

St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church



Nativity of our Lord, Christmas Eve December 24, 2025

As on the first day of creation, on this Christmas Day the Word illuminates the world, shining forth to bring all things into being. Today we celebrate the incarnate Word, God becoming flesh to live among us in the person of Jesus Christ then and now. Emboldened by the good news of Christ's birth, along with the shepherds, Mary and Joseph, and all witnesses to the light of Christ, we declare to the world that we have indeed seen and been transformed by the arrival of "the salvation of our God." O come, let us adore!

† *Congregation stands as able*

GATHERING

Prelude

Children's Presentation

“Ave Maria”

“The Holly And The Ivy”

Lisa Pettit
Handbell Choir



P: In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbors.

P: Most merciful God,

C: **we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P: In the mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you, the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

ELW #283

Kyrie

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Gloria

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Prayer of the Day:

P. Let us pray,

All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C. **Amen.**

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

First Reading

Isaiah 62:6-12

⁶ Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have posted sentinels; all day and all night they shall never be silent. You who remind the ⁷ LORD, take no rest, and give

him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it renowned throughout the earth.⁸ The LORD has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink the wine for which you have labored,⁹ but those who harvest it shall eat it and praise the LORD, and those who gather it shall drink it in my holy courts.¹⁰ Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway; clear it of stones; lift up an ensign over the peoples.¹¹ The LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to daughter Zion, "Look, your savior comes; his reward is with him and his recompense before him."¹² They shall be called, "The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD," and you shall be called, "Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken."

L: The word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 97

Tone 9

¹ The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice;
 let the multitude of the isles be glad.

² **Clouds and darkness sur-round the LORD,**
 righteousness and justice are the foundations of God's throne.

³ Fire goes be-fore the LORD,
 burning up enemies on every side.

⁴ **Lightnings light up the world;**
 the earth sees and trembles.

⁵ The mountains melt like wax
 before the Lord of all the earth.

⁶ **The heavens declare your righteousness,** O LORD,
 and all the peoples see your glory.

⁷ Confounded be all who worship carved images and delight in false gods!
 Bow down before the LORD, all you gods.

⁸ **Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Ju-dah rejoice,**
 because of your judgments, O LORD.

⁹ For you are the LORD, most high over all the earth;
 you are exalted far above all gods.

¹⁰ **You who love the LORD, hate evil!**
 God guards the lives of the saints and rescues them from the hand of the wicked.

¹¹ Light dawns for the righteous,
 and joy for the honest of heart.

¹² **Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous,**
 and give thanks to God's holy name.

Second Reading

Titus 3:4-7

⁴ When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,⁵ he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.⁶ This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

L: The word of the Lord
C: **Thanks be to God.**

Special Music

“Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella”

Handbell Choir



Gospel Acclamation

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Gospel

Luke 2:1-14

P: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And 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 in the guest room. ⁸ Now in that same 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!”

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

“Born to Save Us”

Reverend Taylor Burton Edwards



Hymn of the Day "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

ELW #270

Nicene Creed

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,
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.**

You may sit, stand or kneel for the prayers.

Prayers of Intercession

A: 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.

A: The Word becomes flesh and dwells among us, bringing life, love, and joy to a weary world. Gracious God, use our lips and our lives to proclaim the good news of your coming. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: The earth rejoices and the coastlands are glad on the day of your birth. Bring life to barren wastelands, healing where we have caused harm, and bold hearts to respond to creation's call for justice. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Righteousness and justice are your foundation, O Holy One. Fill world leaders with your zeal for righteousness and your love for any who are marginalized and oppressed. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: The heavens proclaim your glory and announce that we have been made your own people. Keep watch over all who are spending this holy day alone, alienated, or ill. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: Light dawns for the righteous and joy visits the upright in heart. Fortify us with your grace and fill us with zeal to proclaim the news of your birth to those who long for love. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: For all those who have asked us to pray for them....Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

A: From the nurturing darkness of the womb to the tender night of the tomb, you enfold us in your love. We remember with affection those who have died and now rest in your eternal embrace. Hear us, O God.

C: **Your mercy is great.**

P: With 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.**

MEAL

Anthem

“Baby in a Manger”

Choir

The gifts may be brought forward.

Offering Prayer

A: God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior.

C: **Amen.**

 Great Thanksgiving Page 161

Holy, Holy, Holy Page 162

Lord's Prayer “Our Father, who...” Page 163

Lamb of God Page 164

Communion

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Each person may respond, Amen.

Table Blessing

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

C: Amen.

Prayer after Communion

A: Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

C: Amen.

Candles will be lit

Hymn *“Silent Night, Holy Night”* **ELW #281**

Candles may be extinguished

SENDING

Blessing

Special Music *“God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”* Handbell Choir

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Christ is born!

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Playing on handbells that were refurbished this past summer are:

Aidan Gardner
Jaxson Gardner
Shannon Gardner
Cecil McGouirk
Liz McGouirk-Assistant Director
Anna Mion
Toni Mion
Sandra Nearhoof-Director



CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCES - 2025

IN MEMORY OF:

Patricia Bonaker given by Dave & Matt Bonaker

Boyd Lester given by Randy & Sandy Craven

Clarence & Jean Gates and Joseph & Myrie Shediack
given by Jeff & Nancy Gates

Our Parents given by Raymond Lawton & Terri Niederhammer

Robert & Elsie McGourk, Herman & Dorothy Hoffman, and Ralph & Ruth Griffin given by Cecil & Liz McGourk

Scott Miller given by Marga Miller



Louie Niederhammer given by Terri Niederhammer

Mike Regnier given by Geri Regnier

Diana Sperry, and Walter & Allena Gardner, Jacob & Rose Sperry
given by Jim and Allena Sperry

Gary Stickles given by Carla Stickles and family

Our Parents given by Ron & Debby Ullman

Ralph & Ella Wallace, and Hazel Dixon given by Bill and Maxine Wallace

Wayne Wiley given by Renate Wiley

IN HONOR OF:

Laura Lester given by Randy & Sandy Craven

Marga Miller given by Raymond Lawton & Terri Niederhammer

Our loving and supportive family given by Mario & Zaiga Mion

Myrna Hoag, Rose Johnson, Lisa Pettit, Catherine Sayers
given by Terri Niederhammer

Our Grandchildren by Ron and Debby Ullman

Ron Dixon given by Bill & Maxine Wallace

