

CREATED, SAVED AND GIFTED BY GOD,
WE SEEK, SERVE AND SHARE JESUS CHRIST.



FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 31, 2023

10:30 A.M.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

901 EAST STROOP ROAD

KETTERING, OH 45429-4688

(937) 298-0136

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Introduction

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

Affirmation and Expectation

Imagine the baptism of an infant on a winter Sunday morning. Imagine the baby, dressed in a fragile heirloom, and family members and sponsors crowded around the font. Imagine the richness of the ritual—the pronouncement of ancient promises, wet hands and hair, an oily cross on soft skin, a freshly lit candle, laughter and applause.

Now, imagine that an elder in the congregation rises and, unprompted, takes the baby in his arms. As the people look on in stunned silence, he sings a hymn of heartfelt gratitude and wonder. Then another elder stands, turns to face the assembly, and testifies to God's goodness on account of this child. Imagine the surprise. Imagine the indelible memory.

Something similar happens when Mary and Joseph bring the baby Jesus to the temple to present him to the Lord. Once they have done their part to mark Jesus as a member of God's people, two strangers unexpectedly acknowledge him too. Simeon and Anna have each spent a lifetime on the lookout for a sign of God's promised redemption. And stumbling upon him in the temple, they do not hesitate to say so: "My eyes have seen your salvation," Simeon sings, "which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples."

But it isn't all good news. Peering into Mary's eyes, the prophet also foresees that Jesus will uncover the thoughts of many a heart, and that the end result will feel like a blade to her soul. As if she did not already have plenty to ponder (Luke 2:19)!

There is perhaps nothing like the arrival of a child to inspire our hopes and fears for the future. And spoken words of affirmation and expectation have the power to illuminate the possibilities. Jesus is the child in whom God makes the greatest promises. So rejoice with prophets like Simeon and Anna, those who see him for who he is. And, come what may, hold tight to their testimony until God's promises are fulfilled.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME

Don Bennett

ANNOUNCEMENTS

** THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation. **Amen.**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters, and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.

Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

** GATHERING HYMN

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice (ELW 288)

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;

The image shows the musical notation for the hymn 'Good Christian Friends, Rejoice'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The treble staff contains the melody, and the bass staff contains the accompaniment. The music is in 4/4 time and features a simple, joyful melody with a bass line of chords. The lyrics are printed below the treble staff, with three verses of the hymn.

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
 He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

**** GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Assisting minister:

In peace, in peace, let us pray to the...

Congregation:



Lord, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Assisting minister:

**For the Reign of God, and for peace throughout the world;
for the unity of all, let us pray to the...**

Congregation:

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

**For your people here, who have come to give you praise;
for the strength to live your Word, let us pray to the...**

Congregation:

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Assisting minister:

Help, save, and defend us, O God.

Congregation:



A - - - men.

** CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Refrain

Congregation:


Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy
to the God of life and love and
free-dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -
er - more!

Verse 1

1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once
slain, whose blood has freed and u -
nit - ed us to be one great peo - ple of
God.

