us in human flesh— so that we may be bearers of divine light to all the world.

*The Holy Spirit gathers
us in unity
on the eve of
Christ's birth.*

GATHERING

PRELUDE

Carols for Christmas

The carillon calls the assembly to worship.

PROCESSIONAL CAROL

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

(hymn) 283

stanza 2 in harmony

GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The light and peace of Christ be with you all.

A And also with you.

P Let us pray.

Good and gracious God,

on this holy night you gave us your Son,

the Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes;

the Savior of all, lying in a manger.

Draw us into the mystery of your love,

join our voices with the heavenly host,

and give us a place among the shepherds

that we may find the one for whom we have waited,

Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Lord, who lives and reigns with you

in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

A Amen.

CAROL BY THE BELLS

"Away in a Manger"

arr. Mary Albing

*God speaks to us in
scripture reading,
preaching,
and song*

*This poem promises
deliverance from Assyrian
oppression, a hope based on the
birth of a royal child with a
name full of promise. While
Judah's king will practice
justice and righteousness, the
real basis for faith lies in God's
passion for the people:
The zeal of the Lord of hosts
will do this!
(pew bible, front page 598)*

*The appearance of God's grace
in Jesus Christ brings
salvation for all humanity.
Consequently, in the present
we live wisely and justly while
also anticipating the hope of
our Savior's final appearance.
(pew bible, back page 190)*

WORD

READING

A child is born for us

Isaiah 9:2-7

The 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.

CAROL BY THE CHOIR

"Hodie nobis caelorum Rex nasci"

Giovanni Nanino

(Sung in Latin)

*Today the King of Heaven is born for us, for all humanity,
claiming the kingdom of heaven.*

The angels rejoice for eternal salvation has come.

Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth.

READING

The grace of God has appeared

Titus 2:11-14

Paul writes to Titus:

The grace of God has appeared,
bringing salvation to all,

¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions,
and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly,

¹³while we wait for the blessed hope
and the manifestation of the glory
of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us
that he might redeem us from all iniquity
and purify for himself a people of his own
who are zealous for good deeds.

Word of God, word of life.

☩ Thanks be to God.

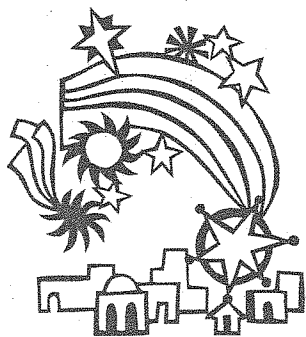
GOSPEL PROCESSION

(hymn) 292

"Love Has Come"

Please stand to face the gospel as it is proclaimed in the midst of the assembly.

God's greatest gift comes as a
baby in a manger. Angels
announce the "good news of
great joy" and proclaim
God's blessing of peace.
(pew bible, back page 50)



P The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

A Glory to you, O Lord.

In 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!"

¹⁵When 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."

¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child;

¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.

²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

A Praise to you, O Christ.

CAROL BY THE ASSEMBLY
"Angels We Have Heard on High"

(hymn) 289
sung in harmony

SERMON
"Home for Christmas"
silence for reflection

Pastor Rick Nelson

CAROL BY THE ASSEMBLY
"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

(hymn) 272
stanzas 2 & 3 in harmony

*ELW uses an ecumenical form
of the Nicene Creed.*

NICENE CREED

A With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

All We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A Rejoicing that the grace of God
has been revealed in the birth of Jesus Christ,
the light of the world,
let us pray for the church,
those in need, and all of God's creation.

after each petition:

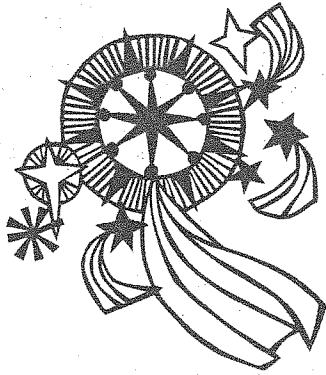
Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

P Trusting in your mercy, O saving God,
we commend to you all for whom we pray,
through the one born among us, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

God feeds us
with the presence
of Jesus Christ



MEAL

PEACE

P Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.
And his name is Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

A And also with you.

The assembly is invited to greet one another, sharing God's peace.

OFFERING

The offering is received.

