

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24, 2023
10:30 p.m. Eucharist



Welcome to Central Lutheran Church.

You are welcome, no exceptions.

Here are a few notes you might find helpful for worship:

Bold print indicates responses spoken by all. Masks are welcomed. Congregational hymns are found printed in this bulletin or in the red hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

PRELUDE

Carols for string quartet

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

Arr. Barlow Bradford

*Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging, angels singing,
noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the babe is Lord of all!
Christ the babe 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 babe was born for you!
Christ the babe was born for you!*

Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885-1933, alt.

(At the sound of the bell, please stand and face the font)

Gathering

OPENING SENTENCES

There is room for you here.

If you're weary and worn, or hopeful and patient.

If you're tired and lost, or wrapped up in hope.

If you're new to this place, or have been here before.

Come in, come in.

There is room for you here. The angels are singing,

“Be not afraid.” The angels are singing,

“Good news and great joy!”

So come in, come in! There is room for us here.

Amen.



GATHERING HYMN
"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

Hymn 283

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa-ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.



For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,



in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther. A-men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Loving God, we have heard this story before—the story of a star in the sky and a baby who was laid in a manger. We have heard this story before—passed down in hopeful whispers through the generations. So this night, as we lean our hearts and our ears closer to you, we ask that you would make room in our souls to hear this story again. Make room in us for awe. Make room in us for wonder. Make room for heartache and compassion. Make room in our hearts for you. Pull us into the narrative, that we might hear the truths in this ancient Word as if it were the first time. For we know that you are still speaking. So speak to us again this night. We are listening. We are already making room. **Amen.**



(Please be seated)

MUSICAL REFLECTION

“Ding Dong Merrily on High”

Arr. Douglas Wagner

Word

FIRST READING

Isaiah 9:2-7

²The 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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

GRADUAL HYMN
“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Hymn 289
Verses 1-2

GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-14

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

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!”

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

GRADUAL HYMN
“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Hymn 289
Verse 3

(Please be seated)

SERMON

(Please stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY
“Away in a Manger”

Hymn 278



PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

How does a weary world rejoice? We pray for the church, the world and all in need...

Each petition concludes:

God who is with us,

Hear our prayer.

...For this, we are your faithful and grateful people, **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

(Please be seated)

MUSICAL OFFERING

“Donkey Carol”

John Rutter

*Donkey riding over the bumpy road
Carry Mary, all with her heavy load;
Follow Joseph, leading you on your way
Until you find a stable, somewhere to rest and stay.
Donkey riding over the bumpy road
Carry Mary, all with her heavy load;*

*Donkey watching over the Jesus child,
See the baby, all with his mother mild;
Hear the angels singing their song on high:
'Nowell, nowell, nowell,' their caroling fills the sky.
Donkey watching over the Jesus child,
See the baby, all with his mother mild;*

*Donkey resting all in a manger stall,
With the oxen worship the Lord of all.
Hush, he lies asleep on his bed of hay
While Mary sings so sweetly 'Lulla, lullalay,'
Donkey resting all in a manger stall,
With the oxen worship the Lord of all.*

*Donkey skip for joy as you go your way;
Alleluia, Jesus is born today.
Hark, the bells ring out with their message clear:
Rejoice and sing that Christ our Savior divine is here.
Donkey skip for joy as you go your way;
Alleluia, Christ is born today.*

-John Rutter

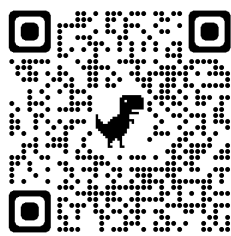
Meal

(Please stand)

PRESENTATION HYMN

“On Christmas Night”

Hymn 274
Stanzas 1-2



This year's Christmas appeal is for the ministry of the Central Restoration Center. There are offering envelopes available at the sanctuary doors for your special Christmas offering. You can also use this QR code to make an online gift for this remarkable, shared ministry by choosing "Restoration Ctr" in the Fund line.



GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right...and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.

Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
 in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Holy God, we have been waiting a long time for this night...
 ...so that no matter where we go we might trust the angels' song when they say, "Be not afraid," and, "Joy to the world!"
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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.

All are invited to receive these
gifts of God.

Children are welcome to
come forward and receive
communion or a blessing.

(Please be seated)

COMMUNION

“To Thee My Heart I Offer”

Elaine Hagenberg

To Thee my heart I offer, O Christ-child sweet and dear;

Upon Thy love relying, be Thou ever near.

O take my heart and give me Thine and it may be forever mine,

O Jesus, holy, undefiled, My Savior meek and mild.

What brought Thee to the manger, O Christ-child sweet and dear?

Thy love for me a stranger, be Thou ever near.

O Lord how great Thy perfect Love, that reaches from the heavens above.

Thy love for us, by sin defiled, That made Thee, God, a child.

Let me be Thine forever, O Christ-child sweet and dear;

Uphold me with Thy mercy, be Thou ever near.

Thy hand bestows Thy gifts to me and all I have, I offer Thee!

