

# Welcome to Christ Lutheran Church & Preschool

**4th Sunday of Advent & Christmas Eve  
December 24, 2023**

**Rev. Gail Heidtke**

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**Please join us  
every Sunday  
Morning at  
9:30a  
In-Person &  
on Facebook**

Member of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
(ELCA – [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org))



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## All Are Welcome – All the Time!

You do not need to be a member of this church or Lutheran to take part in any part of worship.

If you wish to take communion, we ask that you desire a relationship with Jesus.

His body and blood were given and shed for you.



Christ Lutheran Church & PreSchool is a community committed to the work of equity and inclusion, bringing justice and support for all of God's beloveds. We welcome those who are seeking God's love and grace for the first time or as a life-long believer. We welcome because Jesus shows us how to welcome, regardless of race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, economic resources, relationship status, health challenges or anything else that too often divides us. It is in our welcome which we commit ourselves to being an anti-racist space, a space where we seek daily to deepen our work of inclusion in the life of our church. Our unity is in Christ. All are welcome here.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS SHARING OF PRAYERS & THANKSGIVINGS

## INVOCATION – Isaiah 9

*Please join in reading the bold portions responsively*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

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.**

You 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.**

For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,  
**the rod of their oppressor, you have broken.**

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.**

## LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

Followed by silence for reflection and prayer

## SONG: O Come All Ye Faithful, ELW #283 (verse 1)

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;

Come and behold him, born the king of angels:

**O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,**

**O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**



## CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Let us come into the light of Christ, confessing our need for God's mercy. God of peace,

**we confess that we are not at peace with others or ourselves.**

**We bring to you all that tears us apart:**

**discord in our families, violence in our world,  
our own conflicted hearts. In your mercy, mend us.**

**Reconnect us to one another and to you.**

**Let peace reign over all the earth,  
through the Prince of peace, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.**

In the Word who has come to dwell with us,

God has given us grace upon grace:

forgiveness that is stronger than our sins,  
love that can heal every broken heart.

Hear this word of God's pardon and peace:

in the name of † Jesus our Savior, you are free from all your sins.

Rise, shine, for your light has come! **Amen.**

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

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

*Let us pray:* Almighty God, you made this holy time 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. **Amen.**

## SONG: Angels We Have Heard on High, ELW #289 (vs 1 & 3)

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.

***Glo-ria in excelsis Deo; Glo-ria in excelsis Deo!***

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.

***Glo-ria in excelsis Deo; Glo-ria in excelsis Deo!***

## **RESPONSIVE READING – Psalm 96:1-3,10-11**

O sing to the Lord a new song;  
**sing to the Lord, all the earth.**

Sing to the Lord, bless his name;  
**tell of his salvation from day to day.**

Declare his glory among the nations,  
**his marvelous works among all the peoples.**

Say among the nations, **“The Lord is king!**

The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.  
**He will judge the peoples with equity.”**

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;  
**let the sea roar, and all that fills it.**



– Please stand as you are able –

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (vs 1)**

**Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.”  
Joyful all you nations, rise. Join the triumph of the skies.  
With angelic hosts proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”  
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”**

### **GOSPEL READING – Luke 2:1-7**

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

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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 inn.

## **SONG: Away in a Manger, ELW #277** (verses 1 & 2)

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.



## **GOSPEL READING – Luke 2:8-20**

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

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

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

## **SERMON – “Light a Candle”**

## **WE LIGHT CANDLES AT THE FRONT**

As we sing, please feel welcome to come to the front to light a candle.  
Light your candle from the flame on the altar, then place your candle into the sand.

### **SONG: O Little Town of Bethlehem, ELW #279**

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 wondering 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 given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessing of his heaven.  
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!

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Good and gracious God, you hear the prayers of your people even before they are spoken. Hear the prayers of our hearts...

