



Nativity of Our Lord

Thursday, December 24, 2020

Gathering in God's Presence

Prelude — “What Child Is This”

Setting by Jeff Smallman

Doug Schuldt and Michael Schuldt, trumpets; Mary Schuldt, organ

Gathering Hymn — no. 270

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Setting by David Willcox; Michael Schuldt and Mark Roemhildt, trumpets



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new - born king;
2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous - ness!



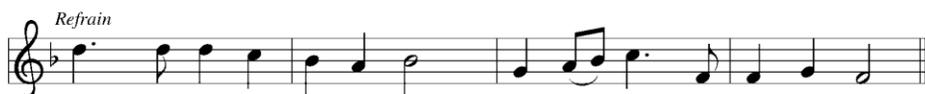
peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled.”
late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God - head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, “Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!”
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new - born king!”

Welcome

Call to Worship — *from Psalm 96, Inclusive Bible Translation*

Sing to Yahweh a new song!

Sing to Yahweh, all the earth!

Sing to Yahweh, bless God's Name!

Proclaim God's salvation day after day.

Let the heavens be glad; let the earth rejoice;

Let the sea roar and all that it holds!

Let the fields exult and all that is in them!

Let all the trees of the forest sing for joy

at the presence of Yahweh, for God is coming.

God is coming to rule the earth--

to rule the world with justice

and its peoples with truth!

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

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

Choral Response — "Ding! Dong! Merrily on High"

Setting by Howard Helvey
FLC & Friends Choir for Christmas

Hearing & Responding to God's Word

A Reading from Hebrew Scriptures — 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 Reading from the Epistles — Titus 2:11-14

11The 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.

Gospel Acclamation — no. 283, Stanza 1

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

**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:**

**O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!**

Gospel — Luke 2:1-20

The Gospel of the Lord according to the 2nd chapter of Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

1In 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.

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

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

**O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!**

Sermon — “The Christmas Story and Our Stories”

Interim Pastor Bill Nelsen

Hymn — no. 289

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Setting by Anne Krentz Organ, Association of Lutheran Church Musicians
Recorded and Compiled by Members and Friends of ALCM



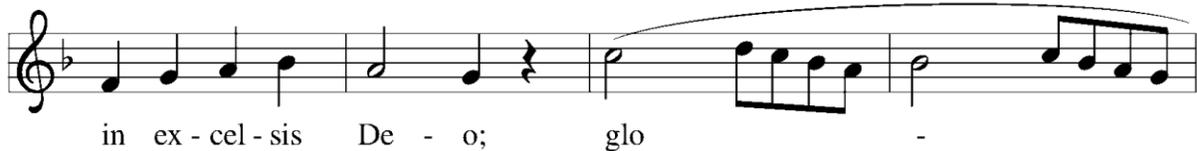
1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



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.



Glo - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo -



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

Christmas Creed

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small.

I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

I believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible.

I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I confess my ever-lasting need of God: The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

I believe in God who gives us the best of God's self. I believe in Jesus, the Son of the living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world.

Prayers of Intercession

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

The shepherds sing, "Jesus Christ is born!" Let your church throughout the world proclaim this good news, over the hills and everywhere. Unite the voices of all your faithful people in songs of praise and rejoicing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Heaven and nature sing, "Joy to the world!" Give respite to flocks, fields, and those who tend them. Come near to us in the beauty of nighttime, the shining of the stars, and the hush of a world at rest. May our wonder at your creation rouse our care for all the earth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The angels sing, "Peace on earth!" Come quickly to still the strife of this world. Hush the noise of war and violence in places of unrest. Inspire leaders of nations to seek lasting peace and sustainable provision for all in their care. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Mary sings melodies of comfort to her newborn child. Bring rest and reassurance to those facing struggles this night. Shelter travelers and those without homes. Console those who lie awake due

to pain or anxiety. Heal those who are sick or hurting. We now lift up those names on our hearts, either aloud or in silence. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Love sings through the sound of a new baby's cry. Bless new parents and expectant parents. Comfort those who long for children, especially those running out of hope or options. Surround families of every shape and size with your love and care. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The heavenly chorus sings, "Glory to God in the highest!" We give you thanks for all the saints who have proclaimed your glory in word and deed. Let us join them this night in joyful praise around your eternal throne. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

Offering

Please remember to give financially to support our ministry.

You can write a check and mail it to the church office or give online at <https://tithe.ly/give?c=283920>.

