

# THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

December 25th, 2024



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EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
St. Louis, MO  
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## ORDER OF SERVICE

*Stand and face the crucifix as it processes forward.*

### Hymn ----- Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful

CW 55

1. Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,  
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him, Born the King of angels.

#### *Refrain:*

Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

2. God from true God, and Light from Light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, to earth he comes,  
Only begotten Son of God the Father. *Refrain*
3. Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation;  
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above.  
Glory to God, all Glory in the highest. *Refrain*
4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n,  
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing. *Refrain*

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

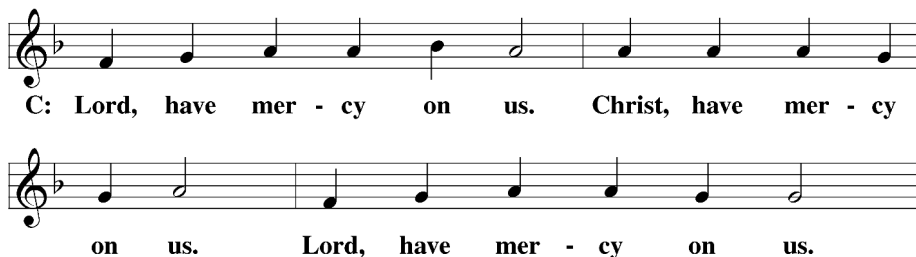


## CONFESSION OF SINS

M: Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

*Lord, Have Mercy*



M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.



## PRAYER AND PRAISE

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

**Hymn ----- Hark the Herald Angels Sing**

CW 61

1. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all you nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies;  
With th' angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

*Refrain:*

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

2. Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail th' incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel! *Refrain*
3. Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, Ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by, Born that we no more may die,  
Born to raise us from the earth, Born to give us second birth. *Refrain*

*Prayer of the Day*

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

M: Let us pray.

Almighty God, grant that the birth of your one and only Son in the flesh  
may set us free from our old bondage under the yoke of sin; through Jesus  
Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one  
God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

*Be seated.*

**Anthem ----- The Bells of Christmas**

Adult Choir

The bells of Christmas ring once more;  
The heav'nly guest is at the door.  
He comes to earthly dwellings still  
With new year gifts of peace, goodwill.  
This world, though wide and far outspread,  
Could scarcely find for him a bed.  
His cradle was a manger stall,  
No pearl nor silk nor kingly hall.

Now let us go with quiet mind,  
The swaddled babe with shepherds find,  
To gaze on him who gladdens them,  
The loveliest flow'r of Jesse's stem.  
Oh join with me, in gladness sing,  
To keep our Christmas with our king,  
Until our song, from loving souls,  
Like rushing mighty water rolls!

O patriarch's Joy, O prophet's Song,  
O Dayspring bright, awaited long,  
O Son of Man, incarnate Word,  
Great David's Son, great David's Lord  
Come Jesus, glorious heav'nly guest,  
And keep your Christmas in our midst;  
Then David's harp-strings, hushed so long,  
Shall swell our jubilee of song!

## THE WORD

### First Lesson ----- Isaiah 9:2-7

The people walking in darkness have seen a great  
light.

For those living in the land of the shadow of  
death, the light has dawned.

You have multiplied the nation. You have in-  
creased its joy.

They rejoice before you like the joy at harvest  
time,

like the celebration when people divide the plun-  
der.

For you have shattered the yoke that burdened  
them.

You have broken the bar on their shoulders and  
the rod of their oppressor,

as you did in the day of Midian.

Every boot that marched in battle  
and the garments rolled in blood will be burned.

They will be fuel for the fire.

For to us a child is born.

To us a son is given.

The authority to rule will rest on his shoulders.

He will be named:

Wonderful Counselor,

Mighty God,

Everlasting Father,

Prince of Peace.

There will be no limit to his authority  
and no end to the peace he brings.

He will rule on David's throne and over his king-  
dom,

to establish it and to uphold it with justice  
and righteousness

from now on, into eternity.

The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish  
this.

### Psalm of the Day ----- Psalm 98

CWS p.53

*Refrain*

**The Word became flesh and lived among us. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done marvelous things.

The LORD has made his salvation known  
and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel;  
all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

*Refrain*

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,  
burst into jubilant song with music;

make music to the LORD with the harp,  
with the harp and the sound of singing.

