



JOY  
TO THE WORLD

Ascension Lutheran Church  
Christmas Day ~ December 25, 2024

## CHRISTMAS DAY 2024

**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: "THE WORD BECAME FLESH"

**AS WE GATHER:** At Christmas, our lives and attention are often occupied not only with the smaller details of the season—the decorations, the gifts, the special menus, the schedule of events—but also with those details of greater importance: family, parents and grandparents, children and grandchildren, as well as those of more distant relationships. Greater than that, as Christians we center our celebration here in God's presence to hear God's Word, to attend to what is most important, which alone can give all the other details of life its most solid foundation. That Word puts everything else in its proper perspective, including our place and participation in the kingdom of God. The "big picture" includes God's amazing creation from the beginning, as well as our part in mankind's fall into sin and struggle with Satan and death. Then enters God's great remedy: our salvation from sin and death through the redemption that is in God Himself, in the person of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, our Lord. His incarnation and birth from the virgin Mary was a great miracle—God taking on our human flesh and blood. Greater, however, was His own sacrifice in our flesh, by which He has cast down Satan and his lies and raised up a new creation to new, eternal life. On this day, amid any and all distractions and details, the familiar hymn has it right: "How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!" (*LSB* 728:1).

#### PRELUDE

## WELCOME

### Angels from the Realms of Glory

LSB 367

- 1 Angels from the realms of glory,  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
Ye who sang creation's story,  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

**Refrain Come and worship, come and worship;  
Worship Christ, the newborn King.**

- 2 Shepherds in the field abiding,  
Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing,  
Yonder shines the Infant Light. **(refrain)**

- D 5 All creation, join in praising  
God the Father, Spirit, Son,  
Evermore your voices raising  
To the eternal Three in One. **(refrain)**

Angels from the Realms of Glory, Text (sts. 1, ref, 2): James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt.; (st. 5): Salisbury Hymn Book, 1857, Salisbury, alt., Text: Public domain

## INVOCATION

- P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
C **Amen.**

## OPENING SENTENCES

LSB 383:2

- P The Word becomes incarnate and yet remains on high,  
C **and cherubim sing anthems to shepherds from the sky.**  
P Proclaim the Savior's birth:  
C **"To God on high be glory and peace to all the earth!"**

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- P The infant Christ—the radiance of the glory of God—came to make purification for the sins of the world, to swallow up death forever, and to be the light of life for those who walked in darkness. In praise of God's mighty deliverance, we humble ourselves before Him in repentant prayer.  
C **Lord God, heavenly Father, we bow before You and confess that we indeed have walked in darkness; in the blindness of**

**sin, we have neglected You, lost by our own fault. But we have seen the great light in the gift of Your only Son. Enlighten our hearts, our minds, and our lives by the forgiveness of our sins and the great promises of Your heavenly grace and mercy; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

P God has spoken His promises by the prophets, and now in these last days has spoken to us by His Son. By the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, announce the grace of God to all of you and speak His own absolution: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

### **CHRISTMAS ACCLAMATION**

P Today we celebrate Christ's birth in Bethlehem.

C **Today we celebrate Christ's birth in each of us.**

P For Christ is born in Bethlehem to save the whole world.

C **And Christ is born in our hearts to save us each from sin.**

P Christ is born in Bethlehem to fulfill the words of the prophets of old.

C **And Christ is born in our hearts so that we may speak the words of Good News to future generations.**

P Christ is born in Bethlehem to bring joy to the world.

C **And Christ is born in our hearts to restore to us the joy of His salvation.**

### **Now Sing We, Now Rejoice**

1 Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav'n our voice;  
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;  
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.  
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!

3 Now through His Son doth shine The Father's grace divine.  
Death was reigning o'er us Through sin and vanity

Till He opened for us A bright eternity.

May we praise Him there! May we praise Him there!

Now Sing We, Now Rejoice, Text: Latin and German, 14th cent.; tr. Arthur T. Russell, 1806–74, alt., Text: Public domain

## **SALUTATION**

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P Let us pray.

Merciful God, as we celebrate the birth of Your only-begotten Son, our Savior, help us to remember the purpose of His earthly ministry that we may take confidence in our deliverance from sin, Satan, and death; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

## **SHARING THE PEACE OF THE LORD**

P The peace of the Lord be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

## **+ THE WORD +**

### **OLD TESTAMENT READING**

Isaiah 52:7-10 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup>How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” <sup>8</sup>The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion. <sup>9</sup>Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted His people; He has redeemed Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup>The LORD has bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

### **EPISTLE READING**

Hebrews 1:1-12 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup>Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. <sup>3</sup>He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup>having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs. <sup>5</sup>For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are My Son, today I have begotten You”? Or again, “I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son”? <sup>6</sup>And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, “Let all God’s angels worship Him.” <sup>7</sup>Of the angels He says, “He makes His angels winds, and His ministers a flame of fire.” <sup>8</sup>But of the Son He says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. <sup>9</sup>You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness beyond Your companions.” <sup>10</sup>And, “You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of Your hands; <sup>11</sup>they will perish, but You remain; they will all wear out like a garment, <sup>12</sup>like a robe You will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## HOLY GOSPEL

John 1:1-18 (ESV)

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. <sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness, to bear witness about the Light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him.

