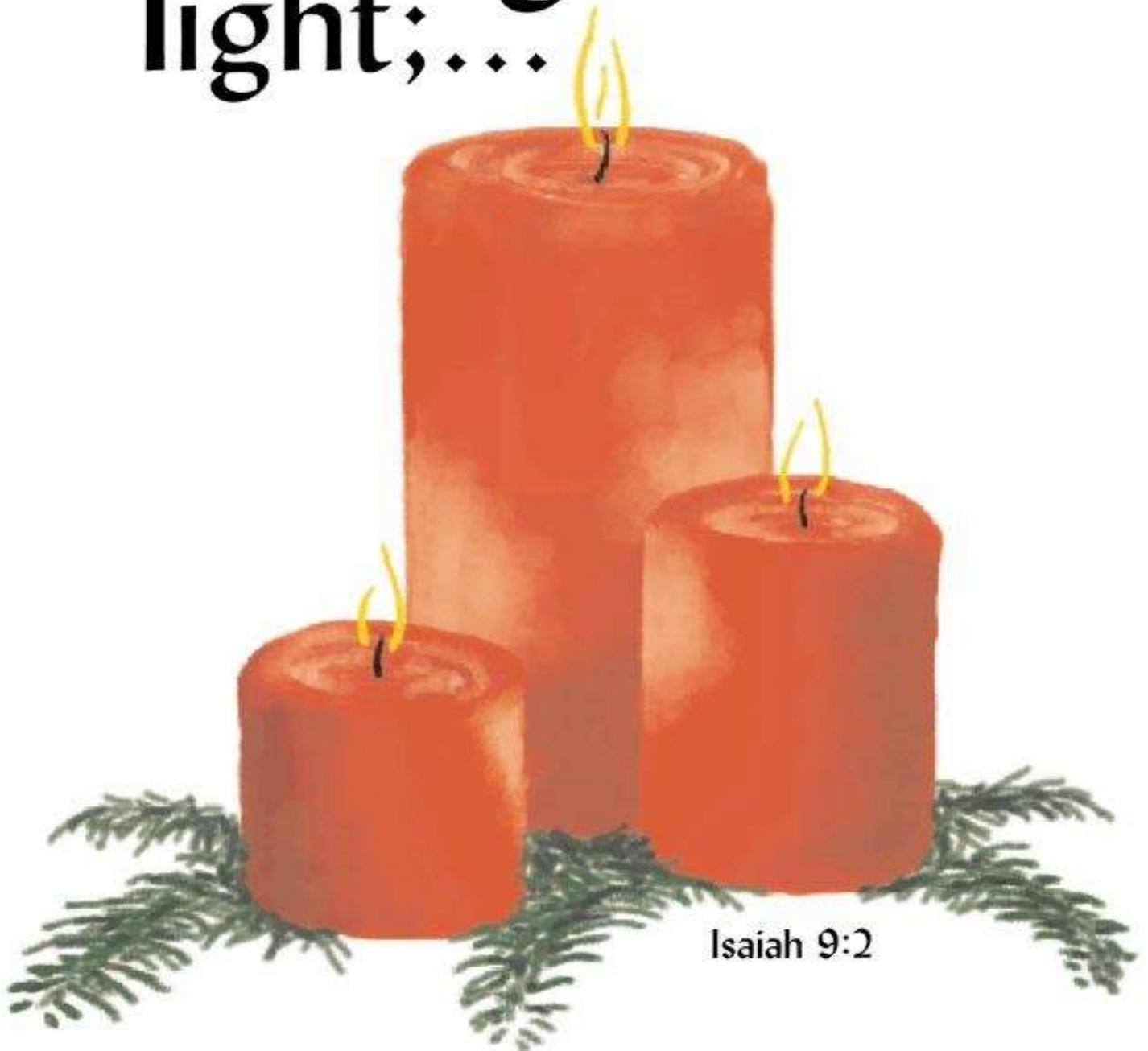


The people
walking in
darkness have
seen a great
light;...



Isaiah 9:2

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Nativity of our Lord

Christmas Eve

DECEMBER 24, 2013

6:40 pm—CAROLS AT THE PRELUDE

7:00 pm—FESTIVAL HOLY EUCHARIST & CANDLELIGHTING

Carols at the Prelude

Angels, from the Realms of Glory (LSB 367)

- 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.
- ⁵ All creation, join in praising God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One.
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

What Child Is This (LSB 370)

- 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!
- 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!

The First Noel

- 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.
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.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.
- 3 And by the light of that same star
Three Wise Men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.
- 4 This star drew near 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.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

O Little Town of Bethlehem (LSB 361)

- 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.
- 3 **How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!**
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming; but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still, the dear Christ enters in.
- 4 O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

Away in a Manger (LSB 365)

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay;
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.
- 2 The cattle are lowing, the poor baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask You to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Your tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with You there.