Shout for joy before the LORD, the King.  
He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son\*  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

*Refrain*

**Second Lesson ----- Hebrews 1:1-12**

In the past, God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets at many times and in many ways. In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of the divine nature. He sustains all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The Son became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say:

You are my Son. Today I have begotten you?

And again:

I will be his Father, and he will be my Son.

And again, when he brought his firstborn into the world, he said:

Let all God's angels worship him.

About the angels he says:

He makes his messengers winds and his ministers flaming fire.

But about the Son he says:

God, your throne is forever and ever,  
and the scepter of righteousness is the  
scepter of your kingdom.

You have loved righteousness and hated  
wickedness.  
Therefore God, your God, has anointed  
you with the oil of joy beyond your  
companions.

And he says:

In the beginning, Lord, you laid the  
foundation of the earth,  
and the heavens are the works of your hands.  
They will perish, but you remain.  
They will all become old like a garment.  
You will roll them up like a robe,  
and they will be changed like a garment.  
But you are the same,  
and your years will never end.

**Verse of the Day ----- Galatians 4:4,5**

M: Alleluia. When the set time had fully come, God sent his Son to be born of a woman, so that he would be born under the law, in order to redeem those under the law. Alleluia.

*Stand.*

*Face the crucifix as it processes to the midst of the congregation.*

**Gospel Procession Hymn ----- Let Us All with Gladsome Voice**

CW 64

1. Let us all with gladsome voice  
Praise the God of heaven,  
Who, to bid our hearts rejoice,  
His own Son has given.
2. To this vale of tears he comes,  
Here to serve in sadness,  
That with him in heav'n's fair homes  
We may reign in gladness.
3. We are rich, for he was poor;  
Is not this a wonder?  
Therefore praise God evermore  
Here on earth and yonder.

*The Gospel Procession is a distinctly Lutheran ceremony that reminds us that God enters the presence of his people. He did this by the incarnation of his Son, and he does this today by making himself present with his grace in his Holy Word.*



4. O Lord Christ, our Savior dear,  
Bless us and be near us.  
Grant us now a glad new year.  
Amen, Jesus, hear us!

**Gospel** ----- **John 1:1-14**

*After the announcement of the Gospel, the congregation sings:*



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made. In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

The real light that shines on everyone was

coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him. He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not accept him. But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

*After the Gospel, the congregation sings:*



*Confession of Faith from the Athanasian Creed*

C: Whoever wishes to be saved must, above all else, hold to the true Christian faith. Now this is the true Christian faith:

We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son,  
is both God and man.

He is God, eternally begotten from the nature of the Father,  
and he is man, born in time from the nature of his mother,  
fully God, fully man,  
with rational soul and human flesh,  
equal to the Father as to his deity,  
less than the Father as to his humanity;

And though he is both God and man, Christ is not two persons but one,  
one, not by changing the deity into flesh,  
but by taking the humanity into God;  
one indeed, not by mixture of the natures,  
but by unity in one person;

For just as the rational soul and flesh are one human being,  
so God and man are one Christ.

He suffered for our salvation,  
descended into hell,  
rose the third day from the dead.

He ascended into heaven,  
is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty,  
and from there will come to judge the living and the dead.

At his coming all people will rise with their own bodies.  
This is the true Christian faith.

*The Gospel procession returns to the chancel.*

*Be seated.*

**Hymn of the Day ----- Once Again My Heart Rejoices**

CW 37

1. Once again my heart rejoices  
As I hear Far and near Sweetest angel voices.  
“Christ is born!” their choirs are singing  
Till the air Ev’rywhere Now with joy is ringing.
2. Hear! The conqueror has spoken:  
“Now the foe, Sin and woe, Death and hell are broken!”  
God is man, man to deliver,  
And the Son Now is one With our blood forever.
3. Should we still fear God’s displeasure,  
Who, to save, Freely gave His most precious treasure?  
To redeem us he has given  
His own Son From the throne Of his might in heaven.
4. God becomes the victim, taking  
Mankind’s place By his grace, Full atonement making.  
For our life his own he tenders,  
And his grace All our race Fit for glory renders.
5. Softly from his lowly manger Jesus calls One and all,  
“You are safe from danger. Children, from the sins that grieve you  
You are freed; All you need  
I will surely give you.”
6. Come, then, banish all your sadness!  
One and all, Great and small, Come with songs of gladness;  
We shall live with him forever  
There on high In that joy Which will vanish never.

