

Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 24, 2025
10:30 p.m. Eucharist



You are welcome. No exceptions.

Central Lutheran Church experiences God's expansive love and strives to share it abundantly. We affirm all people without regard to age, race, biological sex, housing status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, immigration, refugee or migration status, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, and physical or mental health or ability.

All are a part of God's family, created in God's image.

We strive to practice radical hospitality with all people and work toward racial equity. Everyone is invited to immerse themselves in the life of this community of faith as we explore the promise of God for all.

Worship



Bold print indicates responses spoken by all.



Congregational hymns are found printed in this bulletin or in the red hymnal, Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW).



You are encouraged to listen to your body and stand or remain seated at any point in the service.



Masks are welcome, but not required.



Children are welcome and celebrated in worship. During Children's Time, the children receive a Christmas Eve activity along with a glow stick to hold in place of a real candle during Silent Night. Many families sit near the children's tables next to the baptismal font, but you are welcome to sit anywhere in the sanctuary.



All are welcome to receive communion at Central. At the ushers' invitation, you will proceed toward the altar where there are regular and gluten-free wafers served with wine or grape juice. Your server will offer bread and wine for all, including children. If you prefer that your child receive a blessing rather than communion, please let your server know.



Offering can be made online using the QR code in the bulletin or left in the offering plates just outside the sanctuary doors.



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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America | www.elca.org
Align Minneapolis | www.alignmpls.org
ReconcilingWorks | www.reconcilingworks.org





PRELUDE

“My Song in the Night”

Elaine Hagenberg

*O Jesus my Savior, my song in the night,
Come to us with Thy tender love, my soul's delight.
Unto Thee, O Lord, in affliction I call,
My comfort by day, and my song in the night.*

*O why should I wander, a stranger from Thee,
Or cry in the desert, Thy face to see?
My comfort and joy, my soul's delight,
O Jesus my Savior, my song in the night.*

-Traditional American Folk Hymn

“Sweet Was the Song”

Arr. René Clausen

*Sweet was the song that Mary sang, when she to Bethlehem came,
And was delivered of a Son, Christ Jesus was his name.
Sing lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby.*

*Sweet little baby, Jesus child, how still and peacefully you lie,
How could know your Father's will, Christ Jesus born to die.
Sing lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby.*

- Verse 1 – Traditional English Carol;
Verse 2 – Frankie Clausen

Jean Langlais (1907-1991)
was an influential French
composer and organist.

Blind from 2 years old, he
attended school at the National
Institute for Blind Children
in Paris, where he began
his organ studies and would
later return to teach. He
continued his studies at the
Paris Conservatoire. He was
the Titular Organist of Sainte-
Clotilde, following in the
footsteps of César Franck and
Charles Tournemire.

“The Nativity” is a tone poem,
meaning that the music seeks
to evoke a scene or narrative.

In this case, the music is in
four distinct sections, each
focusing on different subjects:
the creche, the angels, the
shepherds, and the holy family.

The composer writes the
following program (translated
from French):

“In a humble manger, on
a gentle night, Mary and
Joseph wait for the birth of
Christ the Lord. The child
being born, the heavenly host,
in a gracious apparition,
announces to the shepherds
the event in Bethlehem. The
shepherds, having come to the
manger, offer their most tender
melodies to the infant Jesus as
a sign of adoration. Then, the
holy family finds calm in the
peace of the Savior.”

“Love Came Down at Christmas”

Arr. Jason Krug

“The Nativity” from *Evangelical Poems*

Jean Langlais

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

Gathering

OPENING SENTENCES

The sky began at the shepherd's feet
And rose to the calming blue.
Blue of Clarity

Color of Mary

Blue of compassion

Midnight blue of possibility

Waiting.

Blue curtain of the night's tabernacle

Waiting for divinity

Out of the blue

A cloven sky

Blue and gold and startling white

Chords, clusters,

Sounds, songs,

Layer upon layer

Celestial polyphony.

**The night stars
with myriad voices
gathered.**

**The night stars
with riveting light
welcomed.**

With arc of golden wing
With scintilla of holiness
the night stars
sang with light
the coming
of their brother,
the bright
and Morningstar.



