



"Immanuel, God with us"

Ascension Lutheran Church

Christmas Eve ~ December 24, 2025

CHRISTMAS EVE 2025

Welcome to all who are attending our service today. We are glad you are with us! To all guests and visitors, we especially extend our hands of friendship. May God bless the worship time for each one of you. Please come again!

NURSERY AVAILABLE We have an unstaffed nursery for your convenience and privacy. The nursery has audio and video so you may hear and see the worship service while attending to your child.

Holy Communion is celebrated at the 8:30 service on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, and at the 11:00 service on the 2nd and 4th Sundays.

+ PREPARATION +

THEME: "WRAPPED PRESENTS"

AS WE GATHER: This Advent, we prepared for our Christmas celebration by considering various ways our seasonal decorations amplify the real meaning of Christmas. Though many of the reasons behind holiday decorations go unappreciated and even unnoticed, they still point us to Christ. Some of the decorations do this in a more obvious way. Even the most secular of souls sees baby Jesus in the crèche. But even seemingly nonreligious signs of the season like evergreens and lights originated in Christendom. Now, as we have come to the Twelve Days of Christmas, we consider another Christian tradition: the exchange of Christmas presents. The giving of gifts, beautifully wrapped, reflects the gracious love of our heavenly Father, the "Father of lights," from whom "every good gift and every perfect gift" comes (James 1:17). Certainly, the greatest gift of all is none other than what we have come to celebrate: God's self-offering to us through His Son for the forgiveness of our sin. It is a gift that produces abundant blessings for us and in us. These blessings know no end. They regenerate and renew us as we walk into the bright eternity God has in store for us. The gift is all wrapped up in the babe, who lies in a manger. Come, let us adore Him!

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

“Angel Medley”

Terry Osman
Handbell Choir

“Gesù Bambino” (*Baby Jesus*)

Words by F.H. Martens, Music by Pietro Yon

Karon Keup, soloist

Karlee Navarro, trumpet

“Almost There”

Words and music by A. Grant, M.W. Smith, & W. King

Alexa Sprengle, soloist

“Shepherds, Hurry!”

Based on a Moravian carol
Words and arr. by K. L. Scott

Ascension Choir

WELCOME

HYMN

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

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!

Highest, most holy, Light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father Now in flesh appearing!
O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him!
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation!
Sing all ye citizens of Heaven above!
Glory to God, In the highest!
O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him!
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

P Brothers and sisters, we have gathered to celebrate the greatest gift of all, our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. O Come, let us worship Him!

C Christ is born!

P He is a child, and yet God. He is a babe, and yet the Lord. He is a man, and yet divine. Jesus never stopped being God, but He truly became one of us.

C The Savior has come!

P The white candle, the Christ candle, symbolizes our pure and spotless Savior, born of a virgin to save us from our sin. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

C **Glory to God!**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P On this evening, as we reflect on the greatest gift the world has ever received, it is good to remember why Jesus was sent. Because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (*Romans 3:23*), we confess our need for the forgiveness God gives us through His Son.

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (*1 John 1:8*)

C **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
(*1 John 1:9*)

(Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.)

C **Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

P Hear the Good News on this most holy night. Jesus Christ, who was born for you and died for you, gives you this gift: the forgiveness of all your sins. Through His Word, you are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

PRAYER

P Let us pray.

Everlasting Father, You brought us peace even as we rebelled against You. Thank You for being faithful to Your promise to give us a Messiah to save us from our sins and give us an eternal inheritance of reconciliation with You. Grant that, as Your children, we may receive Your love, trust in Your mercy, and enjoy the blessings of life in Your holy family; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord and Brother, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

MUSIC

“Still A Bach Christmas”

Music by J. S. Bach, arr. J. Althouse

Barbara Conway, soloist

+ THE WORD +

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 7:10-14 (ESV)

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel,” [which means, God with us.]

Titus 3:4-7 (ESV)

⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

HYMN

“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 ye nations, rise;
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’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!”

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18–23 (ESV)

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

HYMN

“O Little Town Of Bethlehem”

¹ 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.

² 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;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:1–20 (ESV)

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn Son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

MUSIC

“Joseph’s Lullaby”

Words and Music by B. Millard and B. Bannister
Alexa Sprengle, soloist

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a Baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!”

