

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025

6:30 p.m.

Prelude

Announcements

Call to Worship

On this holy night, we come,
dazzled and awe-struck,
ready to sing alongside the angels.

On this holy night, we come,
eager and hopeful,
ready to journey alongside the shepherds.

On this holy night, we come,
quietly and tenderly,
ready to worship alongside Mary.

On this holy night, we come,
singing, trusting, believing, proclaiming:
good news is louder than fear.

Let us worship our good news, with-us God.

Call to Confession

Family of faith, on the night of Jesus' birth, a crowd of angels appeared before a group of rag-tag shepherds to tell them the good news. The angels *could* have gone to Herod's house. The angels *could* have sung in the city square. The angels *could* have found the most important, faithful, and powerful to share the good news, but instead they told a group of low-status shepherds. The angels' message was clear: this is *good* news of *great* joy for all people. The good news of this night is for you too—no matter who you are, what you've done or left undone. The angels are singing for you. So join me in the Prayer of Confession. Join me in drawing closer to the God who has already drawn close to us. Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession

God of angel choruses, you hang the stars in the sky, but we do not see them. You fill the night with angelic song, but we do not hear it. You send shepherds to tell the good news, but we do not believe them. You bring love into the world, but we do not seek it. Quiet the fear in us that works to rationalize, minimize, and distract from the good news you put forth into the world. Tune our hearts back to your song. With hope we pray, amen.

Words of Forgiveness

Family of faith, when the angels arrived in the field that night, the shepherds were afraid. But the angels said: "Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good news of great joy for *all* people." This good news is: **love freely given, grace radically extended, welcome always offered, belonging never restricted.** Friends, we are seen, loved, welcomed, forgiven, called, and sent to serve. Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Amen

Advent Candle Lighting

In a fearful world, where do you see the presence of God?

We see God's fingerprints all around us. We see God in the beauty of the stars. We see God in the love of this community. We see God in the dreams we hold for a better world.

You are right. Even in a fearful world, God is here. God is all around us. On this holy night, we light the Christ Candle as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, God's love is all around us.

Light candle.

Thanks be to God for a love like that! Amen.

Gathering Hymn: ELW #283 "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

1. **O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant! O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; come and behold him born the king of angels;**

Refrain: O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

2. **The highest, most holy, light of light eternal, born of a virgin, a mortal he comes; Son of the Father now in flesh appearing! *Refrain:***

3. **Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sin, all ye citizens of heaven above! Gory to God, in the highest; *Refrain:***

4. **Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n! Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; *Refrain:***

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Prayer of the Day

God of yesterday, today and tomorrow, we long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit. We cup our ears to hear the sound of the angel chorus. We turn our eyes toward the sky to see if we can find your star. We lean forward in our seat to see if we can feel your presence in our midst. We long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit, O God. So on this quiet night, on this holy night, on this *joyful* night, reveal yourself to us once more. Speak to us through the music and the children. Speak to us through starlight and candlelight. Speak to us through these ancient words once again. We long to catch a glimpse of you. Amen.

Readings and Psalm

First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

² ^[a]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.

³ You have multiplied exultation; ^[b]
 you have increased its joy;
 they rejoice before you
 as with joy at the harvest,
 as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴ For 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.

⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors
 and all the garments rolled in blood
 shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For 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.

⁷ Great will be his authority, ^[c]
 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.

Psalm: Psalm 96

¹ O sing to the Lord a new song;
 sing to the Lord, all the earth.

² **Sing to the Lord; bless his name;
 tell of his salvation from day to day.**

³ Declare his glory among the nations,
 his marvelous works among all the peoples.

⁴ **For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;
 he is to be revered above all gods.**

⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
 but the Lord made the heavens.

**6 Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.**

⁷ Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

**8 Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts.**

⁹ Worship the Lord in holy splendor;
tremble before him, all the earth.

**10 Say among the nations, "The Lord is king!
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
He will judge the peoples with equity."**

¹¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar and all that fills it;

12 let the field exult and everything in it.

Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

¹³ before the Lord, for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness
and the peoples with his truth.

Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all,^[a] ¹² training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior,^[b] Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ He 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.

Gospel Acclamation

The Holy Gospel according to Luke starting with the 2nd Chapter. **Glory to you O Lord.**

Gospel: Luke 2:1-20

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.^[a]

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,^[b] 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,^[c] praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”^[d]

¹⁵ When 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.”¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child,¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them,¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

The Gospel of our Lord, **Praise to you O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: ELW #296 “*What Child Is This*”

1. **What child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, hast to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!**
2. **Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you; hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!**
3. **So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him. The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him. Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby; joy, joy, the Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!**

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Affirmation of Faith

We have seen the valley.

We have seen a sky without stars.

We have seen the longest night, and *still* we believe.

We believe in a with-us God.

We believe in the hope of tomorrow.

We believe that good news is louder than fear.

We believe this good news is for all people.

