

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



FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS  
DECEMBER 28, 2025  
10:30 AM

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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# INTRODUCTION

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

## JOY AND SORROW AT CHRISTMAS

The joy-filled carols of Christmas still seem to echo in the nave as the assembly gathers for worship. There is praise of God in the psalm this day as the psalmist sings of the Lord present in all creation even as the same creation reveals a Creator worthy of praise. Still, our joy is not complete for sin continues, even in these days. Herod, bent on destroying Jesus, orders the murders of the youngest children of Bethlehem. Even today the distress present in a dangerous and unjust human society presses in. Human sin severs our relationships with God and one another.

In the midst of our distress, Jesus comes in flesh and blood and is proclaimed in today's readings to be fully human, and even vulnerable, just as we are. Yet the Christ child also is Lord and Savior. Even while Herod plots, God makes a way to use this for good. Guiding Joseph by dreams, Jesus and his family are saved and the words of Hosea 11:1 are fulfilled. In this way we are reminded once more this is no ordinary child, this is the Christ child, the Messiah, the one sent to save and redeem a broken and sinful humanity. Once more we discover God does not simply fix our lives, removing all obstacles and difficulties. Instead, God uses the harsh realities of life as opportunities for the gospel to be proclaimed, hope to triumph, and grace to shine forth. This is Jesus, our Emmanuel, God with us, when we flee to Egypt and as we return to dwell in Nazareth.

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*\*\* indicates to stand as you are able.*

# GATHERING

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

## PRELUDE

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Pastor Mallory Morris*

### \*\* 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.**

A reading from Revelation:

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:1-2)

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.

Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life,  
you are the everlasting wellspring, you are the fire of rebirth.  
Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams.

Honor to you for cloud and rain, for dew and snow.  
Your waters are below us, around us, above us: our life is born in you.  
You are the fountain of resurrection.  
Praise to you for your saving waters:  
Noah and the animals survive the flood, Hagar discovers your well.  
The Israelites escape through the sea, and they drink from your gushing rock.  
Naaman washes his leprosy away,  
and the Samaritan woman will never be thirsty again.  
Praise to you for the water of baptism and for your Word  
that saves us in this sacrament.  
Breathe your Spirit into all who are gathered here and into all creation.  
Illumine our days. Enliven our bones. Dry our tears.  
Wash away the sin within us, and drown the evil around us.  
Satisfy all our thirst with your living water, Jesus Christ, our Savior,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**\*\* GATHERING HYMN**

**“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing (King of Heaven)”**

(Verse 1)

Hark! the herald angels sing: glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled; (pause)  
Joyful all ye 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.

(Verse 2)

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace, hail the Son of righteousness;  
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings; (pause)  
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.

(Refrain)

King of heaven, come down; King of heaven, come now;  
Let your glory reign, shining like the day. King of heaven, come.  
King of heaven, rise up. Who can stand against us?  
You are strong to save, in your mighty name. King of heaven, come.  
(Oh...)

(Verse 3)

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord;  
Late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb; (pause)  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see! Hail, incarnate deity!  
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels sing: glory to the newborn King, the newborn King.

(Refrain)

King of heaven, come down; King of heaven, come now;  
Let your glory reign, shining like the day. King of heaven, come.  
King of heaven, rise up. Who can stand against us?  
You are strong to save, in your mighty name. King of heaven, come.

King of heaven, come. King of heaven, come.  
King of heaven. come. King of heaven, come.

King of heaven, come down; King of heaven, come now;  
Let your glory reign, shining like the day. King of heaven, come.

## **\*\* INTRODUCTION**

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.**

## **\*\* PRAYER OF THE DAY**

O Lord God, **you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## **\*\* PASSING OF THE PEACE**

### **WORD**

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

#### **FIRST READING**

Isaiah 63:7-9

*God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or angel. God's own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God's gracious deeds. God trusts that God's people will not act falsely.*

A reading from Isaiah.

I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,  
the praiseworthy acts of the Lord,  
because of all that the Lord has done for us  
and the great favor to the house of Israel  
that he has shown them according to his mercy,  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.  
For he said, "Surely they are my people,  
children who will not act deceitfully,"  
and he became their savior  
in all their distress.  
It was no messenger or angel  
but his presence that saved them;  
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;  
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM

Psalm 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

Hebrews 2:10-18

*Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.*

A reading from Hebrews.

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

And again,

"I will put my trust in him."

And again,

"Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*\* GOSPEL READING**

Matthew 2:13-23

*In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.*

The holy gospel according to Luke..