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly (LSB 393)

- 1 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!
- 2 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!

It Came upon the Midnight Clear (LSB 366)

- 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.
- 4 **For lo! The days are hast’ning on, By prophets seen of old,**
When with the ever-circling years Shall come the time foretold,
When peace shall over all the earth Its ancient splendors fling,
And all the world give back the song Which now the angels sing.



Greeting

PASTOR LARSON

THE INVOCATION AND RESPONSORIAL

- P In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.
P The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
C those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.
P When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman,
C born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law.



*The Processional Cross symbolizes the Christ who takes on human flesh and comes into our midst.
Please join the choirs in the singing of the carol.*

The Carol in Procession *O Come, All Ye Faithful* (LSB 379)

- 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 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 glory giv'n!
Word of the Father Now in flesh appearing! REFRAIN

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- P The time is fulfilled. Let us repent, confessing our sins to God our Father.
- C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.
- P In 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. Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore **forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.**
- C Amen, so be it! Amen!

The Hymn of Praise *Angels We Have Heard on High* (LSB 368)

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, Echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

The Prayer of the Day

- P The Lord be with you.
- C And also with you.
- P *Let us pray.* O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that, as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C Amen.

A Bell Meditation

Carol of the Drum (The Little Drummer Boy) MIKE MAGATAGAN, arranged
The Gloria Dei Ringers

SERVICE OF THE WORD

The Old Testament: Isaiah 7:10-14

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, "Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!



A Christmas Anthem *In the Bleak Midwinter* MARK SHEPPERD, arranged
The Ascension Chorale
Diana Gaide, piano; Ann Westra, flute

IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER, FROSTY WING MADE MOAN,
EARTH STOOD HARD AS IRON, WATER LIKE A STONE;
SNOW HAD FALLEN, SNOW ON SNOW, SNOW ON SNOW,
IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER, LONG AGO.

OUR GOD, HEAV'N CANNOT HOLD HIM, NOR EARTH SUSTAIN;
HEAV'N AND EARTH SHALL FLEE AWAY
WHEN HE COMES TO REIGN;
IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER,
A STABLE PLACE SUFFICED
THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, JESUS CHRIST.

WHAT CAN I GIVE HIM, POOR AS I AM?
IF I WERE A SHEPHERD, I WOULD BRING A LAMB;
IF I WERE A WISE MAN, I WOULD DO MY PART;
WHAT I CAN I GIVE HIM; GIVE HIM MY HEART.

The New Testament: I John 4:7-16

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

- L The Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God!



Please rise, and as the Crucifer enters the congregation, turn and face the Processional Cross.

The Gospel Procession *Once in Royal David's City* (LSB 376)

- 1 **Once in royal David's city Stood a lowly cattle shed,**
Where a mother laid her baby In a manger for His bed;
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.
- 2 He came down to earth from heaven, Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable, And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly Lived on earth our Savior holy.
- 4 And our eyes at last shall see Him Through His own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle Is our Lord in heav'n above;
And He leads His children on To the place where He is gone.
- 5 Not in that poor, lowly stable With the oxen standing by
Shall we see Him, but in heaven, Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars His children, crowned, All in white, His praise will sound!

The Holy Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

- P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.
C Glory to you, O Lord.

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" --which means, "God with us." When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

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

The Gospel Fanfare (*The Gospel Procession returns to the Chancel.*)

Hymn of the Day *Joy to the World!*

LSB 387

Sermon *Uncertainty* (Matthew 1:18-25)

PASTOR LARSON



The Nicene Creed

LSB *inside back-cover*

A Handbell Meditation

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

CYNTHIA DOBRINSKI, arranged
The Gloria Dei Ringers

The Prayer of the Church

- P Let us pray for the Church around the world and all people in their various needs. That the coming of the Word in the flesh might open the eyes of all who are blinded by this world's sin and folly, let us pray to the Lord,
- C O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!
- P That the grace and mercy God has offered in giving His Son might turn the hearts of many to true repentance, joy, and hope, let us pray to the Lord,
- C O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!
- P That the Church here and around the world might find a renewed sense of purpose as we join the Christmas angels and the hosts of heaven in praising the name of our gracious God, let us pray to the Lord,
- C O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!
- P That an awareness of how much God loves us and what He has been willing to do for us since the beginning of time would bring comfort to all who face this bright new day through tears of pain or sadness, (*especially ...*), let us pray to the Lord.
- C O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!
- P That God, outside of time and space, would so move the leaders of this world that they use every opportunity to reflect His care for the nations and areas they serve, let us pray to the Lord,
- C O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!
- P Into Your almighty and gracious hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C Amen.

The Sharing of the Peace

- P The peace of the Lord be with you always.
- C And also with you.

