

# HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH



## CHRISTMAS EVE DECEMBER 24, 2025

*In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.*

## Holy Cross Lutheran Church Welcomes ALL!

Holy Cross Lutheran Church joyfully affirms and celebrates that every person is a beloved child of God. We welcome all who are seeking God's boundless love and sustaining grace into full community with us at Holy Cross. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves to breaking down barriers and systems that divide God's children working to be a space committed to racial equality for God's people and to building a community where all are recognized as part of Christ's new creation.



We welcome you, and you are safe with us...  
 Whatever your race, ethnicity, or heritage;  
 Whatever your relationship status;  
 We welcome you, and you are safe with us...

Whatever your sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or gender expression;  
 Whatever your socio-economic status;  
 We welcome you, and you are safe with us...

Whatever your age and life circumstance;  
 Whatever your physical and mental ability.  
 You are a beloved child of God, you are valued, and you are welcome here.

### What to Expect in Worship

Worship services can be intimidating for newcomers. While we try to make worship as accessible as possible for everyone, we know that some aspects can be confusing. Feel free to ask an usher or someone near you for help if you have any questions today. We are happy to help and want all voices to be included in praise to God.

Our worship style is traditional at Holy Cross. A full liturgy is used to focus our praise and prayers to God. Notes are included in the side gutter of the bulletin to explain why we use the various liturgical elements. Communion is celebrated every Sunday at Holy Cross. The table (altar) is not our table, but Christ's table. Just as Christ welcomes all, all are welcome to receive communion at Holy Cross.

Throughout the year we emphasize each liturgical season differently to mark the passage of time. Liturgical texts change to reflect aspects of that season, some elements are removed or added to reflect the mood of that season, and colors used to decorate the chancel are changed to provide visual reminders of the current season.

*There is a hearing-assistance system (induction loop) in the Sanctuary for those with hearing impairments. Please ask an usher for instructions.*

# Holy Cross Lutheran Church

*Transforming the world & ourselves, together in community, fellowship, and faith.*

## Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025 ~ 7 PM



### PRELUDE

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

arr. Christopher Uehlein

*Three Songs of Christmas*

arr. Lani Smith

Marcia Kratzke, piano; Jeremy Shoop, organ

*O Holy Night*

by Adolphe Adam

Kevin Kratzke, voice

*Please stand as you are able.*

*This announcement is not merely a counting of years but reminds us that the incarnation marks a precise moment at which God broke into human history altering history forever.*

### PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Reader:

Today the Twenty-fourth Day of December, unknown ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed humanity in God's own image.

Several thousand years after the flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant.

Twenty-one centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah; thirteen centuries after Moses left the people of Israel out of Egypt.

Eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the Judges; one thousand years from the anointing of David as king; in the sixty-fifth week according to the prophecy of Daniel.

In the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;  
the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the  
foundation of the city of Rome.

The forty-second year of the reign of Octavian  
Augustus; the whole world being at peace.

Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal  
Father, desiring to sanctify the world by his most  
merciful coming, being conceived by the Holy  
Spirit, and nine months having passed since his  
conception, was born in Bethlehem of Judea of  
the Virgin Mary.