*Merciful God... Receive our prayer.*

Merciful God, we commend these and all our prayers to you, trusting in your abundant mercy through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

*The peace of the Lord be with you always. And also with you.*  
– Please share a sign of peace or greeting –

## **DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION**

**All are welcome to receive the Real Presence of Christ in the bread and wine of Holy Communion.** You do not need to be a member of this church or Lutheran to receive the sacrament. We ask that you desire a relationship with Jesus Christ. Those who are interested will be invited by an usher to come to the front to select a single-serving Communion kit from the tray, or to receive a blessing. Return to your seat via the side aisle to open the kit and take Communion. An usher will collect the empty containers. You are also welcome to stay seated in prayer. *If you are worshipping at home, please join us by taking a bit of bread or cracker, and wine or juice. Welcome.*

## **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**



## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

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 THE FRONT FOR COMMUNION**

All are welcome to come forward to receive a communion kit,  
then return to your seat to open and partake.  
You may also request a blessing at the front,  
or feel free to remain at your seat in prayer.

### **POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

## **SONG: Silent Night, Holy Night, ELW #281**

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

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;  
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly 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.

## **BENEDICTION**

May you be blessed with the wonder of Mary, the faithfulness of Joseph,  
the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, and  
the Peace of the Christ Child this day and every day. **Amen.**

## **SONG: Joy to the World, ELW 267** *(verses 1, 2 & 4)*

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;  
Let every heart prepare him room  
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth & grace & makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, and wonders of his love.

## **DISMISSAL**

*Go in peace. The Lord has come!*  
**Thanks be to God!**



Have a blessed Christmas!



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Thank you for worshipping today! And thank you to Pastor Gail Heidtke and all of our partner pastors for leading us in praise and worship.**
- **Thank you for the Joy Bags!** More than 50 kids served by Sue's Emergency Pantry in Vernon Hills received a little bit of joy, thanks to you.
- **Encampment Collection** – Thank you to all who contributed to our first delivery to the Chicago homeless encampment near Pastor Padraig's house. We continue to collect blankets/sleeping bags (new or gently used/clean), socks, hand warmers, gloves, feminine products, and Mariano's gift cards (store closest to camp).
- **Sanctuary Support** – Our first batch of sleeping mats, small suitcases and OTC medicines were delivered to asylum seekers living in Police Stations and community centers in Chicago, a Sanctuary City. This collection continues as need does not end.
- **Sue's Pantry** – Looking for small sizes of flour, cooking oil, sugar. Also anything needed to keep a home and family clean – dish soap, laundry detergent, body wash, shampoo.
- **Love INC** – Always looking for housewares, nonperishables and volunteers. Want to learn more about this amazing organization? Have a child or family in need of a bundle of clothes or housewares? Give the details to Natalie and on behalf of the church, we will request support – and Natalie will get us covered! (Thanks, Natalie.)
- **COOL Ministries** – We support the COOL pantry in Waukegan as well as Vernon Township Pantry with non-perishables. Collection bins in hallway or give online.
- **BSA Troop 273** – Thank you to all who support our partner Scouts as they have supported us.
- **Looking to restart Cub Scout Pack 273!** Children/families ages Kindergarten through 4th grade are encouraged to reach out to Theresa ([tcalabrese98@gmail.com](mailto:tcalabrese98@gmail.com)).
- **Prayer concerns?** Please consider reaching out, so that our network of Prayer Warriors can pray for you or your concerns. You may remain anonymous. Please email [ChristLutheranVH@aol.com](mailto:ChristLutheranVH@aol.com) with your request, and we will email the prayer team to lift up your prayer. If you would like to be part of the Prayer Team, please send an email.
- **Thank you for your support.** Your presence in worship is very important as we join together in worship and praise. Thank you for being part of this community of faith so that we can lift our prayers together. If you would like to support the efforts of this community, we welcome donations, which can be provided by credit card or Paypal through the link at the bottom of our webpage, [ChristLutheranVH.org](http://ChristLutheranVH.org). Thank you.