

# December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## Christmas Eve



## Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church

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Pastor Kimberly Belken

**December 24, 2025**

**Christmas Eve: Good News is Louder than Fear**

**Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church**

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## **Welcome & Announcements**

### **Lighting of the Advent Wreath and Christmas Candle**

In a fearful world, where do you see the presence of God?

**We see God's fingerprints all around us. We see God in the beauty of the stars. We see God in the love of this community. We see God in the dreams we hold for a better world.**

You are right. Even in a fearful world, God is here. God is all around us. On this holy night, we light these candles as a reminder of this good news. May the flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, God's love is all around us.

**Thanks be to God for a love like that! Amen.**

## Candle Lighting Song: Love Has Come, ELW 292, verses 1 and 3

### Love Has Come



1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the  
2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -  
3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;  
sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;  
last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to  
what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the  
Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.  
name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.  
gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950

Music: UN FLAMBEAU, F. Seguin, *Recueil de noëls composés en langue provençale*, 1856

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## **Confession and Forgiveness**

P Family of faith, on the night of Jesus' birth, a crowd of angels appeared before a group of rag-tag shepherds to tell them the good news. The angels could have gone to Herod's house. The angels could have sung in the city square. The angels could have found the most important, faithful, and powerful people to share the good news with, but instead they told a group of shepherds. The angels' message was clear: this is good news of great joy for all people. The good news of this night is for you too—no matter who you are, what you have done or left undone. The angels are singing for you. So join me in the Prayer of Confession. Join me in drawing closer to the God who has already drawn close to us. Let us pray.

C **God of angel choruses, you hang the stars in the sky, but we do not see them. You fill the night with angelic song, but we do not hear it. You send shepherds to tell the good news, but we do not believe them. You bring love into the world, but we do not seek it. Quiet the fear in us that works to rationalize, minimize, and distract from the good news you put forth into the world. Tune our hearts back to your song. With hope we pray, Amen.**

P Family of faith, when the angels arrived in the field that night, the shepherds were afraid. But the angels said: "Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people. This good news is love freely given, grace radically extended, welcome always offered, belonging never restricted. We are seen, loved, welcome, forgiven, called, and sent to serve. Thanks be to God for a love like that.

# Gathering Song: O Come, All Ye Faithful, ELW 283

## O, Come, All Ye Faithful



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O  
 2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of light e - ter - nal,  
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,  
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
 born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;  
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!  
 Je - sus, to thee be . . . glo - ry giv'n!

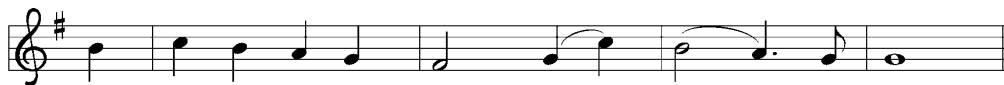


come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:  
 Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!  
 Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:  
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

### *Refrain*



*Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,*  
 O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



*ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.*  
 O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

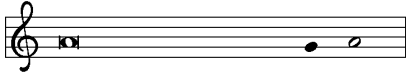
Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2  
 Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John Francis Wade

## Greeting

**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.

## Kyrie



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



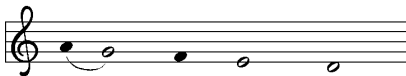
Lord, have mer - cy.



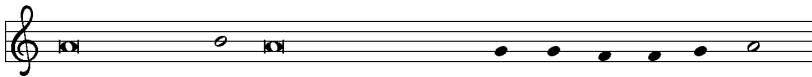
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

# Canticle of Praise, Infant Holy, Infant Lowly ELW 276

## Infant Holy, Infant Lowly



1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;  
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.  
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, an - gels sing - ing, bells are ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing;  
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!  
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885–1933, alt.  
Music: W ZŁOBIE LEŻY, Polish carol

## Prayer of the Day

P God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow,

C we long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit. We cup our ears to hear the sound of the angel chorus. We turn our eyes toward the sky to see if we can find your star. We lean forward in our seat to see if we can feel your presence in our midst. We long to catch a glimpse of your Spirit, O God.

So on this quiet night, on this holy night, on this joyful night, reveal yourself to us once more. Speak to us through the music and the children. Speak to us through starlight and candlelight. Speak to us through these ancient words once again. Amen.

## First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

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.

<sup>3</sup> You have multiplied exultation;<sup>[b]</sup>  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>4</sup> For 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.

<sup>5</sup> For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup> For 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.  
7 Great will be his authority, [C]  
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.

L Word of God, word of life.

C **Thanks be to God.**

# Psalm: Joy to the World, ELW 267, verses 1 and 4

## Joy to the World



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
 plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing  
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

## Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all,<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>12</sup> training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, <sup>13</sup> while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior,<sup>[b]</sup> Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup> He 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.

L Word of God, word of life.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## Gospel Acclamation



## Holy Gospel: Luke 2:1-20

P *The holy gospel according to Luke the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter.*

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while

Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> Joseph 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. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> And 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 in the guest room.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,<sup>[b]</sup> the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,<sup>[c]</sup> praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"<sup>[d]</sup>

<sup>15</sup> When 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." <sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, <sup>19</sup> and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

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

## **Children's Sermon**

### **Sermon**

## Hymn of the Day: Angels From the Realms of Glory, ELW 275

### Angels, from the Realms of Glory

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,  
3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;  
4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,

once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.  
seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.  
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

*Refrain*

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.

