



*Holy
night,*

*the
stars are
brightly
shining.*

*The true light that gives light to everyone
was coming into the world.*

JOHN 1:9 (NIV®)

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

The Nativity of Our Lord

Candle Light Service

December 24, 2023

We Prepare For Worship

(* Please stand as able.)

Silence and Meditation

Prelude

“Emmanuel”

Welcome

*Prayer of Confession and Forgiveness:

P. Let us confess our sins and hear the promise of forgiveness. (Silence for self examination.)

C. Merciful God, we confess too often we find darkness more comfortable than light. We have sinned against you by not putting Christ first in our lives. We have not followed our Savior’s call to love others as He has loved us. We have turned away from those you sent Him to save and the life He calls us to live. In your mercy, through Jesus’ name, forgive our sins and transform our lives, dear God. Give us courage to be open to the wonder and healing of your coming, that through Christ, we receive your forgiveness and life.

P. Brothers and Sisters in Christ, hear the Good News. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will never overcome it. A Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord has come into our world. And because of this truth, God has heard our confession and God has forgiven our sin.

C. Thanks be to God!

*Call To Worship:

P. Rejoice, for God is with us — Emmanuel.

C. In the darkness of our world shines God's holy light.

P. Now there is reason to hope, to love, to laugh, to live.

C. God is truly with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

Hymn 45

*Opening Prayer:

P. Let us pray. God of majesty,

C. On this holy night your light and life broke into the darkness of our human condition. Grant that your light and life will continue to shine through us into a dark and weary world. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We Welcome you to Holy Trinity: The members of Holy Trinity welcome all our worshipers and guests to our celebration of The Nativity of our Lord. We pray that you God will bless you with the joy of our Savior’s birth and be strengthened to share the light of Christ that has come into our world.

We give thanks to God for everyone who helped prepare our worship space and serve as part of our worship celebration tonight!

Please welcome Ms. Joanna Mulfinger, guest violinist, to our service tonight. Ms. Mulfinger is a member of the Greenville Symphony Orchestra. She is also a violin instructor. We are delighted to have her in the service tonight.

Special thanks to Joanna Mulfinger, Dorothy Armstrong (violin), Lauren Armstrong (flute), Brett Lindler (organ), and Lib Boland (piano) for accompanying us on the singing of “Joy to the World”.

*The Altar flowers are given to the Glory of God and
in honor of the celebration of Christ’s birth
by Darin & Becky Boland*



* "Joy to the World"

Hymn 39

- 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.
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 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, wonders of his love.

Worshippers are invited to follow the Choir as we process out of the Sanctuary with candles still lit, proclaiming to the world the joy that has entered our lives through God's love in Christ Jesus. As everyone gathers around the church steps, the pastor will close with the Sending and Charge.

*Sending and Charge:

P: Go in peace to share the light of Christ.

C: Thanks be to God!

We depart to share the light of Christ. Candles may now be extinguished; place candles in the appropriate receptacles provided by ushers.

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

God's Word Proclaimed

First Reading

Isaiah 7:10-14

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

L. Here ends the reading.

C. Thank be to God.

Psalm 110:1-4

¹The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit | at my right hand,*
until I make your ene- | mies your footstool."

²The LORD will send the scepter of your power | out of Zion,*
saying, "Rule over your enemies | round about you.

³Princely state has been yours from the day | of your birth;*
in the beauty of holiness have I begotten you, like dew from the womb | of the morning."

⁴The LORD has sworn and he will | not recant:*

"You are a priest forever after the order | of Melchizedek."

Second Reading

1 John 4:7-16

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. ¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

L. Here ends the reading.

C. Thank be to God.

The Holy Gospel:

Matthew 1:18-25

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.

C. Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸The 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. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But 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. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All 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). ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord.

C. Praise to You, O Christ.

The Children's Sermon: *As the children come forward the congregation is invited to sing verse 1 of "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" on p. 44 of the LBW. We will sing verse 2 as they return to their seats.*

Christmas Message

Pastor Randy Drafts

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Hymn 60

*The Nicene Creed

Page 64

*The Prayers

*The Peace

We Offer Our Gifts to God

The Offering

The Anthem

"Baby Boy"

Choir

Lauren Armstrong, Flute

*Offertory Hymn:

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" (vs. 1)

Hymn 55

*Offertory Prayer:

P. Let us pray. God of time and eternity,

C. You have given your only Son, born to Mary, to save and redeem us. Receive now these gifts that we bring and let the works of your hands proclaim the news of your redeeming love in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*The Great Thanksgiving

Page 68

*The Eucharistic Prayer

Page 70

*The Lord's Prayer

Page 71

Communion: *All are welcome at the Lord's Table. We receive communion at the chancel steps by Intinction. (This means you will receive the wafer and dip it into the wine before eating.) When directed by the usher, please come forward, receive the gift of our Lord and return to your seat for prayer. If you are unable to come forward, please notify an usher and we will gladly serve you in the pew. Children and others who do not commune are invited to come forward for a blessing.*

Love Has Come (vs.1)

Love has come a light in the darkness!

Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.

See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;

hear how their song of joy arises:

Love! Love! Born unto you, a savior!

Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

*Post Communion Blessing

*Post Communion Hymn

What Child is This?

Page 40

*Post Communion Prayer

Page 74

God Sends Us Into The World

The Candle Lighting

The Pastor lights a candle and passes the light to the worship assistants. As they come to your pew, worshippers light their candles and pass the light down their respective pew. Unlit candles are tilted to receive the flame. The lit candle is never tilted. When all the candles are lit and the lights are dimmed, the Christmas Proclamation is read.

* "Silent Night, Holy Night"

Hymn 65

***The Christmas Proclamation:**

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

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

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

C. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

* Christmas Blessing

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.