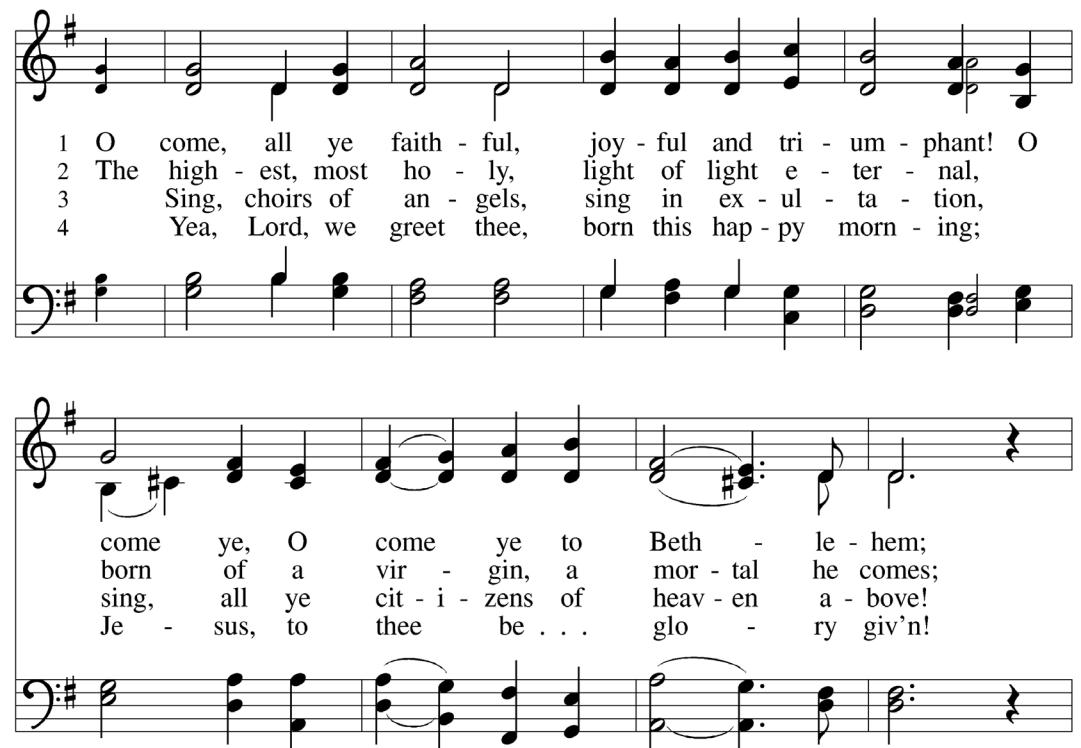
Today is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to the flesh.

*This beloved carol  
gathers us for  
Christmas Eve worship  
with an invitation: to  
come, to behold, and to  
adore. Rooted in an  
18th-century Latin  
hymn, it gathers the  
faithful across  
centuries into a single  
act of praise at the  
manger. As we sing, we  
join angels, shepherds,  
and saints of every age  
in proclaiming the  
mystery of God made  
flesh.*

### GATHERING HYMN

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship #283)

### O Come, All Ye Faithful



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O  
 2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of light e - ter - nal,  
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,  
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
 born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;  
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!  
 Je - sus, to thee be . . . glo - ry giv'n!

come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:  
 Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!  
 Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:  
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing.

*Refrain*

Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,  
 O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,

ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.  
 O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!



Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2  
 Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John Francis Wade



## GREETING

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Assembly: **And also with you.**

*With its soaring melody and jubilant "Gloria," this French carol echoes the song of the angels announcing Christ's birth. The verses tell the story of the shepherds, while the refrain lifts us heavenward in unrestrained praise. On Christmas Eve, this hymn reminds us that joy is not quiet or restrained; it rings out boldly, inviting earth to join heaven in celebration.*

## HYMN OF PRAISE

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship #289)

## Angels We Have Heard on High

1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
 2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun - tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
 What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
 come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.

Refrain

Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo -



Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864  
 Music: GLORIA, French carol; arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1887–1958

*The prayer of the day, particularly appropriate for Christmas Eve, is based on collect #5 in the 7<sup>th</sup> century Gelasian Sacramentary. The time is night, the light is Christ. The prayer moves us through time and into eternity, when we will be wholly in God's light. It is moving to realize that for 1400 years, Christians have prayed this prayer.*

*That the angels in Luke name the child the Messiah, in Greek "Christ," recalls oracles such as Isaiah 9, and Christians have seen in Jesus Christ the ancient promises of a coming king fulfilled. Jesus is "wonderful Counselor and mighty God" among us. Thus Christians hear in this*

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor:

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Assembly:

Amen.

*Please sit.*

## ANTHEM

*The Hills are Bare at Bethlehem*

arr. John McIntyre

Sanctuary Choir



## FIRST READING

Isaiah 9:2-7

*This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!*

Reader:

A reading from the prophet Isaiah:

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation,  
 you have increased its joy;  
 they rejoice before you

*oracle references to  
the triune God.*

as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>4</sup>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.