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

"A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for

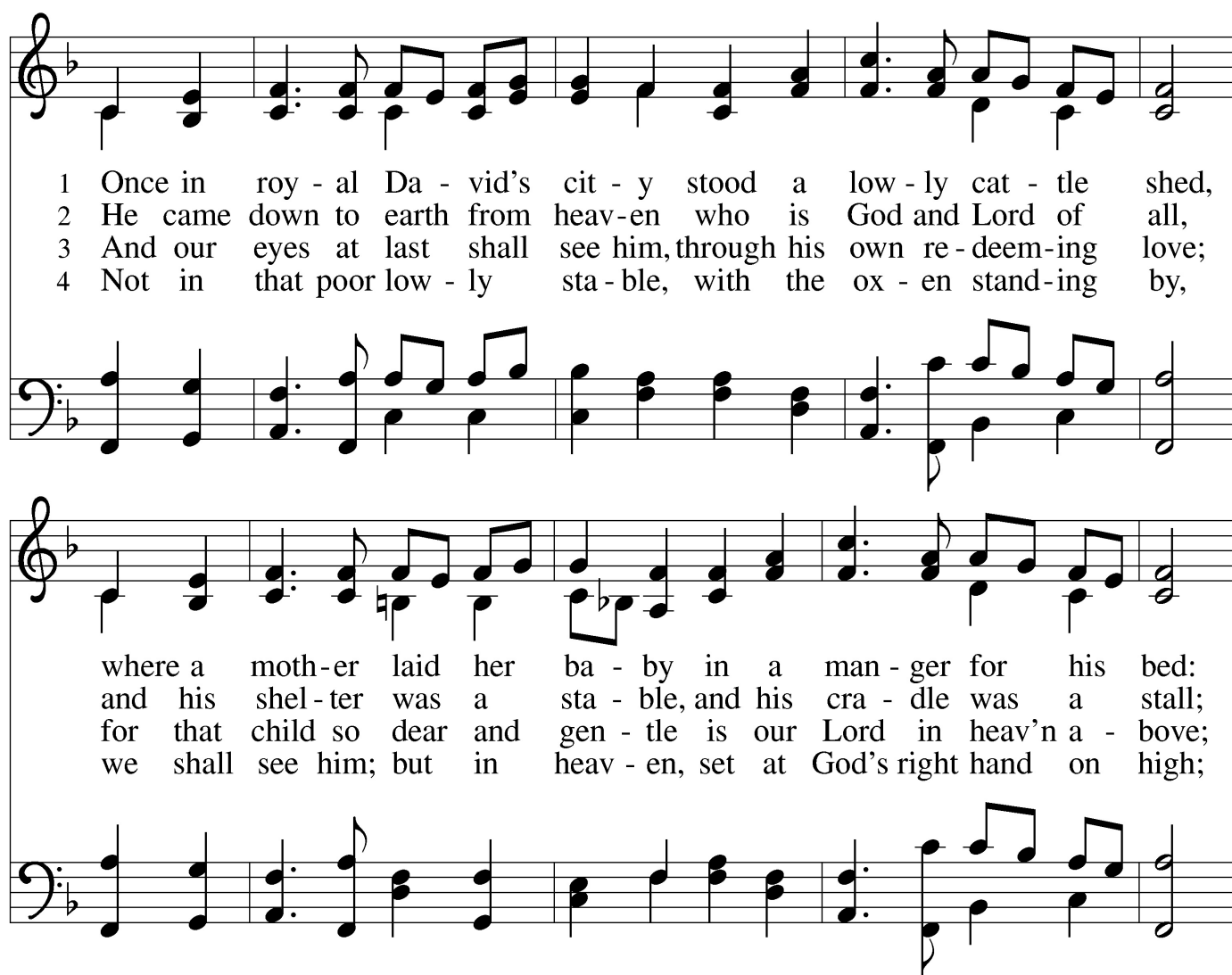
those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