*You may now greet one another in the name of the Lord using
...Peace be with you*

OFFERING

Choral Offering *Angels We Have Heard on High* HOWARD HELVEY, arranged
The Ascension Chorale
Diana Gaide (PRIMO), Stephen Pruitt (SECONDO) piano, four-hands

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH, SWEETLY SINGING O'ER THE PLAINS,
AND THE MOUNTAINS IN REPLY, ECHOING THEIR JOYOUS STRAINS.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO.

SHEPHERDS, WHY THIS JUBILEE? WHY YOUR JOYOUS STRAINS PROLONG?
WHAT THE GLADSOME TIDINGS BE WHICH INSPIRE YOUR HEAV'NLY SONG?

COME TO BETHLEHEM AND SEE HIM WHOSE BIRTH THE ANGELS SING;
COME, ADORE ON BENDED KNEE CHRIST THE LORD, THE NEWBORN KING.

SEE HIM IN A MANGER LAID JESUS, LORD OF HEAV'N AND EARTH;
MARY, JOSEPH, LEND YOUR AID, WITH US SING OUR SAVIOR'S BIRTH.

The Offertory Prayer

P God of glory,

C receive these gifts and the offering of our lives. As Jesus was lifted up
from the earth, draw us to your heart in the midst of this world, that all
creation may be brought from bondage to freedom, from darkness to
light, and from death to life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

The Preface

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 truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; for in the mystery of the Word made flesh You have given us a new revelation of Your glory that, seeing You in the person of Your Son, we may know and love those things which are not seen. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

The Sanctus (*Sung to the tune: Angels We Have Heard on High*)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord. God by high-est hosts a - dored.
Sing ho - san - na. saints a - bove. with the an - gels sing God's love.

Heav'n and earth Your glo - ry sing: With them we our prais - es bring.
Bless-ed He. the com - ing One. God the Fa - ther's on - ly Son.

Refrain

Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

The Words of Consecration

P In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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 Agnus Dei (*sung*)

(Setting I)

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

HOLY COMMUNION AT ASCENSION

The Lord, our Host, invites to his Supper those who are baptized into the Christian faith, confess him as Savior, have examined themselves, truly repent of sins, believe the Risen Lord is present in the sacrament with his true body and blood, and resolve to live faithfully and obediently. For those with an intolerance to alcohol, the center ring of the tray contains grape juice. Gluten free wafers are available to those with wheat allergies. Children who have not been instructed, yet desire a blessing, are invited to come forward with arms crossed. Come, for the Supper is ready! When receiving the bread and wine, the communicant may respond with "Amen!", a word of affirmation and belief.

MUSIC FOR MEDITATION

Two European Christmas Carols

Arranged for flute-duo and piano
Diane Pruitt and Ann Westra, flutes

Still, Still, Still

JOSEPH MARTIN, arranged
Diana Gaide, piano

O Holy Night

ADOLPH ADAM
Rachel Becker, soprano

CONGREGATIONAL CAROLS

From Heaven Above Verses 1—6 (LSB 358)

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming (LSB 359)

O Little Town of Bethlehem (LSB 361)

Away in a Manger (LSB 365)

The Communion Benediction

- P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you
and keep you in his grace.
C Amen.

The Post Communion Prayer

- P We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing
power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us
through this gift, in faith toward you and fervent love toward one another; for the
sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.
C Amen.

The Lighting of the Candles

Candles are lit from the center aisle; please pass the light to one another being careful to hold the candle upright as not to burn yourself with the wax. Let Christ's light be shared! The candles may remain lit through the end of the service.

Musical Introduction to *Silent Night* Diane Pruitt, flute; Diana Gaide, piano
Please join in singing after the organ interlude.

Silent Night, Holy Night! (LSB 363)

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.

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.

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light

Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

The Benediction

P May Almighty God, by whose mercy our Savior the Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of His blessing.

C Amen.

P May He whose second coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love.

C Amen.

P May you, who rejoice in the first advent of our Redeemer, at His second advent receive, by His great mercy, unending life.

C Amen.

P And the blessing of the Almighty God, the Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever.

C Amen.

The Carol in Procession *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* (LSB 380)

**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!”

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!

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

**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.

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Congregational Concerns

P Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

The Organ Chorale *Fanfare and Toccata*

Serving in Worship

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD - CHRISTMAS EVE
7:00 PM

OFFICIANT & CELEBRANT	The Reverend John R. Larson, PASTOR
ELDER	Larry Buethe
MINISTER OF MUSIC & ORGANIST	Stephen R. Pruitt
CHOIRS	The Ascension Chorale; Diana Gaide, accompanist
	The Gloria Dei Ringers
INSTRUMENTALISTS	Diane Pruitt and Ann Westra, flutes
	Brent Paulson, trumpet
CRUCIFER & BANNER BEARER	Jeremy Burchett & Brian Johnson
ACOLYTE	Preston Mills
LECTOR	Larry Buethe
GREETERS	Members of the Congregation
USHERS	Members of the Congregation
ALTAR GUILD	Members of the Congregation

Ascension Lutheran Church—LCMS

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