**Sermon ----- John 1:1-14**

*Born of God*

Hymn ----- Oh, Rejoice All Christians Loudly

CW 45

1. Oh, rejoice, all Christians, loudly,  
For our joys have now begun; Wondrous things our God has done.  
Tell abroad his goodness proudly,  
Who our race has honored so, That he lives with us below.

*Refrain:*

Joy, oh, joy beyond all gladness,  
Christ has done away with sadness!  
Hence all sorrow and repining, For the Sun of grace is shining!

2. See, my soul, your Savior chooses Poverty and weakness, too;  
In such love he comes to you.  
Neither crib nor cross refuses, All he suffers for your good  
To redeem you by his blood. *Refrain*
3. Lord, how shall I thank you rightly? I am saved eternally  
By your life and death for me.  
Let me not regard you lightly But on you in faith depend,  
Praising you, my heav'nly friend. *Refrain*
4. Jesus, guard and guide your members; Make us children of your grace;  
Hear our prayers in ev'ry place.  
Fan to life faith's glowing embers; Give all Christians far and near  
Holy peace, a glad new year. *Refrain*

*Be seated.*

*Offering*

*Stand.*

Online giving option:

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Offerings support the spread  
of the Gospel here and around the world.

## *Prayer of the Church*

*The minister offers the petitions and the congregation responds with “hear our prayer.”*

- M: Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.
- M: Lord God, heavenly Father, as You have caused Your eternal light to dawn on our darkness in the incarnation of Your only begotten Son, cause His glory to shine on us in the grace and truth of His Word, that we may receive Him with joy and believe in His name. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**
- M: Support all pastors, Lord, in their proclamation of Christ. Be pleased through their work to bring the good news of joy and salvation to all who hear them. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**
- M: Be near to those who suffer persecution for the sake of Your Son. As oppression seeks to quench His light in them, sustain them in the truth that the darkness cannot overcome Him. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**
- M: As our families gather in this holy season, give us patience, that we may be slow to judge and quick to forgive. Comfort the lonely with Your presence, and help us extend the welcome of our homes and the friendship of Your grace. Make us mindful of those less fortunate, who celebrate this blessed feast in poverty and want, and teach us to be generous. Accept with our offerings the living sacrifice of our bodies to Your service and our voices in praise and thanksgiving. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**
- M: Your Son took up our flesh so that He might heal and restore it, according to Your good purposes; let His healing hand be upon the sick and those who suffer in our midst [*especially* \_\_\_\_\_]. Comfort those who grieve this day with the truth that the Babe of Bethlehem was born so that the dead might live. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

M: Grant that we may come worthily to receive the body and blood of Jesus with faith in His bodily presence for us, that we may depart with grace upon grace from His fullness. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

M: Joining in heaven's eternal praise for the revelation of Your love in Your Word made flesh, we boldly lay all our petitions before You, dear Father, trusting that You will hear us for His sake, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

### *Lord's Prayer*

C: 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.

### THE SACRAMENT

M: The Lord be with you.



C: **And al - so with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.



C: **We lift them up un - to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.



C: It is good and right so to do.

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for in the wonder and mystery of his birth you have opened our eyes to the glory of your grace and renewed in our hearts the fervor of your love.

Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

*Holy, Holy, Holy*

*Sanctus*



C: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en - ly hosts:



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san -



na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who



comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san -



### *Words of Institution*

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

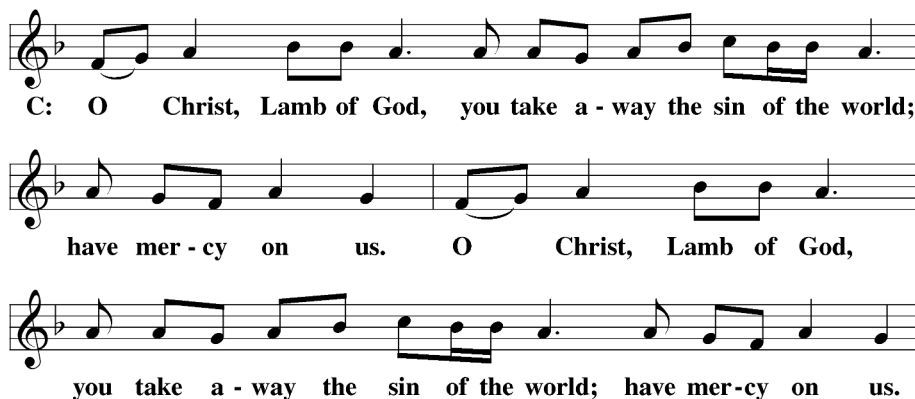
Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.