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

## YOUTH MESSAGE

## HYMN OF THE DAY

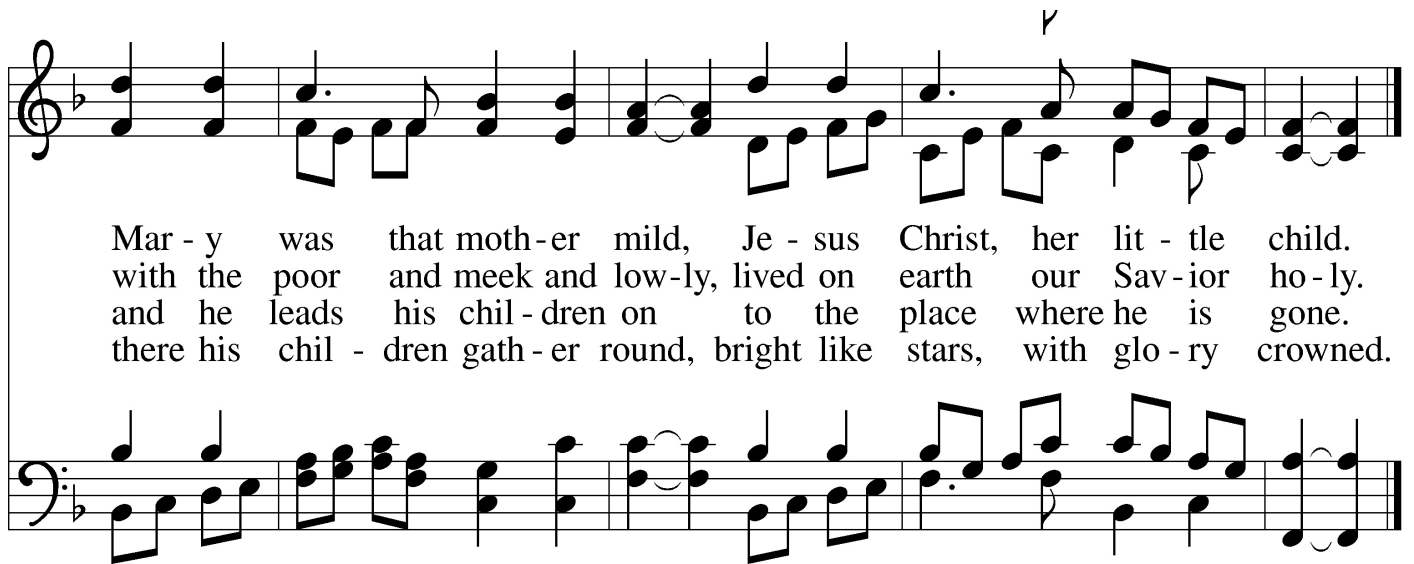
"Once in Royal David's City" (ELW 269)



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;





**\*\* NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God,**

**the Father, the Almighty,  
 maker of heaven and earth,  
 of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,**

**the only Son of God,  
 eternally begotten of the Father,  
 God from God, Light from Light,  
 true God from true God,  
 begotten, not made,  
 of one Being with the Father;  
 through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation**

**he came down from heaven,  
 was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
 and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
 he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again  
 in accordance with the scriptures;  
 he ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
 and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,**

**who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
 who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,**

who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**\*\* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

*Each petition concludes:*

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

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

**GATHERING OF THE GIFTS**

**OFFERTORY**

**\*\* OFFERING PRAYER**

*Assisting Minister*

God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

## 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

Holy and faithful God, we have come through Advent filled with hope and fear; with peace and worry; with joy and sorrow; with love and loss. Like the saints before, we have wondered and waited for your coming. We have looked and longed for all you've promised. Now we come to this table, just as we are, and we see that our journey leads us to your promised answer: a place of rest for our souls, a meal where we are filled, and a God who is, indeed, with us.

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord 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."

Bless this bread and wine, O God, and bless us as we eat and drink. As you abide with us, transform us to see your Son alive and at work in our midst.

### \*\* LORD'S PRAYER

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

God is now in flesh appearing.

Come to the feast of joy!

**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.

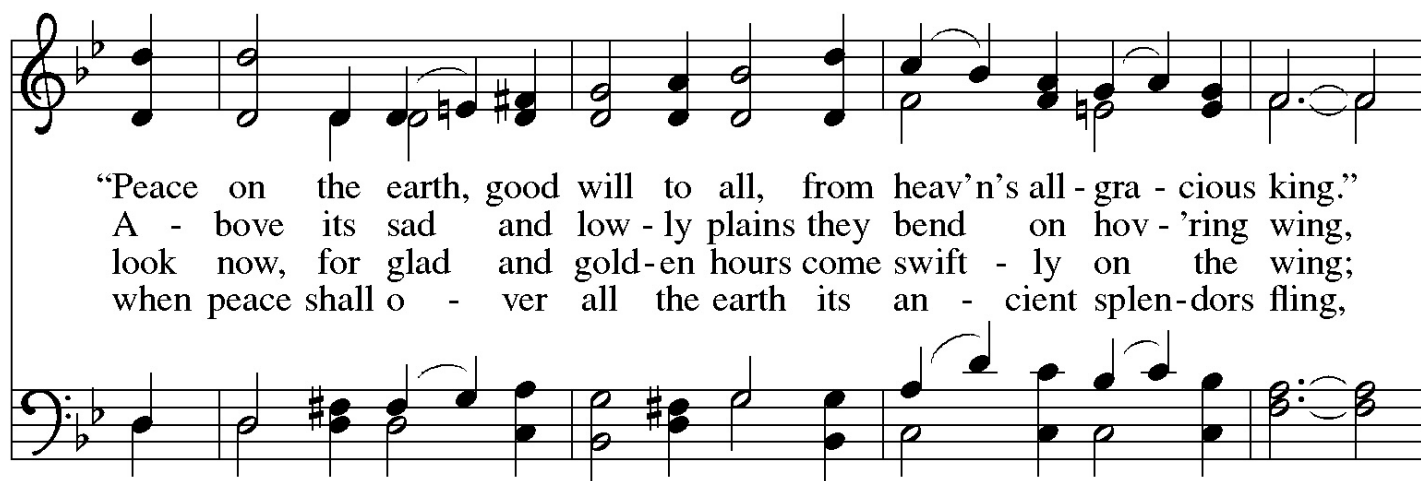
NOTE: We invite everyone to come forward for Holy Communion. If you have a gluten allergy, gluten-free wafers are available upon request when receiving Communion. Also, if you prefer not to receive wine at Communion, apple juice is available upon request. For those choosing to remain in the pews, there are communion all-in-one cups containing grape juice available in the Narthex.