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

<sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>His 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.

### **ANTHEM**

*Gloria Hodie*

Joyful Ringers

arr. Julie Turner

Reader: Word of God, word of life.  
Assembly: **Thanks be to God.**

### **SECOND READING**

Titus 2:11-14

*The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.*

Reader: A reading from the letter to Titus:

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

Reader: Word of God, word of life.  
Assembly: **Thanks be to God.**

*As is often the case,  
the second reading  
indicates the  
implications of the  
gospel for the church:  
the appearance of God  
in Jesus Christ creates  
a people redeemed,  
purified, and dedicated  
to a life of good works.  
Christ among us  
changes our identity,  
our style of life, and the  
goal of our existence.*

*Please stand as you are able.*

## GOSPEL PROCESSION

(Stanzas 1 & 2)

### Angels, from the Realms of Glory

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
 2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid-ing, watch-ing o'er your flocks by night,  
 3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem-pla-tions, bright-er vi - sions beam a - far;  
 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais-ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,  
 once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
 God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.  
 seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.  
 ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.  
*Refrain*  
 Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4  
 Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

*Luke 2, the only biblical narrative detailing the birth of Jesus, is proclaimed at the first eucharist of Christmas. In contrast to Matthew's interest in high status males, Luke emphasizes the opposite: a pregnant woman, "no place in the inn," and lower-class shepherds.*

## GOSPEL

*God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.*

Luke 2:1-20

Pastor: The Gospel according to Luke the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter.  
 Assembly: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>He went to be

*Thanks in part to Luke's talent in storytelling, this narrative has become for many people synonymous with Christmas. The challenge at this service is to proclaim the truth of this narrative as other than and far beyond stereotypical sentimentality.*

registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>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 for them in the guest room.

<sup>8</sup>Now in that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>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: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

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

**Pastor:**                   The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Assembly:**                **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**GOSPEL RECESSION**  
*Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

(Stanzas 3 & 4)

*Please sit.*

**SERMON**

*Please stand as you are able.*

Charles Wesley's rich text proclaims the heart of the Incarnation: Christ, by highest heaven adored, enters our world to reconcile humanity with God. Every stanza is steeped in theology, naming Jesus as both fully divine and fully human, born to bring mercy, peace, and new birth. On this holy night, this hymn allows us not only to rejoice in Christ's birth, but to sing what that birth truly means for the life of the world.

## HYMN OF THE DAY

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship #270)

## Hark! The Herald Angels Sing



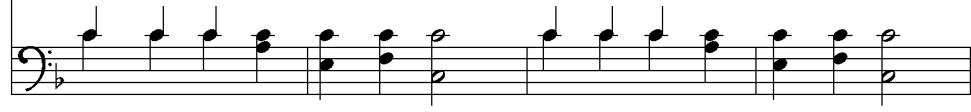
1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king;  
 2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
 3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."  
 late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.  
 Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;  
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!  
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
 Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!  
 born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king!"



## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Assisting Minister: Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people.

*We pray for the greater church.*

Assisting Minister: Angels sing with praise, and shepherds run with haste. As we glorify and praise you in this place, send us into the world, proclaiming the salvation you have revealed this night. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

*We pray for creation.*

Assisting Minister: The seas roar, and the trees of the forest sing for joy. As creation resounds with praise, inspire us with awe, reverence, and a renewed care for all that fills the fields, skies, and seas. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

*We pray for justice.*

Assisting Minister: The nations declare your glory. Uphold the leaders of the earth with your justice and righteousness. Break the rod of the oppressor in every land. Bring peace where there is conflict. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

*We pray for those in need.*

Assisting Minister: The holy family finds shelter around the animals' manger. Draw near to persons experiencing homelessness, those who are alone this holiday season, and all for whom this world makes no room. Wrap all your children in bands of love and mercy. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

*We remember the saints.*

Assisting Minister: The heavenly host praises you. With thanksgiving for Mary, Joseph, and all your saints, sustain us in the blessed hope revealed this night. Fashion us by their example into a people zealous for good deeds, sharing your love and mercy with all. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Pastor: Rejoicing in your Word made flesh among us, we commend these prayers to you, confident of your grace and love made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Assembly:** **Amen.**

Scan the QR code to give your offering electronically.