HYMN

“Angels We Have Heard On High”

¹Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o’er the plains;
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains:
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this Child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

HYMN

“Angels We Have Heard On High”

² Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be
Which inspire your heav’nly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

³ Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King!
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

SERMON **“THE GIFT”**

Pr. Jim Sprengle
Luke 2:1-20; Titus 3:4-7

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

(Our offerings are made as an act of worship, given in loving response to all that God has graciously given us, both materially and spiritually.)

Karlee Navarro, trumpet

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P Let us pray to God our Father through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Heavenly Father, in Your kindness and love, You sent Your Son into the world to be our Savior. Be with and bless all Christians as we witness to Jesus, that others may receive the greatest gift of all. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Heavenly Father, You once sent Your angels to announce good news to lonely shepherds. Send us and others with the same good news of the Savior, who has come for the lowliest among us, including the lonely and destitute, those who are homebound, those who live in nursing homes and care facilities, those who spend their days in institutions and prisons, and those who live on the streets of our towns and cities. Help us love others as You have loved us, and so provide for our neighbors in need. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Heavenly Father, we lift up those who are sick and infirm. Grant them healing of body, peace of mind, and the renewal of the Holy Spirit. Comfort them and their families with the certainty that Jesus is indeed the Savior of the nations who gives us the sure hope of eternal life. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

C **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

C 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.

MUSIC

“A Christmas Laudamus”

Traditional Latin

English words by S. Dengler, Music by L. Dengler

Ascension Choir

Laudamus te. (We praise You)
Benedicimus te. (We bless You)
Adoramus te. (We adore You)
Glorificamus te. (We glorify You)

+ CHRISTMAS BY CANDLELIGHT +

(The choir will exit the chancel and carry lit candles as they move into the center aisle. The congregation will then light their candles from these. Always keep lit candles in the upright position to keep wax from spilling. The unlit candle is tipped to be lit.)

P As the light of these candles illumine our faces, it symbolizes the light of Christ, a child in the manger at Bethlehem, a Savior suffering our death on the cross, and soon to come from His throne on high as Judge of all. He is our Light here on earth and the eternal Light who enlightens heaven, where there is no need of candle or sun. Rejoice, for the Light of the world has come, who transforms us with the brightness of His glory.

“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 Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace.
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth;
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

CLOSING PRAYER

P Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, You came as pure love to unite earth and heaven. Fill our hearts with peace and goodwill. Help us always make room for You in our lives and join with the angels in praising You for Your grace and glory; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

C Amen.

(Please extinguish Candles and do not tip them while allowing them to cool.)

BENEDICTION *(Romans 15:13)*

- P** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.
- C** **We praise You God for giving us Your Son, Jesus, the best gift of all!**
- P** May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the Magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, Son ✠ and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.
- C** **Amen.**

HYMN **“Joy to the World”**

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive its King;
Let ev'ry 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 and grace,
And 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

- P** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God!**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Call To Worship, from www.holyjoys.org

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1440 SE 182nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97233
Office Phone: 503-665-8821 · Web Site: www.alcportland.org
Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday 9am to 3pm

Our Mission Statement:

~Go and Share Jesus Christ~

Our Vision Statement:

“Take part...Join Jesus on His mission.”

The members of Ascension Lutheran Church are committed to being God's witnesses in Gresham, and in all of Portland and the Northwest, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8):

With the universal Christian Church, we believe, teach and respond to the love of the Triune God—the Father, Creator of all that exists; the Son Jesus Christ, Who left His home in Heaven to become flesh and blood, to suffer and die for the sins of all peoples of the world, and Who rose from the grave, victorious over sin, death and the devil, that we too might live with Him in Heaven; and the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts in Christ Jesus through God's Word and Sacrament. The three Persons of the Holy Trinity are one God, co-equal and co-eternal. The core teachings of our faith from the Lutheran perspective can be summarized in three short phrases: Grace alone, Scripture alone, Faith alone.

STAFF

Rev. Jim Sprengle, Pastor
pastor@alcportland.org

Rev. Ruberto Ek Yah, Pastor
rubastinoek@yahoo.com

Brad Hall, Worship and Music Coordinator
bdhall1982@yahoo.com

Michele Sprengle, Office Administrator
office@alcportland.org

Sheryl Maier, Treasurer
treasurer@alcportland.org

Wanda Cassetty,
Council Secretary
alccouncil1440@gmail.com

Laura Potter, Property Management
alcproperty1440@gmail.com