### REFLECTION DURING COMMUNION

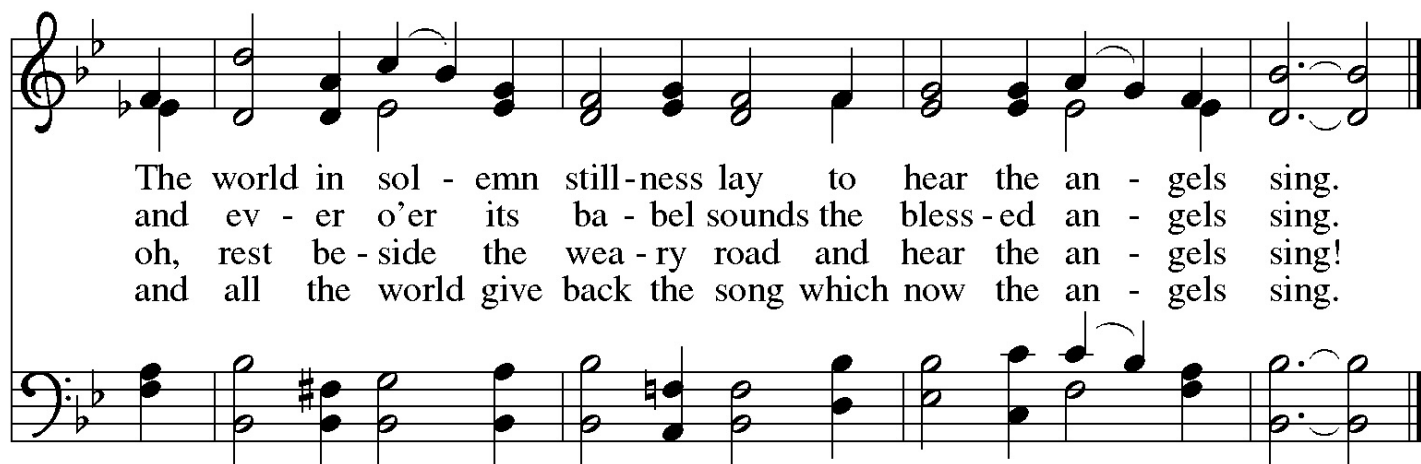
As we prepare to receive the sacrament today, may we quietly take this time to center ourselves on Christ and ponder the amazing gifts of grace and forgiveness that we have been given. As we receive the body and the blood of our Lord, let us reflect upon His sacrifice. Finally, may we take this time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

### \*\* COMMUNION HYMN

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” (ELW 282)



“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav’n’s all-gra-cious king.”  
A - bove its sad and low-ly plains they bend on hov-’ring wing,  
look now, for glad and gold-en hours come swift-ly on the wing;  
when peace shall o-ver all the earth its an-cient splen-dors fling,



The world in sol-emn still-ness lay to hear the an-gels sing.  
and ev-er o’er its ba-bel sounds the bless-ed an-gels sing.  
oh, rest be-side the wea-ry road and hear the an-gels sing!  
and all the world give back the song which now the an-gels sing.

**\*\* TABLE BLESSING**

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

**\*\* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

*Assisting Minister*

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our heart the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us. **Amen.**

**SENDING OF COMMUNION**

*Communion ministers may be sent to take the sacrament to those who are absent. The presiding minister may lead this prayer of sending.*

Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick, homebound, and imprisoned. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**SENDING**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

**\*\* BLESSING**

The triune God,  
glorious Mystery,  
holy Incarnate One,  
abiding Comforter,  
✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.  
**Amen.**

**\*\* SENDING SONG**

"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;

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.

*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.

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**

*Assisting Minister*

Glory to God in the highest!

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

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

**Created, saved and gifted by God,**

**we seek, serve and share Jesus Christ. Hallelujah, thanks be to God!**

**POSTLUDE**

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## **“W + 2” = WORSHIP PLUS TWO**

**MAKE A COMMITMENT NOT ONLY TO 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**

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## UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

### **The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**

Sunday, December 28, 2025

This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.

### **Name of Jesus**

Thursday, January 1, 2026

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**

Friday, January 2, 2026

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.