<sup>11</sup>He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the

right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>(John bore witness about Him, and cried out, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because He was before me.’”) <sup>16</sup>And from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, He has made Him known.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

### What Child Is This

LSB370

- 1 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!
- 2 Why lies He in such mean estate  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,  
The cross be borne for me, for you;  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary!
- 3 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!

What Child Is This, Text: William C. Dix, 1837–98, Text: Public domain LSB370

### **SERMON**

**“THE WORD (GOD) BECAME FLESH”**

Pr. Jim Sprenkle  
John 1:1-18

## 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.)*

### The First Noel

The first Noel, the angel did say,  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,  
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

### Refrain

**Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,  
born is the King of Israel.**

They look-ed up and saw a star  
shining in the east, beyond them far;  
and to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night. **(refrain)**

This star drew nigh to the northwest;  
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,  
and there it did both stop and stay,  
right over the place where Jesus lay. **(refrain)**

Then let us all with one accord  
sing praises to our heav'nly Lord,  
that hath made heav'n and earth of naught,  
and with His blood mankind hath bought. **(refrain)**

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, we give thanks to You for our creation, our life, and all Your gifts. But we especially give You thanks that, in many and various ways, You spoke Your Word of grace, comfort, and truth, first through Your holy prophets, but now in these last days by Your very own Son, whose coming into our flesh we celebrate this day.

By His coming, He has brought us forgiveness and new, eternal



life. Help us to live in Him even as He lives in us. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

**P** Cause the joyous message of Your angels—of Your glory and peace to all—to resound in our country and throughout the world. Bless, guard, and guide all in the authority of government in our land. Prosper the preaching of the Gospel by Your church, keeping all pastors and teachers steadfast in Your word of salvation. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

**P** Renew our hearts and those of all Your people in the joy and peace of Your salvation and help us to reflect Your love for all in all that we say and do. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

**P** For all who are in any need in these days, for the lonely and abandoned, for the wayward and the hopeless, for those in trouble or despair, and for the sick and dying, bring Your saving Word of mercy, forgiveness, health, healing, and hope by faith in Your Son, the Savior of the world. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

**P** Grant Your blessing to rest upon our families—husbands, wives, children, grandparents, and other relatives. Bind our hearts together by Your own gifts of love. Remembering those whom You have called into Your nearer presence, we give You thanks. Keep us in the same saving faith that we may be numbered among those You have redeemed for eternal life in the day of resurrection. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

**P** Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER (sung)**

(tune: "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear")

Our Father, Lord on Heav'n's high throne,  
Most holy be Your name.  
Your kingdom come. Your will be done  
On earth—in Heav'n the same.

Give us this day the food we need;  
Forgiven may we be;  
Into temptation do not lead;  
From evil set us free.

Yours is the kingdom; unto You  
In grateful love we bow;  
And Yours the pow'r; Lord, let us view  
Your mighty presence now.  
The glory Yours; Your praise be sung  
By angel hosts and men  
In ev'ry land, by ev'ry tongue  
Forevermore! Amen.

## SENDING

- P And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.
- C **For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.**
- P And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
- C **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.**
- P Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
- C **Come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.**
- P For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called:
- C **Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.**
- P Let us go forth and share the gift of Christ that is not just for a nation, or a people, or a specific tongue or race, but Good News for the whole world.
- C **Joy to the world, the Lord has come!**

## BENEDICTION

- P Christmas peace and joy through God’s infinite love given in Christ, His only-begotten Son, be yours; and the blessing of God Almighty—Father, T Son, and Holy Spirit—be with you and abide with you forever.
- C **Amen.**

## Go Tell It on the Mountain

LSB 388

**Refrain** Go tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills and ev’rywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!

- 1 While shepherds kept their watching  
O’er silent flocks by night,  
Behold, throughout the heavens  
There shone a holy light. **(refrain)**
- 2 The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo, above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior’s birth. **(refrain)**
- 3 Down in a lonely manger  
The humble Christ was born;  
And God sent us salvation  
That blessèd Christmas morn. **(refrain)**

Go Tell It on the Mountain, Text (sts. 1–3): John W. Work II, 1873–1925, alt.; (ref): African American spiritual, Text: Public domain

## DISMISSAL

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

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Ascension Lutheran Church

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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**

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