

First Lutheran Church

Get Ready. Tell the Story.

Christmas 2021

*An asterisk \* invites you to stand in body or in spirit, and you are invited to read responses found in **bold**.*

*You are welcome to sing during worship if you are vaccinated!*

Nativity of Our Lord + December 24, 2021 + Welcome to First Lutheran Church!

## Gathering in God's Presence

**Prelude** — “Christmas Joy” (4:00 p.m.)

Setting by Cynthia Dobrinski  
FLC Handbell Choir

— “What Child Is This” (7:00 p.m.)

Setting by Jeff Smallman  
Doug Schuldt & Kristine Schuldt, trumpets

— “What Child Is This” (10:00 p.m.)

English Traditional  
Nancy Timm, handbells; Sharon Malm, piano

### Welcome

### \*Call to Worship

An unmarried teenage girl was invited

**to carry Christ into this world.**

An ordinary carpenter was invited—

**to be a father to a child unlike any other.**

The shepherds were invited—

**outcast and isolated, included at the manger.**

The Magi were invited—

**foreigners and seekers, included at the manger.**

And if she was invited, and he was invited, and they were invited—

**then we can trust that we too are invited.**

This story is for us.

**This love is for us.**

Family of faith, this is our invitation. Welcome home.

**Amen.**

\*Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who sends the word with angels,  
who is made flesh among all peoples,  
and who breathes peace on all the earth.  
Amen.  
In Christ, we are bold to name our sin and cry out for  
peace.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy God,  
**we confess our sin before you.**  
**We replace compassion with competition.**  
**We seek what is mighty while ignoring the meek.**  
**We are quick to anger but slow to forgive.**  
**We have not put on love in harmony with you.**  
**Wrap us in the grace of your powerful Word.**  
**Swaddle our hearts with your peace,**  
**that all we do, in word or deed,**  
**may reflect your love born among us.**  
Amen.

I bring you good news of great joy for all  
people:  
God has come among us  
in the child born of Mary, Christ the Lord.  
† In Christ your sins are forgiven  
and you are clothed in peace.

**Amen.**

**Christmas Candle Lighting Liturgy: Christ Candle**

*Led by an FLC Family*

In God's house, there is hope—  
For God loves us too much to leave us just as we are.  
Light the candle of hope.  
In God's house, there is peace—  
For all that separates us from God falls away.  
Light the candle of peace.  
In God's house, there is joy—  
Because God created music, and coffee, and dance floors, and laughter that is  
contagious, and endless rounds of peek-a-boos with babies; and if those things have  
God's fingerprints, then God's house surely exudes joy.  
Light the candle of joy.  
In God's house, there is love—  
Because God is love, from start to finish, and that love exists for us all.  
Light the candle of love.  
And in the center of our hope,  
In the center of our peace,  
In the center of our joy,  
In the center of our love, is God—who came to this earth to dwell among us.  
So tonight we light the Christ candle, for God's love just could not stay away.  
Welcome home. Amen.

*All five candles are lit while stanza 1 of "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (hymn no. 279) is sung:*

**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 hope and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.**

## **Hearing & Responding to Scripture**

### **A Reading from Hebrew Scriptures — Isaiah 9:2-7**

<sup>2</sup>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 the nation,  
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.  
<sup>7</sup>His 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.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people. **Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalm 98 — hymn no. 267**

"Joy to the World"

### **A Reading from the Epistles — Titus 2:11-14**

<sup>11</sup>The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, <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, 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.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people. **Thanks be to God.**

### **\*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 Luke, the 2nd chapter.

**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.**

**\*Gospel Response — no. 283, Stanza 3**

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

**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 — “Get Ready: Tell the Story, the Love Story”**

Interim Pastor Bill Nelsen

**\*Hymn — no. 290**

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

**\*Affirmation of Faith — Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen**

**\*Prayers of Intercession**

God of shepherds and angels, God of starlight and seekers, God of mangers and unwed teenage mothers:

It feels like we have been waiting so long for this night.

Amidst the hustle and bustle of this busy season, we have been waiting for a quiet, a calm, a stillness. We have been waiting for good news that changes us and for the undeniable sense that you are near.

So in this moment, surrounded by community, in the presence of candle light and hallelujahs, we bow our heads and give thanks:

**Thank you, God, for the places and people that feel like home.**

**Thank you for the hope on the horizon which carries us through.**

**Thank you for moments of worship that break open our hearts.**

**Thank you for the joy of children on this night, which reminds us of love.**

**And thank you for the stars in the sky which remind us of you.**

**We have so much to be grateful for.**

However, even amidst our prayers of gratitude and joy, we also bring you prayers of concern.

**We pray for the lost, lonely, sick, anxious, and those who have no home.**

**We pray for your creation. Guide us as we work together to restore and protect all life.**

**We pray for refugees displaced by violence and threat of death, as Jesus once was.**

**We pray for those affected by recent natural disasters in our country and around the world.**

**We pray for those who have lost loved ones due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

**We pray for doctors, caregivers, essential workers, teachers, and first responders.**

God of starlight and angel choruses, on this Christmas Eve, as you come dwell among us, we pray that you would bring us closer to home. Scoop us up. Draw us in. Help us to build the world you have in mind for us. Hear our prayers. In Jesus's name we pray, **amen.**

**Offering**

*Music at the Offering*

— “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (4:00 p.m.)

Setting by Mark Sedio

Emily Bruflat, organ

— “The First Noel” (7:00 p.m.)

Setting by Catherine McMichael

Keith Stelter, oboe; Carrie Stelter, cello

Please leave an offering in the basket outside the sanctuary, mail a check to the office, or give online: <https://tithe.ly/give?c=283020>.

