

The Nativity of Our Lord:  
Christmas Day  
December 25, 2020  
A Joint Service of



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*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!*

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GATHERING

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GATHERING MUSIC

*Carols of Christmas*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CAROL

*"Joy To the World"*

**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.**

**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 the sounding joy.**

**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 the curse is found.**

**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 wonders, wonders of his love.**

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1872

Tune: *Antioch*; 18<sup>th</sup> Century English Melody

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CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

☞ Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, Love from the beginning, Word made flesh,  
Breath of heaven.

☞ **Amen.**

☞ Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

☞ Merciful God:

☞ **We confess that we are not perfect. We have said and done things we regret. We have tried to earn your redeeming grace, while denying it to others. We have resisted your call to be your voice in the world. Forgive us, loving God. Give us your righteousness, the strength to put aside our failures, and the courage to try again. Amen.**

☐ Dear people of God, hear the good news: Christ the Savior is born! You are loved and forgiven in the name of † Jesus, who has come among us. You are freed from proving that you deserve to be loved, because God’s love is given to you as the most precious gift of all. Rejoice in this love and share it with the world.

☑ Amen.

## CAROL OF PRAISE

*“Angels We Have Heard on High”*

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.**

*Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.*

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song? Refrain**

**Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king. Refrain**

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864

Tune: *Gloria*; French carol, arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1887-1958

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

☐ The Lord be with you.

☑ **And also with you.**

☐ Let us pray. Almighty God, you gave us your only Son to take on our human nature and to illumine the world with your light. By your grace adopt us as your children and enlighten us with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

☑ Amen

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## WORD

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### FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 52.7-10

*A messenger races home to Jerusalem with the marvelous words: “Your God reigns!” In comforting the people, God proves to be the best brother or sister (redeemer) they have ever known. Everyone will witness the salvation of God.*

<sup>7</sup>How beautiful upon the mountains  
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,  
who brings good news,  
who announces salvation,  
who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

<sup>8</sup>Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,  
together they sing for joy;  
for in plain sight they see  
the return of the LORD to Zion.

<sup>9</sup>Break forth together into singing,  
you ruins of Jerusalem;  
for the LORD has comforted his people,  
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD has bared his holy arm  
before the eyes of all the nations;  
and all the ends of the earth shall see  
the salvation of our God.

℣ The word of the Lord.

✠ Thanks be to God.

## PSALM 98

*Read in unison*

<sup>1</sup>Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done marvelous things,  
whose right hand and holy arm have won the victory.

<sup>2</sup>O LORD, you have made known your victory,  
you have revealed your righteousness in the sight of the nations.

<sup>3</sup>You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel;  
all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

<sup>4</sup>Shout with joy to the LORD, all you lands;  
lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.

<sup>5</sup>Sing to the LORD with the harp,  
with the harp and the voice of song.

<sup>6</sup>With trumpets and the sound of the horn  
shout with joy before the king, the LORD.

<sup>7</sup>Let the sea roar, and all that fills it,  
the world and those who dwell therein.

<sup>8</sup>Let the rivers clap their hands,  
and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD,  
who comes to judge the earth.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD will judge the world with righteousness  
and the peoples with equity.

## SECOND LESSON: Hebrews 1.1-9

*This letter opens with a lofty declaration of Jesus' preeminent status as the Son through whom God created the world and through whom our sins are cleansed. God speaks to us now through the Son, who is exalted even above the angels.*

<sup>1</sup>Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. <sup>3</sup>He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup>having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

<sup>5</sup>For to which of the angels did God ever say,  
"You are my Son;  
today I have begotten you"?

Or again,

"I will be his Father,  
and he will be my Son"?

<sup>6</sup>And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

"Let all God's angels worship him."

<sup>7</sup>Of the angels he says,

"He makes his angels winds,  
and his servants flames of fire."

<sup>8</sup>But of the Son he says,

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,  
and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom.

<sup>9</sup>You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;  
therefore God, your God, has anointed you  
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

📖 The word of the Lord.

🙏 Thanks be to God.

CAROL

*"Go Tell It On the Mountain"*

*Refrain*

**Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *Refrain***

**The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. Refrain**

**Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;  
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. Refrain**

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt.

Tune: *Go Tell It*; African American spiritual

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### **HOLY GOSPEL: John 1.1-14**

*The prologue to the Gospel of John describes Jesus as the Word of God made flesh, the one who reveals God to be "full of grace and truth."*

📖 The Holy Gospel according to John, the first chapter.

🎵 **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

📖 The Gospel of the Lord.

🎵 **Praise to you, O Christ!**

**SERMON**

*The Rev. Noah H. Evans*

**CAROL**

*"Holy Child Within the Manger"*

1 Ho - ly Child with - in the man - ger, long a -  
 2 Once a - gain we tell the sto - ry— how your  
 3 Ho - ly Child with - in the man - ger, lead us

go yet ev - er near; come as friend to ev - 'ry  
 love for us was shown, when the im - age of your  
 ev - er in your way, so we see in ev - 'ry

stran - ger, come as hope for ev - 'ry fear.  
 glo - ry wore an im - age like our own.  
 stran - ger how you come to us to - day.

As you lived to heal the bro - ken, greet the  
 Come, en - light - en with your wis - dom, come and  
 In our lives and in our liv - ing give us

out - cast, free the bound, as you taught us love un -  
 fill us with your grace. May the fire of your com -  
 strength to live as you, that our hearts might be for -

spo - ken, teach us now where you are found.  
 pas - sion kin - dle ev - 'ry land and race.  
 giv - ing and our spir - its strong and true.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950  
 Music: JOYOUS LIGHT, Marty Haugen, b. 1950

## NICENE CREED

☐ With the whole church, let us confess our faith in the words of the 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 and the Son, 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.