Anthem

"Let Our Gladness Have No End" *Bohemian carol, arr. Mark Sedio*

*Let our gladness have no end, Hallelujah!
For to earth did Christ descend, Hallelujah!
On this day God gave us Christ, the Son, to save us;
Christ, the Son of God, to save us.*

*Prophesied in days of old, Hallelujah!
God has sent the one foretold, Hallelujah!
On this day God gave us Christ, the Son to save us;
Christ, the Son of God, to save us.*

*See the loveliest blooming rose, Hallelujah!
From the branch of Jesse grows, Hallelujah!
On this day God gave us Christ, the Son, to save;
Christ, the Son of God, to save us.*

*Into flesh is made the Word, Hallelujah!
Our true refuge, our Lord! Hallelujah!
On this day God gave us Christ, the Son to save us;
Christ, the Son of God, to save us.*

Offertory Carol

"Joy to the World"

*(hymn) 267
sung in harmony*

Offertory Prayer

A God of time and eternity,

A you have given your only Son,
born of Mary,
to save and redeem us.

Bless us with all good things,
that the works of our hands
through all the years of our lives may proclaim
the news of your redeeming love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

A And also with you.

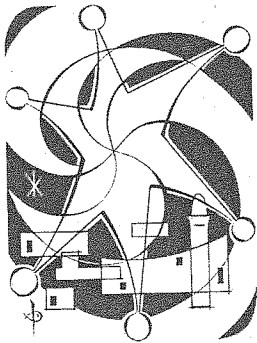
P Lift up your hearts.

A We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

A It is right to give our thanks and praise.

During Advent and Christmas, portions of the liturgy are sung to Gregorian tunes traditionally associated with the season.



All are invited to receive these gifts of God.

Children are welcome to receive communion or a blessing.

Communion at this service is served standing by intinction. Please follow the direction of the ushers to a communion station. Receive the bread and dip it in the chalice of wine.

Grape juice and gluten-free bread are available upon request.

Holy, Holy, Holy

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of might!
 Heav'n and earth re - flect your glo - ry,
 ho - - - san - na in the heights!
 Bless - ed is he who comes - - -
 in the name of the Lord! Ho - san-na in the high - est!

The presider continues with the Great Thanksgiving concluding:

Lord's Prayer (1975)

A Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
 now and forever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread and Invitation to the Table

Communion

Carol by the Choir

"Angels from the realms of Glory"

Mark Sedio

Angels from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
 Once you sang creations story; Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
 Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.
 Shepherds in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,
 God with us is now residing, yonder shines the infant light.
 Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.
 Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;
 Seek the great desire of nations, you have seen his natal star.
 Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.
 All creation, join in praising God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
 Evermore your voices raising to the eternal three in one.
 Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

Carol for Violin

"What Child Is This"

English carol, arr. Charles Callahan

Carol by the Assembly

(hymn) 276

"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

Carol for Oboe
"Susani"

German carol, arr. Robert Buckley Farlee

CANDLE LIGHTING

*The ushers will bring lighted candles to each pew of worshipers.
Worshipers are asked to light their candles from those of their neighbors.*

Carol by the Bells
"Silent Night"

arr. Karen Roth

Reading

John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being.
What has come into being in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it.


Following the lighting of candles, the assembly remains seated and sings the carol.


Carol by the Assembly


"Silent Night, Holy Night!"

sung in harmony

Please raise your lighted candles  for the final line of each stanza.

All 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.

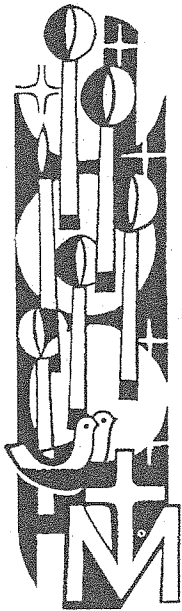
Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
 Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior is born! Christ, the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from your holy face,
 With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

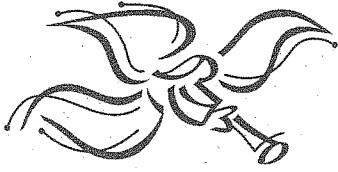
Prayer

A Let us pray.
Almighty God, you made this holy night shine
with the brightness of the true Light.
Grant that 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.

All Amen.



*God blesses and sends us
in mission to the world*



SENDING

BLESSING

- ☐ May you be filled with the wonder of Mary,
the obedience of Joseph,
the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the determination of the magi,
and the peace of the Christ child.
Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.
- ☒ Amen.

Please extinguish your candle as the carol begins.

RECESSIONAL CAROL

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

(hymn) 270

stanza 2 in harmony

DISMISSAL

Please face the cross for the dismissal.

- ☐ Go in peace. Your light has come.
☒ Thanks be to God!