## Sharing the Meal

### \*The 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.**

### \*Sanctus — from *Setting Twelve, All Creation Sings*

“Holy, Holy, Holy”



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and  
God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your  
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the  
Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

### \*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.

As we prepare to eat together as your disciples did,

We remember and we speak that truth out loud, praying together,

**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.**

## Distribution of Communion & Blessing

# Departing to Serve God's World

## Announcements

**\*Sending Hymn Medley** — no. 289, stanza 1 — “Angels We Have Heard on High”  
— no. 282, stanza 1 — “It Came upon the Midnight Clear”  
— no. 281 — “Silent Night, Holy Night!”

*The ushers will begin to pass the candlelight during the introduction to “Silent Night.”  
Please carefully extinguish your candle after the hymn.*

## \*Blessing & Dismissal

As you leave *this* service, *your* service begins:  
Comfort the homesick.  
Open your doors to others.  
Seek sanctuary.  
Be brave enough to go home by another way.  
And remember that here in God's house, all are welcomed—so come back soon.  
In the name of our Foundation—God, Spirit, and Son—  
go in peace. Get ready. Tell the story, the Love Story!  
**Thanks be to God.**

**\*Postlude** — “What Child Is This” (4:00 p.m.) English Traditional  
Nancy Timm, handbells; Sharon Malm, piano

— “Silent Night” (7:00 p.m.) Setting by Cathrine McMichael  
Carrie Stelter, cello

— “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (10:00 p.m.) Setting by Mark Sedio  
Emily Bruflat, organ

## Acknowledgements

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“Call to Worship”; “Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy”; “Prayers of Intercession” (altered); “Blessing and Dismissal” written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org), from the Advent series *Close to Home*, adapted for local use.

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## Worship Assistants

Interim Pastor: Bill Nelsen	Audio/Video: Brad Chambers
Director of Music: Emily Bruflat	Greeter/Reader (4:00): John Holte
Musicians (4:00): Handbell Choir, Nancy Timm, Sharon Malm	Greeter/Reader (7:00): Dan Polzin
Musicians (7:00): Schuldt Family, Carrie and Keith Stelter	Greeter/Reader (10:00): Nancy Timm
Musicians (10:00): Rebekah Roemhildt, Nancy Timm, Sharon Malm	Ushers (4:00): Szybnski Family
Wreath Blessing (4:00): Chambers Family	Ushers (7:00): Betty Thompson, Carol Solberg
Wreath Blessing (7:00): Stelter Family	Ushers (10:00): Jim and Diane Stenson
Wreath Blessing (10:00): Roemhildt Family	

*Those who would like to take home their donated poinsettias may do so after the Sunday service on December 26.  
The remaining poinsettias will grace the altar through the last Sunday of the season of Christmas, January 2.*



# GIVING TREE

GIFTS GIVEN THIS SEASON IN HONOR AND IN  
MEMORY OF SPECIAL PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES

Judy Chaffee in memory of Forrest Chaffee  
Kathryn Christenson in memory of My Mother Elfrieda Kidd  
Donna Green in memory of Ron Green  
Judy & David Hanson in honor of Pastor Bill & Family  
Harry & Bonnie Hunt in honor of our family  
Gloria & Harvey Kane in memory of our Mothers  
Lorraine Knutson in memory of Marlin Knutson, Danny & Parents  
Brenda Knutson memory of Lester, Elsie, Marlin, Danny Knutson and Joe & Anna Kott  
Kristine Larson Larson in memory of my Mother Geraldine Nyberg  
Mary & Gordon Long in honor of our children & grandchildren  
Sharon Malm Malm in memory of Carl J (Skip) Malm  
McHugh Family in memory of Grandpa Jerry Matheis  
Kay Moline in memory of our daughter Kim  
John & Cindy Nadeau in memory of Robert Gamm (Cindy's Father)  
Tom Nelsen in memory of Linda Nelsen  
Garret & Betsy Paul in memory of our parents & in honor of our children  
Annalise Rivas in memory of George Rivas, Sr.  
Ken & Patsy Rossow in honor of Pastor Bill  
Mary & Jack Spear in honor of Calleigh Carlson for her work with children & families  
Jim & Diane Stenson in memory of Tom Stenson and Dennis Rettke  
John & Shirb Sylvester in honor of Abby, Cullen, Ellie & Will  
Tom & Nancy Thorkelson in honor of Erik & Megan Thorkelson's wedding, married June 12, 2021  
Barbara Wilkenson in memory of Steve Wilkenson

## **Poinsettia Sponsors**

Carol Solberg in memory of Stan Solberg  
Betty Thompson in memory of Henry Thompson  
Elgen Lund in memory Don Lund  
John & Sharon Malm in memory of our parents and in honor of our children  
Judy Fienen in memory of Bev Wetherill  
Judy Fienen & David in honor of our children  
John & Shirb Sylvester in honor of our children, in memory of Clarence & Phyllis Sylvester and in memory of  
Thurmand & Ora Erickson

## **Christmas Tree Sponsors**

Jack & Mary Spear in memory of our parents  
Aileen Bipes  
Mary & Gordon Long

## Prayers

- We lift up prayers for those on our long-term list: Tom and Deb Johnson, Tom Michels, Abigail Christenson, Betty Gustafson, Elgene Lund, Chuck Petry, Bob Cady, Joan Williams, Myrene Bunge, Glen Stryker, Erika Schuldt, Tim Sebring, Mary Pieklo, Gloria Kane, Gwen Powell, Nancy Maag, and Urusla McRostie.
- We pray for all those families continuing to adjust to the loss of loved ones, including the families of Pastor Heidi Hagstrom, Beverly Wetherill, Tom Stenson, Mary Lee Denley, Marion Peterson, and Bob Isenberg.

## 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 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."

**ReconcilingWorks**  
LUTHERANS FOR FULL PARTICIPATION