GATHERING HYMN

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

Hymn 283

Stanza 2 sung in harmony

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

1st time: leader
2nd time: All

(Organ)

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.

1st time: leader
2nd time: All

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 -

*1st time: leader
2nd time: all*

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.

O Holy One, heavenly angels spoke to earthly shepherds and eternity entered time in the child of Bethlehem. Through the telling of the Christmas story, let our temporal lives be caught up in the eternal in that same child, that we might join shepherds and all the heavenly host in praising the coming of Jesus Christ, our Savior who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

(Please be seated)

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)

GOSPEL HYMN

“Angels from the Realms of Glory”

Hymn 275

Verses 1 and 2

(Verses 3-4 sung after the reading)

GOSPEL

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

Luke 2:1-20

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!”

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL HYMN

“Angels from the Realms of Glory”

Hymn 275

Verses 3 and 4

(Please be seated)

SERMON

(Please stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Once in Royal David’s City”

Hymn 269

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

With the angels of heaven we proclaim your glory, O God. As the radiance of your presence lights up the heavens, we pray for enlightenment for your church on behalf of the whole world.

Each petition concludes:

God who is with us,

Receive our prayer.

Grant that, through our prayers, our lives may radiate the presence of Christ to all who dwell on earth, for he is our Lord for ever and ever.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

(Please be seated)



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 Center" in the Fund line.

MUSICAL OFFERING

"God's Mother Be"

Matthew Culloton

I sing of a maiden that is Makeles; King of all Kings to her son she chose. He came all so still where his mother was, as dew in April that falleth on the grass.

He came all so still to his mother's bow'r, as dew in April that falleth on the flower.

He came so still where his mother lay. As dew in April that falleth on the spray.

Mother and maiden was never none but she; well may such a lady, God's Mother be.

Meal

(Please stand)

PRESENTATION HYMN

"I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve"

Hymn 271

Stanzas 1, 2, and 5

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.

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

As the shadows lengthen, we bless you, sheltering God...



When the petition concludes:

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

...be all glory, all honor, all praise this night unto the coming dawn, now and forever. **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)

*All are invited to receive these
gifts of God.*

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

COMMUNION

“Lamb of God”

A musical score for 'Lamb of God' in G major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The score consists of five staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The lyrics are integrated into the music, appearing below the notes. The lyrics are: 'Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.'

“My Lord Has Come”

Will Todd

Shepherds, called by angels, called by love and angels:

No place for them but a stable.

My Lord has come.

Sages, searching for stars, searching for love in heaven;

No place for them but a stable.

My Lord has come.

His love will hold me, his love will cherish me, love will cradle me.

Lead me, lead me to see him, sages and shepherds and angels;

No place for me but a stable.

My Lord has come.

“On This Day, Earth Shall Ring”

Arr. Cathy Moklebust

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

Hymn 276

(Please stand)

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

God of joy and exultation, may this meal now strengthen what is weak; heal what is broken and give hope to those who live in fear. Look upon our needs this day. Deepen our gratitude, keep us faithful in your service and inspire our songs of peace and goodwill. In the name of the Child born this night, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Sending

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)

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.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, sing gloria in excelsis Deo, Christ is born!

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Improvisation on the Gregorian Chant “Puer Natus Est”

Translation of chant from Latin:

A child is born to us,

and a Son is given to us:

Whose government is upon His shoulder:

and his name shall be called, the angel of great counsel.

Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle:

who has done wonderful things.

-From Isaiah 9 and Psalm 98

“Puer natus est” is a
Gregorian chant for Christmas
Day. In the Roman mass, it
is the introit, meaning that it
begins the service.

Serving Today

Pastor Peter Nycklemoe	<i>preacher</i>
Pastor Melissa Pohlman	<i>presider</i>
Tom Edelen	<i>assisting minister</i>
Pat Hansen	<i>reader</i>
Bell Choir	<i>ensembles</i>
Central Choir	
Joe Osowski	<i>choir director</i>
Isaac Drewes	<i>organist/bell choir director</i>
Tim Short	<i>carillonneur</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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Opening Sentences: Susan Palo Cherwien, "Crossings: Meditations for Worship"

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