Venmo

*"All Through the Night" might not seem like an obvious choice for Christmas Eve, but it works beautifully as it inhabits the holy tension of the night itself. Christmas does not begin with noise and spectacle, but in quiet watching: angels guarding, hearts waiting, the world holding its breath. The repeated refrain "all through the night" mirrors the long vigil of Christmas Eve, when we sit between darkness and dawn, promise and fulfillment. Its gentle imagery of sleep, silence, and watchfulness echoes the tenderness of the nativity, while the final verses widen the lens to include hope for those who carry sorrow, reminding us*

## THE PEACE

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
Assembly: And also with you.

*Please sit.*

## OFFERING

### MUSICAL OFFERING

*All Through the Night*  
Sanctuary Choir

arr. Matthew D. Long

*Please stand as you are able.*

## OFFERTORY HYMN

(Stanza 3)

### What Child Is This



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?  
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?  
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

*that Christ is born not only into joy, but into a weary world longing for light.*

### OFFERTORY PRAYER

Assisting Minister: Let us pray. God of heaven and earth, from the beginning, you have called forth life, in which you take delight. The trees, the fields, and the seas sing for joy. Bless now these gifts, received from your bounty, that we may join the chorus of creation to tell of your salvation from day to day.

**Assembly:**

**Amen.**



### GREAT THANKSGIVING

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**Assembly:** **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**Assembly:** **We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**Assembly:** **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

### WORDS OF INSTITUTION

### LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Assembly:** **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

**Pastor:** A child has been born for us, a Son given to us.  
Come, receive the gift of Jesus.  
**Assembly:** **Thanks be to God.**

*Please sit.*

## DISTRIBUTION

*This is Christ's table of welcome. Jesus invites **all** who are hungry and thirsty for unconditional love and acceptance to come to God's banquet. The ushers will direct you forward at the appropriate time. Communion will be by station. Red wine and white grape juice are available in individual cups. Bread served is Gluten Free. If you wish to receive a blessing rather than communion, cross your arms over your chest. Return to your seat by the side aisle.*



## ANTHEM

*I Wonder as I Wander*

Appalachian Carol

Matthew Andersen, voice &amp; guitar

*Quiet and reflective, this carol invites us to linger in the stillness of the nativity. While the world sleeps, God's great gift is given—not with fanfare, but in humility and love. Sung during communion, it draws a powerful connection between Christ born in Bethlehem and Christ who comes to us now, present and incarnate, in bread and wine.*

## DISTRIBUTION HYMN

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship #279)

## O Little Town of Bethlehem

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove  
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!  
 4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
 while mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won-d'ring love.  
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.  
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.

yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.  
 O morn-ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
 No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,  
 We hear the Christ-mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
 and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!  
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.  
 oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

*This traditional English carol retells the Christmas story from the perspective of the shepherds, ordinary people who become the first witnesses of extraordinary news. Its simple, narrative style reminds us that the good news of Christ's birth is meant to be told and retold. As we share in communion, we are reminded that this story continues through us, sent into the world to bear Christ's light.*

## DISTRIBUTION HYMN

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship #300)

### The First Noel

The musical score consists of three staves of music in G major, 2/4 time. The top staff is for the soprano voice, the middle staff for the alto voice, and the bottom staff for the basso continuo. The lyrics are integrated into the music, with numbered lines 1-5 for the first section and continuous lyrics for the second and third sections.

**1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to**  
**2 They look - ed up and saw . . . a star shin-ing**  
**3 And by the light of that . . . same star star three . . .**  
**4 This star drew near to the . . . north - west, o'er . . .**  
**5 Then en - tered in those wise . . . men three, full . . .**

cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where  
 in . . . the east . . . be - yond . . . them far; and to the  
 wise . . . men came . . . from coun - try far; to seek for a  
 Beth - le - hem . . . it took . . . its rest; and there  
 rev - 'rent - ly . . . up - on . . . their knee, and it fered

they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's  
 earth it gave . . . great light, and . . . so it con -  
 king was their . . . in - tent, and to fol - low the  
 did both stop . . . and stay right . . . o - ver the  
 there in his . . . pres - ence their . . . gold, . . . and

*Refrain*

night that was so deep.  
 tin-ued both day and night.  
 star wher - ev - er it went.  
 place where Je - sus lay.  
 myrrh, and frank - in - cense.

el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Text: English traditional

Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional; arr. John Stainer, 1840–1901

*Please stand as you are able.*

### POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

Pastor: May the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in His grace.