to Refrain

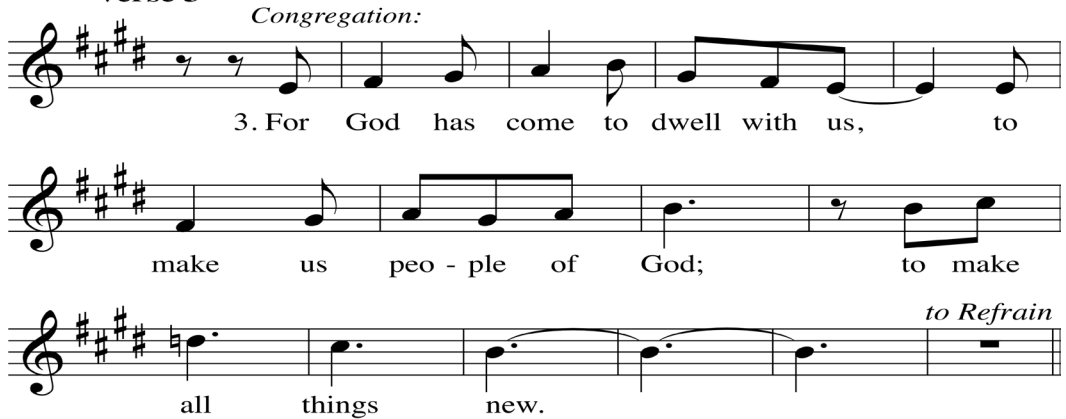
Verse 2



2. Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and
might, all hon - or and glo - ry to Christ
for ev - er. *to Refrain*

Verse 3

Congregation:



3. For God has come to dwell with us, to
make us peo - ple of God; to make
all things new. *to Refrain*

** PRAYER OF THE DAY

Assistant Minister

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:10--62:3

To the people who returned to Jerusalem after the exile, the prophet proclaims that God's salvation will fully come to pass. Jerusalem will become a shining light to the nations and righteousness and praise will spring up as surely as the earth puts forth vegetation.

A reading from the book of Isaiah.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Psalms 148

The splendor of the LORD is over earth and heaven. (Ps. 148:13)

Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise God in the heights.

**Praise the LORD, all you angels;
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

Praise the LORD, sun and moon;
sing praise, all you shining stars.

**Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens,
and you waters above the heavens.**

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
who commanded, and they were created,
**who made them stand fast forever and ever,
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

Praise the LORD from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps;

**fire and hail, snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars;

wild beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds;
sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the world;
young men and maidens,
old and young together.

Let them praise the name of the LORD,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

**The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING

Galatians 4:4-7

Paul seeks to show the Galatians that the purpose of Christ's birth was to liberate us from the law's condemnation so that we would be fully adopted into God's family as beloved children.

A reading from Paul's letter to the Galatians.

When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

** GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Congregation:

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall
go? You have the words of e - ter - na
life. Al - le - lu - ia!

Optional Re

**** GOSPEL READING****Luke 2:22-40**

Luke's narrative continues with stories that emphasize Jesus' connection to Judaism. His family is devout in its observance of the law, and Jesus himself is recognized as one who will bring glory to Israel.

The Holy Gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

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

YOUTH MESSAGE**MESSAGE***Don Bennett*

HYMN OF THE DAY

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming (ELW 272)

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
 2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
 3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the
 4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man

sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
 mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
 air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
 woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who

seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
 vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
 dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
 dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to

mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
 bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
 sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.
 the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

**** APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Assistant Minister

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

A brief silence is kept.

After each petition:

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.
Amen.

OFFERTORY

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

** GREAT THANKSGIVING

Lift up your heads; **we lift them up to God.**
Lift up your voices; **we lift them up to God.**
Lift up your hearts; **we lift them up to God.**

** WORDS OF INSTITUTION

And so we gather at the table. We come from many different places in life. And as we come together around the table we discover that our differences are not something we just tolerate, but that our differences are indeed a blessing. So come, children of God, just as you are. Wherever you are in your journey of faith, you are invited and welcomed here - here in this place, here in this community, here at this table. Come, children of God, come and remember.

Remember the stories that Jesus' friends tell: Stories of bread broken and shared to feed a multitude; stories of gathering both enemy and friend together around a common table; stories of unlikely guests revealing the face of the sacred.

On a night of both celebration and betrayal Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it; gave it to his disciples and said, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Then Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to his disciples 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."

And so we pray: Lord, bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine. Bless all of us in our eating and drinking that our eyes might be open, and that we might recognize the risen Christ in our midst, indeed in one another.

** LORD'S PRAYER *(personal option - holding hands)*

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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

Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace.

