



"Helping others receive grace, purpose and direction by proclaiming Christ's love."

CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

www.calvarylutheranscottsbluff.org

308-632-8023

CHRISTMAS EVE 2023

On a long winter evening we gather to proclaim the coming of the light. Isaiah announces that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Paul reminds us that the grace of God brings salvation to all. In the familiar account of Christ's birth, the evening sky is bright with the heavenly host singing, "Glory to God in the highest." Amid our broken world we proclaim that the Prince of peace is born among us. God comes to us in human flesh—in Christ's body and blood—so that we may be bearers of divine light to all the world.

Prayer Before Worship: Dear Lord, help us make room for you this night of all nights; room in our minds and hearts; room also in our life together. Let your word be born in us anew so that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, your splendor shines in us and through us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

(In preparation for our worship together, you are invited to pause now and offer your own prayers of worship and praise.)

***INDICATES PLEASE STAND IF ABLE.**
Congregational responses are printed in **BOLD**

Prelude

Tahnee Hutchinson

‡WE LIFT OUR HEARTS IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP‡

Hymn:

"Oh Come, All Ye Faithful"

ELW #283
vv. 1-2

**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:**

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

2. The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

The Christmas Greeting and Prayer

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

May the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, Word made flesh, born of Mary,
be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you made this holy night 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.

‡THE GOOD NEWS FOR ALL PEOPLE‡

Old Testament Reading:

Isaiah 9:2–7

² 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. ³You 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. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For 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. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Hymn:

“What Child is This”

ELW #296

vv. 1-2

**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!**

Second Reading:

Titus 3:4-7

⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. ⁶This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn:

“I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve”

ELW #271

vv. 1

**1. I am so glad each Christmas Eve,
the night of Jesus' birth!
Then like the sun the star shone forth,
and angels sang on earth.**

Psalm 96

¹O sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
²Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.
³Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.
⁴For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.
⁵For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
⁶Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.
⁷Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
⁸Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts.
⁹Worship the LORD in holy splendor;
tremble before him, all the earth.
¹⁰Say among the nations, "The LORD is king!
The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
He will judge the peoples with equity."
¹¹Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
¹²let the field exult, and everything in it.
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
¹³before the LORD; for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with his truth.

***Hymn:**

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

ELW #270
vv. 1-2

**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!"**

Refrain: Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

2. Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*

THE CHRISTMAS GOSPEL

The Good News: A Child is Born.

Luke 2:1-7

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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.

Hymn:

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

ELW #279
vv. 1-2

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. For Christ is born of Mary,
and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.

O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all the earth!

The Christmas Message

Pastor George Kilmer

Hymn:

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

ELW #275
vv. 1-2

1. Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

2. Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

‡WE RESPOND TO GOD'S GIFT OF A SAVIOR‡

***Profession of Faith: the 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.**

The Prayers of the People

Each portion of the prayers ends with:

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

The prayers conclude with:

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace. **Amen.**

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

Offering

Tahnee Hutchinson

***Offertory Prayer**

God of abundance,
**receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the
angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all
the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ,
the Word made flesh. Amen.**

‡WE CELEBRATE IMMANUEL-GOD WITH US‡

Here our Lord Jesus gives to us His own Body and Blood for the forgiveness of all our sins.

Confession of Sins and Assurance of Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, Father, ‡ Son and Holy Spirit who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

Amid the darkness of this world, let us confess our sin and welcome the light of God's forgiveness.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of grace and truth,

In Christ Jesus you come among us as light shining in the darkness. We confess that we have not welcomed the light, and have not trusted the good news of great joy. Forgive us and renew our hope, so that we may live in the fullness of your love, trusting in the grace of Christ our Lord. Amen.

The angel said, you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins. With great joy, I announce to you the entire forgiveness of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ‡ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

***The Great Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

***Words of Institution**

***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 Communion

In this holy sacrament God makes a home with us.

Let us approach in wonder and joy at all that God has done for us.

Distribution of Communion

Christ is truly present in the Lord's Supper with gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

All are invited to participate in the Lord's meal.