**Assembly:** **Amen.**

### POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Assisting Minister: God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Assembly:** **Amen.**





## WE ARE SENT FORTH TO SERVE



*To protect your hands and the carpets/pews. Please hold lit candles stationary and upright. Flames will be passed to unlit candles by tipping the unlit candle into the flame of the lit candle.*

### **GOSPEL OF LIGHT**

John 1:1-14

<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.

**Pastor:**

Word of God, word of life.

**Assembly:**

**Thanks be to God.**

*A cantor will sing the first stanza in German. The assembly is invited to then sing stanzas 1-3 in English.*

*Few hymns capture the sacred stillness of Christmas Eve like "Silent Night." Written during a moment of quiet simplicity, this carol invites us into holy calm, where fear is stilled and grace is revealed. Sung by candlelight, it becomes more than a carol. It is a prayer, a moment of collective breath, and a glimpse of the peace Christ brings into a weary world.*

## HYMN

*(Please raise your candles on the third stanza)*

**Silent Night, Holy Night!**  
*Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!*

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885  
Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

## BENEDICTION

Pastor:

The God of love, Father,  $\pm$  Son, and Holy Spirit, lavish you with grace, illumine your path, and increase your joy, today and always.

Assembly:

Amen.

*Often thought of as a Christmas carol, "Joy to the World" is actually a hymn of Christ's reign, celebrating not just his birth, but his ongoing work of renewing all creation. As we are sent out into the night, this hymn proclaims that the joy we have received is meant to be shared. The Lord has come, and because of that, the world is changed forever! Joy to the world!*

SENDING HYMN

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship #267)

## Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all the world their songs employ, while fields and heart floods, prepare him to make his blessings known.  
 3. No more let sin and sorrow grow; nor thorns in the ground; he comes to nations prove the glo-ries of his righ-teous-ness.  
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace; and heav'n and na-ture sing, and heav'n and na-ture repeat the sound-ing joy, far as the curse is found, and won-ders of his love, and heav'n and na-ture sing, and heav'n and na-ture repeat, the sound-ing the curse is found, and won-ders of his love.  
 and heav'n and na-ture sing, and heav'n and na-ture repeat, the sound-ing the curse is found, and won-ders of his love.

**DISMISSAL**

Assisting Minister: Glory to God in the Highest!

**Assembly:** **And peace to God's people on earth!**

Assisting Minister: Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

**Assembly:** **Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

*Angels from the Realms of Glory*

arr. Paul Manz

*As part of our continuous efforts to make worship more inclusive and sensory friendly, we ask that you refrain from applauding during worship and after the postlude.*

**ATTRIBUTIONS:**

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## FROM THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES

*Dorothy Day, By Little and By Little, ed. Robert Ellsberg (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 94, 96-97*

It is no use saying that we are born two thousand years too late to give room to Christ. Christ is always with us, always asking for room in our hearts. But now it is with the voice of our contemporaries that he speaks, with the eyes of store clerks, factory workers, and children that he gazes; with the hand of office workers, slum dwellers, and suburban housewives that he gives. It is with the feet of soldiers and tramps that he walks, and with the heart of anyone in need that he longs for shelter. It would be foolish to pretend that it is always easy to remember this. If everyone were holy and handsome, with “alter Christus” shining in neon lighting from them, it would be easy to see Christ in everyone. But that was not Christ’s way for himself, now when he is disguised under every type of humanity that treads the earth. It is not because these people remind us of Christ, but because they are Christ, asking us to find room for him, exactly as he did at the first Christmas.

