

SPIRIT OF GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Christmas Eve

Ministers: Every Member of Spirit of Grace
Pastor Scott Hackler – Pastor Gary E Benson

OUR MISSION

Proclaiming God's Love, God's Promises,
and the Abundant Life

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION AND LIGHTING OF THE WREATH

Many ages after God created the heavens and the earth and then formed man and woman in his own image; long after the great flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant; twenty-one centuries from the time the promise was given to Abraham and Sarah; thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt and Miriam danced in freedom; eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges; one thousand years from the anointing of David as king, in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days discerned by the prophets; 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; while the whole world enjoyed a span of relative peace, Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, willing to hallow the world by his coming in mercy, was born of the virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea.

Today is the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh, the Light of the World.

CAROL "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful"

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!

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**

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, / Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! / Glory to God in the highest: **Refrain**

GREETING AND PRAYER

May the grace and truth of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. 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 only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

MUSICAL GIFT "Celebrate the Coming of the Lord" Joyful Spirit Singers

READING Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For 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. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For 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. ⁷His 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.

Word of God, word of life

Thanks be to God!

CAROL "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

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 angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" / Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

Hail the heav'n-born 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 each child of earth, born to give us second birth. / Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

READING Luke 2:1-7

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

CAROL Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, / the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head; / the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, / the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes, / but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes. / I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky / and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay / close by me forever and love me, I pray. / Bless all the dear children in your tender care / and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

SERMON "Backstage" Pastor Scott Hackler

CAROL O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, / how still we see thee lie! / Above thy deep and dreamless sleep / the silent stars go by; / yet in thy dark streets shineth / the everlasting light. / The hopes and fears of all the years / are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, / and, gathered all above / while mortals sleep, the angels keep / their watch of wond'ring love. / O morning stars, together / proclaim the holy birth, / and praises sing to God the king, / and peace to all the earth!

How silently, how silently / the wondrous gift is giv'n! / So God imparts to human hearts / the blessings of his heav'n. / No ear may hear his coming; / but, in this world of sin, / where meek souls will receive him, still / the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem, / descend to us, we pray; / cast out our sin, and enter in, / be born in us today. / We hear the Christmas angels / the great glad tidings tell; / oh, come to us, abide with us, / our Lord Immanuel!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893 (GARY) *We will receive the Christmas offering now.*

OFFERING "Away in a Manger" Sandy Hobbs

OFFERING RESPONSE "What Child Is This"

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, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

OFFERING PRAYER

Good and loving God,
we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them

be blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's and Joseph's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
the Word made flesh.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming again. Come, Lord Jesus, may your Word take flesh in us.

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.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

May the body and blood of Christ fill your life with his light now and forever.

We thank you God,

for Jesus, God with us, in the gifts of your wonderful supper. As we have shared this feast of love, strengthen us to share your love with all the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION John 1:1–14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And 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 PRAYERS

Wonderful Counselor, increase our joy as the church gathers to hear of our dear Savior's birth. May the story of salvation live in the hearts of all who listen to its wonders. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Mighty God, you have broken the yoke of sin's burden through the birth of your Son. Comfort those whose burdens distract them from the deeper peace of this holy night and grant them a restful mind. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Everlasting Father, we remember with thanksgiving all who have died and who now rest in your peaceful light. Uphold all who are in sorrow and those in need of your divine goodness and mercy, especially those we name and remember in this moment of silence. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, bathe us always in the light of your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

CAROL OF LIGHT Silent Night, Holy Night!

Silent night, holy night! / All is calm, all is bright / Round yon virgin mother and child. / Holy Infant, so tender and mild, / Sleep in heavenly peace, / sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! / Shepherds quake at the sight; /
Glories stream from heaven afar, / heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia! /
Christ, the Savior, is born! / Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! / Son of God, love's pure light / Radiant beams from your holy face, / with the dawn of redeeming grace, /
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, / Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

BLESSING

May the Lord God, who has called you out of darkness to be servants of light, grant you the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, and the peace of the Christ Child. In the name of Almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve our newborn king.

Thanks be to God!

SERVING AS WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Choir Director	Ken Carnes
Choir Accompanist/Worship Pianist	Sandy Hobbs
Sunday Usher Coordinator	Rich Frusciano
Audio/Lighting	Jerry Huston
Online Scripture Reader:	Deborah Frusciano

Online Singers: Ken Carnes, Sheila Greer, Elaine and Dennis Siemsen, Bruce Belanger, Bill and Barbara Lyes, Richard Olsen.