(Communion will be served continuously at two stations in the front of the church.

Please follow the usher's instructions as directed.

WHITE GRAPE JUICE and GLUTEN FREE wafers are available. Just ask the server.

Children who are not yet communicants are invited to come forward for a blessing.)

Distribution Music

Hymn:

"Joy to the World"

**ELW #267
vv. 1&2**

- 1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her 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.**
- 2. 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.**

Hymn:

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

**ELW #282
vv. 1-2**

- 1. It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.**

2. Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heav'nly music floats
o'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hov'ring wing,
and ever o'er its babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

Hymn:

“The First Noel”

ELW #300
vv. 1-2

1. 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.

2. They looked 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*

***Post-Communion Prayer**

God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Christmas Candle Lighting Ceremony

The minister lights a large candle from an altar candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world of whom John's gospel speaks. The ushers light their candles from the minister's candle, then light the candle of each worshipper nearest the aisle. The lighted candle is never tilted, but is always held upright when giving light to another.

The Gospel of the Incarnation (*read as the candles are lit*)

John 1:1-5, 14

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

After all candles have been lit, we sing:

Hymn:

“Silent Night, Holy Night!”

ELW #281

**1. 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.**

**2. 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!**

(Candles are raised)

**3. 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.**

The candles are extinguished.

***The Blessing and Dismissal**

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. **Amen.**

Go forth in joy to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God!

Postlude

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DECEMBER 24-25, 2023

CHRISTMAS EVE,
CHRISTMAS DAY



God's plan for hope, peace, joy, and love.

CHRISTMAS BIBLE READINGS

Take time to read and reflect on these Bible passages as part of your Christmas observances.

Sunday

Isaiah 9:2-7

The reign of the coming king

Psalms 96

Sing a new song

Monday

Titus 2:11-14

God's kindness and the new life

Luke 2:1-20

The birth of Jesus

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR CHRISTMAS

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. Luke 2:19-20 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for Christmas:
Almighty and merciful God, we give you thanks and praise for the birth of Jesus, our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:
Dear God, we thank you for this food, for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the seas roar, and all that fills it. Amen. (Psalm 96:11)

A Blessing to Give:
May the birth of Jesus the Messiah give you joy. (Luke 2:11)



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DECEMBER 24-25, 2023

HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS
Silent Night, Holy Night



CHRISTMAS MILESTONES
Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When you think of the Christmas story, what do you wonder about?
- Who (angel, shepherd, Mary, Joseph) would you be in the Christmas story? Why?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Luke 2:1-20.

Christmas tells a surprising story of God's saving work. God joins our world as a vulnerable baby. This child was born to a couple who were forced to leave home because of a new census registration law. Jesus' birth and the humble beginnings do not fit our usual perceptions of divine power and glory. And yet, angels come with a message of good news for all, a message not seen as favorable to rulers of the empire. The angelic messengers even give lowly shepherds front row seats to a cosmic chorus signaling that the world is being turned upside down. Every Christmas we are invited to join angels, shepherds, Mary, and Joseph and let loose with joy at the news that the world of compassion and vulnerability is blessed by God. Life as God wants it is coming to fruition. It leads us to ponder with Mary what it all means and to give shouts of praise to God with shepherds and all those looking for God's amazing power for peace, acceptance, and hope.
Discuss: How does the Christmas story encourage you to give thanks and praise to God?
Pray: Almighty God, give us hearts and minds to cherish Jesus' birth and the message of the angels that brings peace and joy for all. Amen.

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Bible Readings and theme for Christmas, how can you share the joy of Jesus' birth with someone?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The scripture readings during Advent all pointed to Jesus. Place a white candle in the center of the four candles on the Advent wreath. The white candle represents Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Psalm 96 is a song of praise to God. For Christians that includes Jesus, our Lord: "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice." Gather around the Advent wreath. Light the first candle of hope, the second candle of peace, the third candle of joy and the fourth candle of love. Take a moment to reflect on the Advent journey before lighting the white candle that represents Jesus Christ. As you light the white candle, say: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5)



In addition to Taking Faith Home, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org