Sharing the Lord's Supper

The Great Thanksgiving and Preface

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.**

"Glory to God in the Highest"

Refrain

The musical notation is written on three staves in a single system. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody starts with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a series of eighth notes: B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. A long horizontal line above the staff indicates a phrase that continues across the second and third staves. The lyrics 'Glo - ri - a' are placed below the first staff. The second staff continues the melody with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter note F4. The lyrics 'in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo -' are placed below the second staff. The third staff concludes the phrase with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, and a final half note G4. The lyrics '- ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.' are placed below the third staff.

Words of Institution

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.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Communion

*Please raise your bread up. The body of Christ given for you. Please eat the bread now.
Please raise up your glass. The blood of Christ shed for you. Please drink the wine/juice now.*

Post- Communion Prayer

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

Musical Reflection — “What Child Is This”

Setting by Jeffrey A. Hall
Virtual Handchime Choir; Carrie Stelter, cello

Departing to Serve God's World

Announcements

Sending Hymn — no. 281

“Silent Night, Holy Night!”

You are invited to light a candle during the introduction and keep it lit through the end of the postlude.

**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,
heavenly 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 your holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.**

Benediction

Let the love that shaped earth and heaven
dwell within us this Christmas.
Let the love that created humanity
dwell within us this Christmas.
Let the love that overcomes suffering and hatred
dwell within us this Christmas.
Let the love that causes us to rejoice with loved ones
dwell within us this Christmas.
Let the love that forgives and renews
dwell within us this Christmas.
Let the love that brings reconciliation after separation
dwell within us this Christmas.
Let the love that brings the blessing of peace
dwell within us this Christmas.
And may we share that peace
with all people near and far. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Live and tell the Christmas story. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

Postlude — “O Holy Night”

Adolphe Adam
Rebekah Roemhildt, voice

Acknowledgements

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“Christmas Creed” by Walter Russell Bowie, posted on <http://www.postkiwi.com/2008/christmas-creed-by-walter-russell-bowie/>

“Let Love Dwell within Us” Benediction from *Prayers for Christmas*, posted on the Christian Aid website. <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2017/12/christmas-affirmation-let-love-dwell.html>

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Pastor/Presider: Pastor Bill Nelsen

Cantor: Emily Bruflat

Lector/Assistant: John and Sharon Malm

Prelude Musicians: Doug and Mary Schuldt, Michael Schuldt

Trumpeters for Gathering Hymn: Michael Schuldt, Mark Roemhildt

Virtual Christmas Choir; Virtual Handchime Ensemble, Carrie Stelter, cello

Postlude: Rebekah Roemhildt, voice

Many Ways to Join FLC for Christmas Worship!

- ★ Christmas Eve on SPPA: 12/24 at 4 p.m., 7 p.m., & 9 p.m.; 12/25 at 10:30 a.m., 4 p.m., & 7 p.m.
- ★ Christmas Eve broadcast on KNUJ Radio: 12/25 at 10 a.m.
- ★ Christmas Day at 10:00 a.m. on Facebook, with a rebroadcast on Sunday, December 27 at 10:00 a.m.
- ★ Christmas Day on SPPA: 12/27 at 11:30 a.m. & 3:00 p.m., 12/28 at 6 p.m., & 12/29 at 8 a.m.
- ★ Did you miss something? All Christmas services will be available on our website (www.flcstp.org) and on our Facebook Page (www.facebook.com/FLCSTP) - they can be viewed at any time!

First Lutheran Church's Statement of Welcome!

Held in Christ, our Center, and living in grateful response to God's love and grace, we welcome everyone, without exception. We make known our gratitude and appreciation of all, including people of every race, sex, age, color, creed, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital and familial status, physical and mental ability, health status, socioeconomic situation, education level and political affiliation.

Please join with us as we seek to celebrate the image of God in all people, nurture meaningful relationships, and share our collective gifts in response to the world's deep hunger for hope, love, grace, justice, and peace.

Learn more about us at <http://www.flcstp.org/welcome-to-flc.html>

We Belong to the ELCA

"The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States. . . This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here. We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace. Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person--questions, complexities and all. Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world." Find more info at <https://elca.org/About>



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

FLC Is a Reconciling in Christ Congregation

"The Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Program is for Lutheran communities that publicly welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people." For more info, visit <https://www.reconcilingworks.org/>



"We believe that God values and embraces each person as a beloved child, that the Spirit gives a diversity of gifts for the common good, and that Jesus Christ calls us to work for justice."

FROM ALL THE STAFF AT FLC,

Merry Christmas!