COMMUNION HYMN

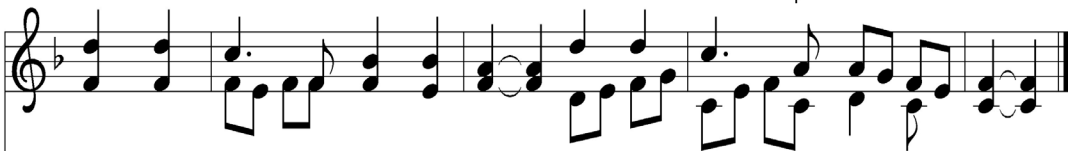
Once in Royal David's City (ELW 269)



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
 2 He came down to earth from heav-en who is God and Lord of all,
 3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;
 4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,



where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:
 and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;
 for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;
 we shall see him; but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;



Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
 with the poor and meek and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
 and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.
 there his chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo - ry crowned.



LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
you break the chains of ha - tred and
you are the way of jus - tice and
you are the way of mer - cy and

Congregation:



world: have mer - cy on us, mer - cy on us,
fear:
peace:
love.

Final Stanza

Congregation or Assistant:

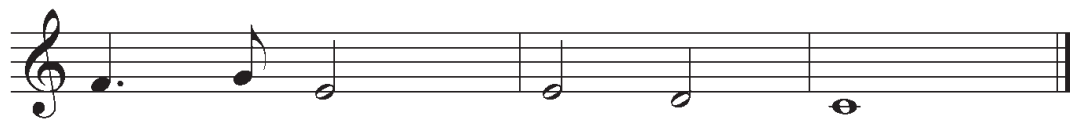


mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you

Congregation:



take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace,



grant us peace, grant us peace.

HOLY COMMUNION - *Receiving the Lord's tangible presence.*

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Each person may respond: **Amen.**

Communion Statement ~ *If you believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is your Savior and Redeemer and would like to receive Holy Communion, then come forward to receive the elements. If you would just like to come forward and receive a blessing, then you may do that also.*

NOTE: We invite everyone to come forward for Holy Communion. If you have a gluten allergy, gluten-free wafers are available upon request when receiving Communion. Also, if you prefer not to receive wine at Communion, apple juice is available upon request.

REFLECTION DURING COMMUNION

*As we prepare to receive the sacrament today, may we quietly take this time to center ourselves on Christ, and the amazing gifts of grace and forgiveness that we have been given. As we receive the body and the blood of our Lord, let us reflect upon His sacrifice. Finally, may we take this time to ask the Holy Spirit to enter our hearts, and then to work **in** us and **through** us in the coming days.*

**** TABLE BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and always keep you in God's grace. **Amen.**

**** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Assistant 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. **Amen.**

SENDING

** BLESSING

God bless you and keep you, Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever. **Amen.**

** SENDING HYMN

Go Tell It on the Mountain (ELW 290)

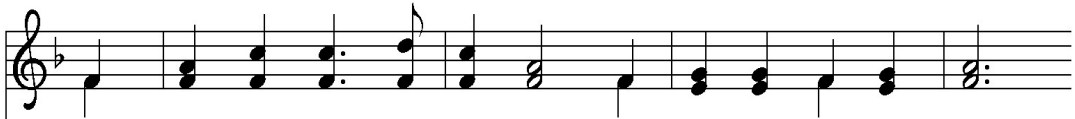
Refrain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;



Refrain

be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.



**** DISMISSAL**

Assistant Minister

Christ the Savior is born!

Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

Created, saved and gifted by God, we seek, serve and share Jesus Christ.

Hallelujah, thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

“W + 2” = Worship Plus Two

**Make a commitment to not only worship each week
but also try to find a way to serve in the congregation
and seek out a way to serve our community.**

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE MISSION FIELD

Upcoming Commemorations

Name of Jesus

Monday, January 1, 2024

By Jewish law, every baby boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day of life, so on the eighth day of Christmas the church celebrates this event in Jesus' life. The keeping of the covenant as well as Jesus' name are signs of God's salvation given to us through him.

Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, renewer of the church, died 1872

Tuesday, January 2, 2024

Loehe was a pastor in nineteenth-century Germany. Loehe's chief concern was that a congregation find its life in the holy communion, and from that source evangelism and social ministries would flow. He sent pastors to North America, Australia, New Guinea, Brazil, and Ukraine.

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