So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news.

We will reach for each other.

We will look for God in our midst.

We will sing songs of joy.

We will proclaim: *Unto us, love is born.*

We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love.

So *still*, we believe. Amen.

Sharing of Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you all. **And also with you.**

Prayers of the People

Holy One, tonight is a night for good news. Tonight is a night for candles in the window and joyful music in the air. Tonight is a night for family around the table, and children too excited to sleep. Tonight is a night for Christmas caroling and storytelling. Tonight is a night for *good* news. And we are so grateful for that. We are so grateful for the good-news moments you sprinkle throughout our days. However, we also pray for those, both inside and outside this room, who struggle to hear the good news over the sound of their fear. For despite the joy of this evening, we are well aware that we live in a world with plenty of reasons to be afraid. We are afraid of the divisions that rack our country. We are afraid of messing up our relationships, or losing the ones we love. We are afraid of climate change and of saying the wrong thing. *Add fears that resonate with your community or the week.* Everywhere we look, we have reasons to be afraid. And if we're honest, that fear can cling to us. So tonight, with-us God, we ask for your presence among us. So just like the shepherds on that first Christmas, may we hear the voice of angels. May you fill our hearts with a holy hope. And may we know, deep in our bones, that your good news *is* louder than fear. And until the day when every reason to be afraid has been washed away, we ask that you would continue to inspire courage, conviction, and hope in us. Point our hearts toward sources of joy. Remind us of the good news of this night, and may we always hold onto some portion of the wonder, the mystery, and the joy found here. With hope, we lift our voices together. Amen

Offering and Offertory Hymn: ELW #253 "He Came Down"

- 1. He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.**

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Offering Prayer

God of healing and hope, you bless those who are hungry, promising to fill them with good things. Fulfill that promise through us and these your gifts. Nourish us with the abundance of your feast and unite us into the blessed body of Jesus Christ our Savior, now and forever. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

With-us God, We live in a fearful world. If we're honest, we come to this Table today with the taste of fear on our tongues. We come to this Table carrying our anxiety. We come to this Table asking for guidance. We come to this Table with all of life's "what-ifs."

But you do not disregard our fear. You do not brush it under the rug or call us foolish. You do not ignore the realities in front of us. You do not dish out hurtful platitudes, telling us to "toughen up" or "power through." Instead, you meet us here. You listen to our fears. You remind us that we are not alone. You surround us with people who love us. You show us where we are strong. You walk beside us. So today we pray, gracious God: replace the fear on our tongues with these words of hope:

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

As we come to this Table, pour out your Spirit on this bread and cup. Remind us that even in a fearful world, you are on the move. Remind us that even in a fearful world, you are here, inviting us to the Table, nourishing our spirits, reminding us that we belong, calling us by name.

Instill that good news in us, for this is a joyful feast. Fear is not the loudest voice today. What a gift that is. Now with hope for a better tomorrow, we join our voices together to pray the prayer your son taught us to pray, saying. . .

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to the Table

Friends, did you ever have a moment growing up when you walked into the school cafeteria, panned the faces in the crowd, and wondered if you were going to have a place to sit? Did you ever have a moment, maybe as a new student or at the start of a new school year, when fear nibbled at the back of your mind because you weren't sure where you belonged? I imagine, at some point or another, most of us have experienced that kind of fear. But here at this Table, you never have to wonder. Here at this Table, there is enough room, enough food, enough love for everyone. Here at this Table, Jesus is standing up on his chair, waving his hands over his head, saying to each of you, "I saved you a seat!" Here at this Table, you are wanted and welcomed. You are safe and loved. Here at this Table, you belong. So my friends, there is no need for fear here, for this is a joyful feast. And you are invited. Come. All are welcome.

Distribution Hymn: ELW #267 "Joy to the World"

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.
2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found far as, far as far as the curse is found.
4. He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonder, wonders of his love.

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Prayer after Communion

Loving God, In a world racked with fear, you gather us together. You set the table. You meet us here. You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits. You remind us that this is a joyful feast, and that fear cannot win every time. So with renewed courage, with renewed hope, with renewed conviction, send us out into the world. Help us to feed others as you have fed us. With gratitude we pray, amen.

Benediction

In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit. May you reach for each other's hands. May you choose courage whenever you can. And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear. In the name of the one who calls, the one who sends, and the one who journeys with—go in peace and *be not afraid*. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: ELW #290 "Go Tell It On A Mountain"

Refrain: **Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere; go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

1. While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night, behold, through-out the heavens there shone a holy light. *Refrain:*
2. The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain:*
3. Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born; and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain:*

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Dismissal

Go in peace. Do not fear.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

 **Prayers:** Please continue to keep our members and loved ones in your prayers, including Arlen, Lan-Shiang, Deb, Ruth, Barry, Monica, Dennis, Nathan, Sue and Donna Richards, the family of Beverly Devoe and the Hruska family.

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