## THE PRAYERS

- ☒** Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

- ☒** God of glory, you bring your word to birth among us. As you spoke through prophets and ancestors, empower your church to proclaim your name with boldness and tenderness, that your salvation is revealed to all the ends of the earth. *(pause)* Hear us, O God.

- ☒ Your compassion is everlasting.**

- ☒** You fashioned the earth and the heavens are the work of your hands. Protect the beauty of mountains and valleys. Save glaciers, tundra, and arctic lands from the threat of changing climates. Sustain all things by your powerful word. *(pause)* Hear us, O God.

- ☒ Your compassion is everlasting.**

- ☒** You send messengers to announce peace. Build trust among nations. Strengthen relationships that reach beyond borders. Grant safety to ambassadors, relief workers, military personnel, and health care providers who travel across the world. Reveal your restoration through their work. *(pause)* Hear us, O God.

- ☒ Your compassion is everlasting.**



**A** You bring hope to all people. Bring wholeness to all who long for your comfort and companionship. Revive aching spirits and restore tired bodies. Bring healing and wholeness to all people, especially those afflicted with Covid-19 and those who care for them. Send your Holy Spirit to all who seek the peace of God's love, especially [*Names from the Saint John and Saint Paul's prayers*] and those we name now either silently or aloud. (*pause*) Hear us, O God.

**C** **Your compassion is everlasting.**

**A** You are the fullness of grace and truth. Bless ministries of generosity in our congregations and communities. Open our doors in welcome, extend our tables to guests, and send us out with provisions for those who lack food, water, shelter, clothing, or companionship. (*pause*) Hear us, O God.

**C** **Your compassion is everlasting.**

**A** Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. Claim us as your children in this life and in the next. Encourage us by the witness of the saints across the ages who have testified to your light and life. (*pause*) Hear us, O God.

**C** **Your compassion is everlasting.**

**A** God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

**C** **Amen.**

## PEACE

**P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C** **And also with you.**

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## MEAL

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## GREAT THANKSGIVING

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**C** **We lift them to the Lord.**

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C** **It is right to give our thanks and praise!**

**P** It is indeed right, our duty and our joy that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name as we say:

**☩ Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

**☩** Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your Word brought light into the world. In the fullness of time, you sent that Word to be born of a woman, to shine in our darkness and to make us your children forever.

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 in 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 in remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, Christ's birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored and reconciled to you.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished in your grace, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Beloved Child, born for us this night.

With Mary and Joseph and your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever.

**☩ Amen**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**☩** Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**☩ 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 COMMUNION

- ☞ Love has come: God's love for all people. Come and eat, for Christ invites you.  
☛ Thanks be to God.

## COMMUNION

### POST-COMMUNION CAROL

**Thank the Lord, his praises voicing for his promised faithfulness!  
All who seek the Lord, rejoicing, tell his love, his name confess  
For he leads us, with thanksgiving in the paths of righteousness.**

**At Your word, Lord, let your servant go in peace, for with my eyes  
I have seen your bright salvation, Israel's light, begin to rise  
As the glory of the nations leading us to paradise.**

Text: Unknown  
Tune: *Regent Square*; Henry T. Smart, 1813-1879  
Public Domain

### POST COMMUNION PRAYER

- ☞ Let us pray. Emmanuel, God with us: You grace us with life and breath and give us bread for the journey. Send us out in service to this world that you love, telling the amazing news of your coming to be Savior and Lord of all.  
☛ Amen.

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## SENDING

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### BLESSING

- ☞ Grace from God's own heart, peace from the Child in the manger, and strength from the Spirit of life be blessings upon you ✝ for you today and forever.  
☛ Amen.

### CAROL

*"The First Noel"*

**The first Noel the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.**

*Refrain: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!*  
**Born is the King of Israel.**

*(The Carol continues on the next page)*

They looked up and saw a star  
shining in the east beyond them far;  
and to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night.

*Refrain:* Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!  
Born is the King of Israel.

And by the light of that same star  
three wise men came from country far;  
to seek for a king was their intent,  
and to follow the star wherever it went. *Refrain*

This star drew near to the northwest,  
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;  
and there it did both stop and stay  
right over the place where Jesus lay. *Refrain*

Then entered in those wise men three,  
full rev'rently upon their knee,  
and offered there in his presence  
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. *Refrain*

Text: English Traditional  
Tune: *The First Nowell*; English Traditional  
Public Domain

## DISMISSAL

- Ⓐ Christ is born! Go tell it on the mountain and everywhere!
- Ⓑ Thanks be to God!



*The officers and staffs of  
Saint John Lutheran  
and  
Saint Paul's Episcopal Churches  
wish you a Blessed Christmas  
and a  
New Year full of the Love and Peace of Our Lord!*

## Serving the Assembly This Morning

**Presiding Minister**

The Rev. Sara Irwin  
*Pastor, Saint John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Carnegie*

**Homilist**

The Rev. Noah H. Evans  
*Rector, Saint Paul's Episcopal Church, Mt. Lebanon*

**Lectors**

Jan Schade  
*Saint John*

Susan Wilcox  
*Saint Paul's*

**Organist**

Jeffrey H. Gray  
*Director of Music and Liturgy, Saint John*