—Dorothy Day

*For Christmas Eve, a stunning image is the fifteenth-century painting *The Mystical Nativity*, by Sandro Botticelli. Angels dance around the stable and hug one another in joy.*





## ***Poinsettia Dedications***

### **In Memory of:**

Teresa Hale Edwards, Jack and JoAnn Hale, Bob and Betty Edwards,  
and Ellen Hale, by Marie Edwards Nelson

Scott Shaffer, by Ray and Carol Shaffer

Max and Phyllis Swancutt, Hilda and Vince Russo, and Jim Shilket,  
by Lynn and Vince Russo

Bill Smith and Sherri Smith, by Cheryl Smith

Arthur Laemmerzahl and Jean Bural, by Ina Laemmerzahl and Glenn Reges

Tonya's parents, Ed and Lois Idzak, by Tonya Elliott

Grace Bush, by Catherine Taylor

Our parents, by Dave and Pat Manzel

Joe Baggett, Gene Bain, and Jeanne Maysonett, by Ellen Atwell

Jill Reichow, by Craig Reichow

Loved Ones, by Carol Petersen and Richard Smullen

LaJean Koentopf, by the family of LaJean Koentopf

Our parents, by Kathy & Joe Makowski

Leroy and Louise Ireland, Solange Gignac and Alan Huggins,  
by Lois Ireland and Pierre Huggins

Helen and Charlie Steele, Jeanne Wolfe, and Olive and Arthur Wolfe,  
by Helen and Gary Wolfe

Loved Ones, by Ned and Fran Johnson

Gene Bain, by Katy Bain



## ***Poinsettia Dedications***

### **In Honor of:**

Brian Russo; Alan, Jill, Rebecca, and Caleb Russo; Frank, Diane, Vincent, Caitlin, and Harper Russo; Max and Nancy Swancutt; Nancy Jean Swancutt; Sharon and Ike Eichten; Steve and Barb Swancutt; by Lynn and Vince Russo  
Quinn, Jack, Dylan, and Mayeli, by Dick and Diana Virgo  
Our children and grandchildren, by Craig and Patricia Swanson  
Our children and grandchildren, by Kathy and Joe Makowski

There is a hearing-assistance system (induction loop) in the Sanctuary for those with hearing impairments. Please ask an usher for instructions.

## **STAFF**

Phone: (703) 437-1883

Website: [www.HolyCrossHerndon.org](http://www.HolyCrossHerndon.org)

Facebook: [www.Facebook.com/HCLCHerndon](http://www.Facebook.com/HCLCHerndon)

Instagram: [www.Instagram.com/HolyCrossELCA](http://www.Instagram.com/HolyCrossELCA)

YouTube: [www.YouTube.com/c/HolyCrossLutheranChurchHerndonVA](http://www.YouTube.com/c/HolyCrossLutheranChurchHerndonVA)

Email: [Admin@HolyCrossHerndon.org](mailto:Admin@HolyCrossHerndon.org)

Jeremy Shoop, Director of Music and Liturgy

(585) 748-2848

[MusicDir@HolyCrossHerndon.org](mailto:MusicDir@HolyCrossHerndon.org)

Marie Edwards Nelson, Church Administrator

(703) 437-1883

Sarah Schulmeyer, Church Administrator

[Admin@HolyCrossHerndon.org](mailto:Admin@HolyCrossHerndon.org)

Marie Edwards Nelson, Bookkeeper

[Bookkeeper@HolyCrossHerndon.org](mailto:Bookkeeper@HolyCrossHerndon.org)

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Cara Swanson Papenheim, President

(571) 481-6281

[President@HolyCrossHerndon.org](mailto:President@HolyCrossHerndon.org)

Mark Roe, Vice President

(202) 615-8495

[VicePresident@HolyCrossHerndon.org](mailto:VicePresident@HolyCrossHerndon.org)

Jo Roe, Secretary

(703) 477-3509

[Secretary@HolyCrossHerndon.org](mailto:Secretary@HolyCrossHerndon.org)

Bob Thompson, Treasurer

(703) 795-3662

[Treasurer@HolyCrossHerndon.org](mailto:Treasurer@HolyCrossHerndon.org)