

Blue Christmas Worship Service

Tidings of Comfort

December 13, 2023

7:30 p.m.

REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH

613 Lakeview Avenue
Milford, Delaware, 19963



Phone: 302-422-9117

www.rlcmilford.com

Gail Kelso

Director of Music / Organist

The Rev. Eric W. Evers & The Rev. Paige G. Evers

Pastors

Please silence cell phones before worship begins. Thank you

GATHERING

Prelude

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Sigrid Evers

Welcome

Gathering Hymn

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”



1 Oh, come, oh, come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
2 Oh, come, oh, come, great Lord of might, who to your tribes on
3 Oh, come, strong Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's
4 Oh, come, blest Day - spring, come and cheer our spir - its by your
5 Oh, come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen wide our



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
Si - nai's height in an - cient times once gave the law
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save
ad - vent here; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,
heav'n - ly home; make safe the way that leads on high,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re - joice! Re - joice!
and death's dark shad - ows put to flight.
and close the path to mis - er - y.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

Text: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. John M. Neale, 1818–1866, alt.
Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.

Greeting & Prayer of the Day

P: Show us your mercy, Lord.

C: **And grant us your salvation.**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray...

C: **Amen**

WORD

Bible Reading

Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." ⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Bible Reading

Psalms 90:1-4, 12

¹Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. ²Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. ³You turn us back to dust, and say, "Turn back, you mortals." ⁴For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night. ¹²So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Special Music

"Wonderful"

Pastor Paige Evers

"Gathered round the table, So much to be thankful for. It's Christmas. Oh, how I've missed this. But through the joy and laughter You can feel the sadness, 'cause this Christmas Ev'ryone's not with us. It's the time of year When happiness and cheer Won't be enough to get me through the night. I need a Wonderful Counselor..."

Bible Reading**1 Peter 5:6-7, 10-11**

⁶Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. ⁷Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. ¹⁰And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Holy Gospel**John 1:1-5, 10-14**

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 1st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In 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. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. 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.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Reflection

Pastor Dianna Smith

Hymn of the Day

"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

No. 276

PRAYERS & LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

P: God of love, as we light the first candle, we pray for your help and comfort with the pain of loss; the loss of relationships, the loss of jobs, or the loss of health. We pause and ask for your constant presence as we gather up the pain of the past. We bring before you our loneliness and our loss of hope. We offer it all to you, asking that from your hands we may receive the gift of peace.
O Holy God,

C: hear our prayer.

Silent Night

No. 281, verse 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.**

P: God of life, as we light the second candle, we pray for your presence and comfort as we remember those whom we have loved and lost. We pause to remember their faces, their voices, and the memories that bind them to us in this season. Be with us as we remember those whose names we offer now, aloud or in the silence of our hearts. May your eternal love surround them.
O Holy God,

C: hear our prayer.

Silent Night

No. 281, verse 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!**

P: God of life, as we light the third candle, we pray for ourselves this Christmastime. We pause and remember times of sadness, confusion, or disbelief. Guide us to continue to seek your presence in the midst of hard times. We thank you for the love and support of family and friends, our neighbors and our fellow church members through all the highs and lows of our days, and of this season. O Holy God,

C: hear our prayer.

Silent Night

No. 281, verse 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.**

P: God of hope, as we light the fourth candle, we thank you for the gift of faith. Strengthen our faith and trust in you as we recall the story of the first Christmas, the humble birth of our Savior. We thank you for becoming a human in Jesus and for understanding our vulnerability and the challenges of life. Thank you for being with us in the midst of all of our days, and for promising us a future where there will be no more tears, no more suffering, and no more pain. O Holy God,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Let us remember the One who shows the way, who brings the truth, and who shines his light on us, Jesus Christ our Lord. In his name we pray,

C: Amen.

The congregation is invited to come forward and light individual candles in remembrance, or you may remain seated for reflection and prayer.

MEAL

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is right, and a good and joyful thing...

...we praise your name and join their unending praise:

**C: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

P: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ...
...All honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray...

**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.**

Distribution of Communion

Post-Communion Blessing

C: Amen.

Post-Communion Prayer

A: Let us pray. Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work or watch
or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who
sleep. Tend the sick, give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe
the suffering, comfort the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for
your love's sake.

C: Amen.

SENDING

Benediction

P: May Christ Jesus, who by his incarnation has filled us and the
world with grace and truth and light, give you peace this
Christmas. May Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless
you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn "It Came upon the Midnight Clear"

No. 282

Dismissal

A: The Coming of the Lord is near. Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Worshippers are welcome to stay after the service for quiet prayer and reflection.

Serving this Evening

Preacher	Pastor Dianna Smith
Presiding Minister	Pastor Paige Evers
Worship Assistant	Todd Hannah
Lay Reader	Joy Rowe
Altar Guild	Eric Valentine
Ushers	Steve & Edith Weipert
Music Director	Gail Kelso
Violinist	Sigrid Evers

You are Invited!

Advent and Christmas Worship & Special Events Reformation Lutheran Church

Decorate the Church for Christmas

Sunday, December 17 at 3:00 pm

Christmas Eve Worship Services

Sunday, December 24

Choir Cantata and Holy Communion at 10:00 am

Festive Christmas Worship at 4:00 & 7:00 pm

*Both Services include Holy Communion
and Candlelight; the 4:00 service will be live streamed*

One Worship Service—First Sunday of Christmas

Sunday, December 31 at 10:00 am

Lessons, Carols & Holy Communion



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We Invite You to Join Us on Sunday mornings

We worship at 8:30 and 11:00 AM and offer Bible Study and Coffee Fellowship at 9:45. The 8:30 service is live streamed on YouTube. You can find our channel at www.rlcmilford.com/video.

Visit www.rlcmilford.com/connect to find the Sunday bulletin (usually by Friday afternoon) for worship. After the service, the live stream recording is reposted on YouTube and on our website: www.rlcmilford.com.

