

Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24, 2023
3 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

“There’s a Voice in the Wilderness Crying”

Henry Hugh Bancroft,
arr. Craig Philips

*There’s a voice in the wilderness crying, a call from the ways untrod:
prepare in the desert a highway, a highway for our God!
the valleys shall be exalted, the lofty hills brought low;
make straight all the crooked places where the Lord our God may go!*

*O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up to the heights and sing!
Proclaim to a desolate people the coming of their King.
Like the flowers of the field they perish, like grass our works decay,
the power and pomp of nations shall pass like a dream away;*

*but the word of our God endureth, the arm of the Lord is strong;
he stands in the midst of nations, and he will right the wrong.
He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, the lambs he’ll gently hold;
to pastures of peace he’ll lead them, and bring them safe to his fold.*

-James Lewis Milligan, 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.

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)

Word

CHILDREN'S TIME

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

Luke 2:1-14



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!”

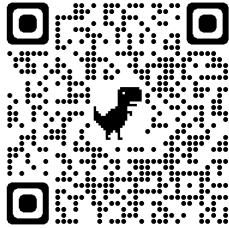
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

GRADUAL HYMN
“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Hymn 289
Verse 3

(Please be seated)

SERMON



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.

**Many African American spirituals and hymns were never credited to their creators or were claimed by other individuals. On weekends when Central uses music or music texts created by people who were kept in chattel slavery, a donation will be made to a Historical Black College and University (HBCU) as a reparation to their descendants. For 2023, Central will be sending donations to Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.*

(Please stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

Hymn 277

"Away in a Manger"

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

"Angel's Carol"

John Rutter

*Have you heard the sound of the angel voices
Ringing out so sweetly, ringing out so clear?
Have you seen the star shining out so brightly
As a sign from God that Christ the Lord is here?
Have you heard the news that they bring from heaven
To the humble shepherds who have waited long?
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels sing their joyful song.*

*He is come in peace in the winter's stillness,
Like a gentle snowfall in the gentle night;
He is come in joy like the sun at morning
Filling all the world with radiance and with light.
He is come in love as the child of Mary;
In a simple stable we have seen his birth:
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Hear the angels singing 'Peace on earth'.*

-John Rutter

Meal

(Please stand)

PRESENTATION HYMN

*Hymn 290

"Go Tell It on the Mountain"



GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also 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.

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.

(Please be seated)

COMMUNION

"O Holy Night"

Adolphe Adam

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining;

It is the night of the dear Savior's birth!

Long lay the world in sin and error pining,

Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,

For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

Fall on your knees, O hear the angel voices!

O night divine, O night when Christ was born!

O night, O holy night, O night divine!

Truly he taught us to love one another

His law is love and His gospel is peace

Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother,

And in His name all oppression shall cease.

Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,

Let all within us praise His holy name.

Christ is the Lord, then ever, ever praise we,

His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim.

His pow'r and glory ever more proclaim.

All are invited to receive these gifts of God.

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

“Tecum Principium” from *Christmas Oratorio* Camille Saith-Saëns

Sung in Latin:

Tecum principium in die virtutis tuae

Tecum principium in splendoribus sanctorum

-*Psalm 110:3*

Translation:

With you, from the beginning, in the day of power

With you, from the beginning, in the splendor of the saints.

“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”

Hymn 282

“I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve”

Hymn 271

(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

Optional blessing during postlude:

On this Christmas Eve, you are invited to receive a blessing during the postlude and before you depart. Pastors will be at three blessing stations. One station will be at the baptismal font. The other two stations will be on either side of the chancel on the floor.

Serving Today

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Pastor Peter Nycklemoe | <i>preacher</i> |
| Pastor Stephanie Friesen | <i>presider</i> |
| Pastor Melissa Pohlman | <i>hospitality</i> |
| Sam Friesen | <i>assisting minister</i> |
| Hannah Brenke | <i>reader</i> |
| Michael Acuña Dee | <i>crucifer</i> |
| Section Leaders | <i>ensembles</i> |
| Choristers | |
| Tim Short | <i>carillonneur/organist</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.

Portions of the liturgy are from SundaysandSeasons.com

© 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress liturgies license #26515.

Hymns reproduced under OneLicense A-704051.

Portions of the liturgy are from A Sanctified Art

© 2023 A Sanctified Art LLC. All rights reserved.

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.



Central Lutheran
MINNEAPOLIS

An Everyday Church for Everyone

Central Lutheran
333 South 12th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55404

(612) 870-4416 | info@centralmpls.org