The musical score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It features a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The melody is primarily in the soprano and alto parts, with the piano providing harmonic support. The lyrics are arranged in four stanzas, with the first three lines of each stanza corresponding to the four voices. The refrain is a single line of music that repeats the phrase 'Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the new-born king.'

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4  
Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

## **Affirmation of Faith**

**We have seen the valley. We have seen a sky without stars. We have seen the longest night, and still we believe.**

**We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow. We believe that good news is louder than fear. We believe this good news is for all people.**

**So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news.**

**We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst. We will sing songs of joy. We will proclaim: unto us, love is born.**

**We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love. So still, we believe. Amen.**

## **Prayers of the People**

Holy One, tonight is a night for good news. Tonight is a night for candles in the window and joyful music in the air. Tonight is a night for family around the table, and children too excited to sleep. Tonight is a night for Christmas caroling and storytelling. Tonight is a night for good news. And we are so grateful for that. We are so grateful for the good-news moments you sprinkle throughout our days.

However, we also pray for those, both inside and outside this room, who struggle to hear the good news over the sound of their fear. For despite the joy of this evening, we are well aware that we live in a world with plenty of reasons to be afraid. We are afraid of the divisions that rack our country. We are afraid of messing up our relationships, or losing the ones we love. We are afraid of change and saying the wrong thing.

Everywhere we look, we have reasons to be afraid.

And if we're honest, that fear can cling to us. So tonight, with-us God, we ask for your presence among us. So just like the shepherds on that first Christmas, may we hear the voice of angels. May you fill our hearts with a holy hope. And may we know, deep in our bones, that your good news is louder than fear.

And until the day when every reason to be afraid has washed away, we ask that you would continue to inspire courage, conviction, and hope in us. Point our hearts toward sources of joy. Remind us of the good news of this night, and may we always hold onto some portion of the wonder, the mystery, and the joy found here. **Amen.**

## **Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

## **Offering**



## Offering: *What Child Is This*, ELW 286, verses 1 and 3

### What Child Is This



- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
- 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
- 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?  
Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!  
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

## Offering Prayer

P Loving God,

C **pour out your Spirit on these gifts that we bring to your table. Pour out your Spirit on the bread and the wine. Pour out your Spirit on us. Draw near to us here and saturate us with your love. Amen.**

## Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Friends, did you ever have a moment growing up when you walked into the school cafeteria, panned the faces in the crowd, and wondered if you were going to have a place to sit?

Did you ever have a moment, maybe as a new student or new employee, when fear nibbled at the back of your mind because you weren't sure where you belonged?

I imagine, at some point or another, most of us have experienced that kind of fear. But here at this table, you never have to wonder.

Here at this table, there is enough room, enough food, enough love for everyone.

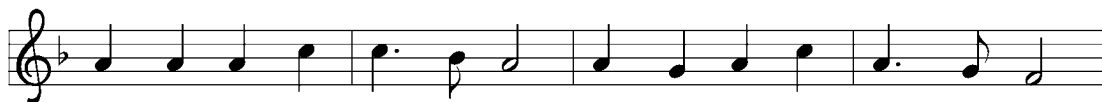
Here at this table, Jesus is standing up on his chair, waving his hands over his head, saying to each of you "I saved you a seat!" Here at this table, you are wanted and welcomed. You are safe and loved. Here at this table, you belong. There is no need for fear here, for this is a joyful feast.

## Gloria: Angels We Have Heard On High, ELW 289, verse 1

### Angels We Have Heard on High



- 1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.

#### *Refrain*



Glo

-

ri - a



in ex - cel - sis

De - o;

glo

-



-

ri - a

in ex - cel - sis

De

-

o.

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864  
Music: GLORIA, French carol

## Thanksgiving at the Table

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.

## Lord's Prayer

P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us,

**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.**

## Invitation to Communion

P Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

## Holy Communion

### Communion Song:

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on  
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

### Post Communion Blessing

**P** May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you  
and keep you in his grace.

**C** **Amen.**

### Prayer after Communion

**P** Loving God,

**C** in a world racked with fear, you gather us together. You set the  
table. You meet us here. You nourish our bodies as you nourish our  
spirits. You remind us that this is a joyful feast, and that fear cannot  
win every time. So, with renewed courage, with renewed hope, with

**renewed conviction, send us out into the world. Help us to feed others as you have fed us. With gratitude we pray, Amen.**

## **Blessing**

P In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit. May you reach for each other's hands. May you choose courage whenever you can. And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear. In the name of the one who calls, the one who sends, and the one who journeys with—go in peace and be not afraid. **Amen.**

## **Candle Lighting**

The pastor lights a candle from the Christ Candle; the ushers light their candles from the pastor's candle. The ushers then light the candle of each worshiper nearest the aisle. Lit candles should never be tilted, to prevent dripping wax. Thank you.

## Sending Song: Silent Night, ELW 281

### Silent Night, Holy Night! *Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht!*



*Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,*  
 1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,  
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake  
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



*ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.*  
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.  
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,  
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



*Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher*  
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly  
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is  
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



*Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.*  
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!  
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885  
 Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

## Dismissal

P      Go in peace. Persist in hope.  
C      **Thanks be to God.**

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## Announcements

- **Annual Meeting:** The annual meeting of Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church will take place during worship on Sunday, Jan. 18. If we have to cancel church due to weather, we will hold the meeting the following Sunday, Jan. 25.
- **Office Hours:** Pastor Kimberly is in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays. Thursdays she will be splitting her time between Immanuel and Mt. Olivet, so if you would like to see her on that day, please call ahead so she can be sure to be in town. You can call the church number (515) 465- 5298 and it will ring to Pastor's cell phone if she is not in the office.