My heart, my soul, and all I own; Let these be Thine alone.

“Love Came Down at Christmas”

Arr. Arnold Sherman

“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”

Hymn 282

(Please stand)

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

And now may the body and blood of our lord Jesus Christ strengthen
you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

POST-COMMUNION HYMN

Hymn 267

“Joy to the World”

Sending

BENEDICTION

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.




CAROL BY CANDLELIGHT

Hymn 281


“Silent Night, Holy Night!”

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

**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.**

(Please extinguish your candle)

DISMISSAL

Go rejoicing. Christ is born!
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

“Silent Night”

Arr. John Vettel

Serving Today

Pastor Peter Nycklemoe	<i>preacher</i>
Pastor Melissa Pohlman	<i>presider</i>
Pastor Stephanie Friesen	<i>hospitality</i>
Jeff Block	<i>assisting minister</i>
Sara Masters	<i>reader</i>
Jack Friesen	<i>crucifer</i>
Central Choir	<i>ensembles</i>
Bell Choir	
Joe Osowski	<i>interim choir director</i>
Marilyn Wahlstrom	<i>interim bell choir director</i>
Tim Short	<i>carillonneur</i>
Isaac Drewes	<i>organist</i>
Andrea Sieber	<i>violinists</i>
Derick Rehurek	
John Vettel	<i>violist</i>
Veronica Hudacek	<i>cellist</i>
Mark Kieffer	<i>video/sound</i>

Thanks to:

Sacristans, Usher, Hospitality Ministry, and Décor Teams.

Chancel flowers this week are given in memory or honor of loved ones by various donors. See the *Spirit* for more information.

If you wish to donate flowers, please contact Judy Korogi at 612-788-1288.

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Christmas Eve | How does a weary world rejoice?
We make room



Surrogacy

by Hannah Garrity

Inspired by Luke 2:1-20

Oil paint, charcoal, and copper leaf on canvas

Dr. Christena Cleveland published a book in 2023 called, *God is a Black Woman*.⁵ In it, she shares her powerful testimony describing her journey to meet the Black Madonnas carved centuries ago from lava rock. This resonates with my lifelong yearning for Mother God.

Male language for God has always been a wall to my ability to connect in worship. Now, it is a wall that I break through every week—changing words, rewriting liturgy in the moment, saying “Mother” where “Father” is printed, trying “Lady” where “Lord” is printed. In this case, “Yahweh” is actually best. Who are we to squash God into patriarchy so perpetually?

But when someone else joins me in this necessary work, that is when the barrier is removed. I hear it sometimes: “She,” “Mother.” Almost

always, the liturgist feels the need to explain themselves. In liturgy discussion, gaslighting is common. “We should be more inclusive.” All of a sudden?

Recently, I was standing at The Dwelling at Richmond Hill.⁶ The former slave quarters are open and offered for visitation. After our tour, the idea that one should remove their shoes before entering this holy haven came up. Our tour group was all white people and we discussed this idea from a theoretical standpoint. But earlier, before we entered, I felt it. I was holding a seltzer water can from lunch and felt incredibly rude entering the space with it, so, without understanding, I backtracked and placed my purse and the can outside. I knew not why. After the tour, in our discussion about shoes, our white tour guide mentioned that Black members of the staff felt a great reverence, a holy presence at The Dwelling. The space held the presence of God; it was like entering a sanctuary.

I remember the same feeling when I was young, touring the slave quarters at Monticello.⁷ But now, listening to the Richmond Hill staff testimony, I understood these spaces in a new way, with a reverence for the God-like presence of the Black mother in the depths of oppression.

“Listen to Black women.” This cry has become a mantra over the last few years. I saw in that moment what Cleveland so eloquently explains in her book. In the pigmentocracy we inhabit, the Black mother is the closest figure to God, and “whitemalegod” is the very farthest. He promotes oppression; She is the savior of the most oppressed. And so I listen.

In this painting, Black Mother God has asked her daughter Mary to hold the role of surrogate for the pregnancy of infant Creator. Mary has carried the child to term. She has given birth. God embraces Mary as well as the Holy Infant in gratitude. For without Mary’s surrogacy, the incarnation could not be. —Hannah Garrity

⁵ *God is a Black Woman*, by Christena Cleveland. (New York: HarperOne, 2022).

⁶ Richmond Hill is an ecumenical fellowship, residence and urban retreat center in Richmond, VA. On its campus lie the remains of a historic enslaved dwelling. The remains are currently undergoing restoration efforts in order to become a place of learning, reflection, and prayer. Learn more here: richmond.com/opinion/columnists/williams-richmond-hill-seeks-to-uncover-buried-truths-of-enslavement-at-its-site-a/article_7b21c63f-3e00-5c86-9e2d-0197ab4deee1.html

⁷ Monticello, VA, was the primary plantation of Thomas Jefferson, a Founding Father and the third president of the United States.



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MINNEAPOLIS

An Everyday Church for Everyone

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