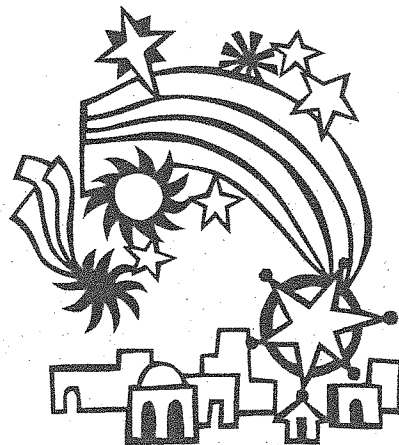
The carillon sends the assembly into mission.

POSTLUDE

"Joy to the World"

arr. Craig Phillips

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SERVING TONIGHT



Pastor D. Foy Christopherson *presiding*
Pastor Rick Nelson *preaching*
Kris Schoephoerster *assisting minister*
Maggie Peterson *reader*

Pastor Kristen Jacobson *hospitality*
Mark Sedio *cantor/organist*
Jane Lien *associate cantor*
Central Choir *choir*
Campanas Central *bell choir*
Andrea Sieber *violin*
Emily Olson *oboe*
Beacon Hill Brass

Richard Stegall *sacristan*
Brad Boogren, Melissa Deonarine,
Rick Johnston *processional corps*

Judith Stone, Chuck & Joyce Anderson,
Mons Teig, Barb Hoernemann, Judy Berge,
Rick Johnston *communion ministers*

George & Mary Holtan,
Karen Snyder, Joan VanWirt *hosts and greeters*

Bob Boldt *cover design*

Kris Stedje, Christopher Haug,
David Nelson, Michael Wickman,
Paul Troselius, John Troselius,
Stephen Shearer, Karl Starr, Sara Klomp,
Maggie Peterson, Judith Stone *seasonal environment*

Phil & Laura Holst, Trudy Ness,
Mary Jo Olson, Michael Wickman,
Richard Stegall, David West *seasonal worship team*

The poinsettia garden in our sanctuary is a gift from donors who choose to honor and remember loved ones during our Christmas worship. A list of donors and those they honor and remember is available at all sanctuary entrances. At the close of the Christmas Day service tomorrow, you are invited to select a plant from the chancel, pick up an address card and bulletin from the boards in South Commons, and deliver our good wishes to one or more of our homebound members. Thank you for participating in this decades-long tradition of Central.



WORSHIP LIFE

Holy Families



The gospel stories that we revel in during these days of Christmastime hold up for us the family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. It's easy to gaze on the images in the Christmas crib and recognize the holiness of the newborn Jesus. It may be harder to look at your own children or parents, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, grandchildren or neighbor children and see reflections of that same holiness in them. After all, living together, we see each other's bad sides as well as the good, the warts as well as the dimples.

But if we truly believe in what we are celebrating, the wrapping of God in human flesh, and the fact that Jesus saved us by his death and resurrection into which we are baptized, then we must cultivate the ability to see a reflection of the baby Jesus' holiness in each and every child of God.

Maybe it will help to remember not just the gurgling baby Jesus in the crib, but also the toddler Jesus at age two — in his own version of the "terrible twos." Or to meditate on Mary and Joseph changing diapers and picking up the ancient Palestinian version of Cheerios from the kitchen floor — and the living room floor and the bedroom floor and. . . The gospels are silent about Jesus' childhood, but truly human as well as truly God, Jesus no doubt had nosebleeds and skinned knees, tried dangerous stunts, didn't get enough sleep sometimes and so was cranky. Maybe there were even battles over homework. (Jesus would have studied Hebrew and the scriptures.)

And think of Jesus as a teenager. We get a glimpse of him in the gospel of Matthew at age twelve, wandering off in Jerusalem, causing Mary and Joseph to panic. Of course he didn't have the opportunity to take driver's ed or ask for the car keys, but there were a myriad of other but similar parent-teen encounters, to be sure.

Some may find such speculation to be sacrilegious. "Jesus is perfect," they'll object. "Jesus is God!" How very true. And Jesus was a baby, a teenager, a young adult, too. True God, true human. And maybe, just maybe one of the delights of this Christmas season is that some of the small quirky things about us as human beings — the terrible twos, the teenage struggle for independence, parents' angst about their child — maybe all of these are holy and part of what it means to grow toward the Light. And so we ask God's blessings on our families tonight.

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CHRISTMAS EVE
10:30 p.m.

CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
*in the heart of the city, welcomes all people
to celebrate, discover and share the love of Christ*
333 South Twelfth Street • Minneapolis, MN 55404
Office — 612.870-4416 • Infoline — 612.767-9101 • www.centralmpls.org

