

Welcome to Christ Lutheran Church & Preschool

First Sunday of Christmas – A Fresh New Year

December 31, 2023

Service of readings, prayers, songs

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Member of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
(ELCA – www.elca.org)



All Are Welcome – All the Time!

You do not need to be a member of this church or Lutheran to participate 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.

SHARING OF PRAYER CONCERNS & THANKSGIVING

SONG: O Come All Ye Faithful, ELW #283 (vs 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!

INVOCATION

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

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

We confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

– Silence for reflection –

Most merciful God... We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done and what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ have mercy on us.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together in Christ. By grace we have been saved.

In the name of + Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit that Christ may live in our hearts. **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

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.**

READING – Isaiah 61:10 to 62:3

I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSIVE READING – Psalm 148

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights above.

Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars.

Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the skies.

Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for at his command they were created,

and he established them for ever and ever –
he issued a decree that will never pass away.

Praise the Lord from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,

lightning and hail, snow and clouds,
stormy winds that do his bidding,

you mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,

wild animals and all cattle,
small creatures and flying birds,

kings of the earth and all nations,
you princes and all rulers on earth,

young men and women,
old men and children.

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted;
his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.

And he has raised up for his people a horn,
**the praise of all his faithful servants, of Israel,
the people close to his heart. Praise the Lord.**

SONG: How Great Thou Art, ELW #856

O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed;

**Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee.
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee.
How great thou art! How great thou art!**

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze. **Then sings my soul...**

But when I think that God, his Son not sparing
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in.
that on the cross my burden gladly bearing
he bled and died to take away my sin. **Then sings my soul...**

READING – Galatians 4:4-7

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.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

SONG: What Child Is This – ELW #296 (vs 1 & 3)

What child is this, who, laid to rest on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

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.

– *Please stand as you are able* –

This reading is found on the bulletin insert...

THE GOSPEL – Luke 2:22-40

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

When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.” Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”

The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.^[d] She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

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

SONG: Go Tell it on the Mountain, ELW #290

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere!

Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light... **Go tell...**

Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn... **Go tell...**

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 to the dead.

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

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.**

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.

BENEDICTION

May the Lord bless us and keep us.

May the Lord make His face shine on us and be gracious to us.

May the Lord look upon us with favor and give each of us His peace.

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

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

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.

DISMISSAL

Rejoice in our fresh start!

Go in peace!

Serve the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Thank you for worshipping today! And thank you to our lay leaders and all of our partner pastors for leading us in praise and worship.**
- **Thank you for the Joy Bags!** More than 60 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).
- **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 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. Thank you.