### *O Christ, Lamb of God*

### *Agnus Dei*







*Be seated.*

#### DISTRIBUTION

*In Holy Communion we believe that Jesus gives us his own body and blood to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of our sins. We ask that, in keeping with God's Word, only confirmed members who are in confessional unity with our church (WELS and ELS) would come forward to receive this sacrament. If you have any questions or are interested in communicant membership, please speak with the pastor.*

*During the distribution, the congregation sings the following hymn:*

#### Hymn ----- From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

CW 38

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. "From heav'n above to earth I come<br/>To bear good news to ev'ry home;<br/>Glad tidings of great joy I bring,<br/>Whereof I now will say and sing:</p>       | <p>4. "He will on you the gifts bestow<br/>Prepared by God for all below,<br/>That in his kingdom, bright and fair,<br/>You may with us his glory share.</p>                          |
| <p>2. "To you this night is born a child<br/>Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;<br/>This little child of lowly birth<br/>Shall be the joy of all the earth.</p>           | <p>5. "These are the signs which you shall mark:<br/>The swaddling clothes and manger dark.<br/>There you will find the infant laid<br/>By whom the heav'ns and earth were made."</p> |
| <p>3. "This is the Christ, our God most high,<br/>Who hears your sad and bitter cry;<br/>He will himself your Savior be<br/>From all your sins to set you free.</p> | <p>6. How glad we'll be to find it so!<br/>Then with the shepherds let us go<br/>To see what God for us has done<br/>In sending us his own dear Son.</p>                              |

7. Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes,  
And see what in the manger lies.  
Who is this child, so young and fair?  
It is the Christchild lying there.

8. Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,  
Through whom the sinful world is blest!  
You came to share my misery  
That you might share your joy with me.

9. Ah, Lord, though you created all,  
How weak you are, so poor and small,  
That you should choose to lay your head  
Where lowly cattle lately fed!

10. Were earth a thousand times as fair  
And set with gold and jewels rare,  
It would be far too poor and small  
A cradle for the Lord of all.

11. Instead of soft and silken stuff  
You have but hay and straw so rough  
On which as King, so rich and great,  
To be enthroned in royal state.

12. And so it pleases you to see  
This simple truth revealed to me:  
That all the world's wealth, honor, might  
Are weak and worthless in your sight.

13. Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,  
Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled  
Within my heart, made clean and new,  
A quiet chamber kept for you.

14. My heart for very joy must leap;  
My lips no more can silence keep.  
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue  
That sweetest ancient cradle song:

15. Glory to God in highest heaven, Who unto us his Son has given!  
While angels sing with pious mirth A glad new year to all the earth.

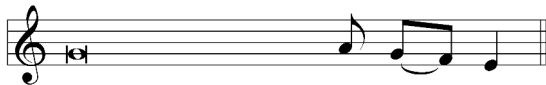
*After the distribution is finished the congregation stands and sings:*

*Now Sing We, Now Rejoice (CW 34)*

**C: 1. Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav'n our voice;  
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;  
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.  
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!**

**4. Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'nly ground?  
Where the angels singing With all his saints unite,  
Sweetest praises bringing In heav'nly joy and light.  
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!**

M: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.



C: And his mercy endures for - ev - er.

M: O God the Father, source of all goodness, in your loving kindness you sent your Son to share our humanity. We thank you that through him you have given us pardon and peace in this sacrament. We also pray that you will not forsake us but will rule our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit so that we willingly serve you day after day, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C: A - men.

### *Blessing*

M: May he who by his incarnation gathered things earthly and heavenly into one, fill us with such joy that comes with the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life. And the blessing of God Almighty – the Father, the Son †, and the Holy Spirit – be upon you and remain with you always.



C: A - men. A - men. A - men.

*Remain standing for the closing hymn and recessional.*

Hymn ----- Joy to the World

CW 62

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 the sounding joy.
3. No more let sins and sorrows 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.
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 wonders, wonders of his love.

*You may be seated after the hymn.*

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