

REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Gail Kelso	Director of Music / Organist
The Rev. Eric W. and The Rev. Paige G. Evers	Pastors

The Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Eve 2023 4:00 pm

Candlelight Service with Holy Communion

A Christmas Eve Welcome

“Be not afraid...” So said the angels long ago to Mary, to Joseph, and to shepherds who would come to visit the Christ child. Jesus, God’s own beloved Son, has come into the world to bring peace and hope. In his great love, we find forgiveness and healing for our souls. In his resurrection, we find the promise of eternal life.

As we gather to worship the newborn King, we are glad you are here tonight. If you are a visitor, know that there is “room in the inn” here for you, unlike what Mary and Joseph found that first Christmas!

Tonight, we celebrate Holy Communion. All baptized Christians are welcome to receive the sacrament. Please follow the usher’s directions to the altar. If you prefer to receive a gluten free wafer or white grape juice, please tell the Communion servers. Those who do not yet receive Communion are invited to come and receive a blessing. At the Lord’s table, we receive the Body and Blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of our faith. Come, taste and see that the Lord is good!

Prelude

“O Holy Night”

Sigrid Evers

Announcements

The Gathering Hymn “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

No. 283

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

3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God ... in the highest!

Refrain

4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

Refrain

The Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray together.

C: **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 on the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Musical Offering

“The Little Dummer Boy”

Dresden Miller

First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

²The 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.

A: The Word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

Musical Offering

“What Child Is This”

Soren Evers

Second Reading

Titus 2:11-14

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

A: The Word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

Musical Offering

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Eli Rakow

Third Reading

Hebrews 1:1-6

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things,

through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. ⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son”? ⁶And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”

A: The Word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

Musical Offering

“This Is My Wish”

Lexi Caccamise

Gospel Processional

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” (v. 1)

No. 276

Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!

The Christmas Eve Gospel

Luke 2:1-20

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 2nd chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

In 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.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be

afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” ¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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

Gospel Processional

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” (v. 2)

No. 276

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.

Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:

Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

Sermon

Pastor Paige G. Evers

Hymn of the Day “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

No. 270

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

3 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.

Refrain

The Prayers

Prayers are offered for the Church and the world.

Each prayer ends as follows:

A: Lord in your mercy,

C: **Hear our prayer.**

The Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

Gathering of Offerings

"Heaven Everywhere"

Kelsey Oldland

Offertory

“What Child Is This” (v. 1, 3)

No. 296

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!
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!

The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.
C: **And also with you.**
P: Lift up your hearts.
C: **We lift them to the Lord.**
P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C: **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**
P: It is indeed right and salutary...
C: **Amen.**

The Words of Institution

The 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.**

The Distribution of Communion

Please follow the usher's directions to the altar.

Communion Hymns: No. 277, "Away in a Manger;" No. 300, "The First Noel;"
No. 272, "Lo, How a Rose;" No. 269, "Once in Royal David's City"

Post-Communion Blessing

Congregation responds with Amen.

Post-Communion Prayer

Congregation responds with Amen.

Christmas Candlelight

*The Pastor takes a candle and lights it from the Paschal candle, which symbolizes
Christ, the light of the world.*

P: Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." And again he said to his disciples: "You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

*The light is passed. The lighted candle is never tilted
when giving light to another.*

"Silent Night, Holy Night"

No. 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!

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.

Benediction

Please extinguish your candles for the hymn and return them in the narthex at the close of the service.

Sending Hymn "Joy to the World"

No. 267

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 flood, 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.

Dismissal

A: Go in peace, share Christmas joy!

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Organ


SERVING THIS EVENING

Usher	Ed Huey
Lay Reader	Karolyn Hayes
Worship Assistant	Eric Valentine
Acolyte	Lexi Caccamise
Altar Guild	Pam Curnock
Live Stream Operator	Scott Rainville

Announcements

Thank you to the Emory family for their donation of our lovely Christmas tree.

Thank you! So many people worked so hard for our Christmas celebrations. Thank you to all who provided music, decorated, invited friends and family, helped to lead worship, and did so many things “behind the scenes.” Your efforts have glorified God and been a blessing to many. Thank you to all of you, and especially to Gail and Mary Lu, for all the extra hours you have put in during this season!



***You are Invited to Continue the
Celebration of the Savior's Birth!***

One Worship Service—The First Sunday of Christmas

Sunday, December 31 at 10:00 am

Lessons, Carols & Holy Communion

Regular schedule resumes January 7:

Worship at 8:30 & 11:00 am; Bible Study & Fellowship at 9:45 am