

# *Christmas Day*

## *Sunday, December 25, 2022*



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Welcome! As on the first day of creation, on this Christmas Day the Word illumines the world, shining forth to bring all things into being. Today we celebrate the incarnate Word, God becoming flesh to live among us in the person of Jesus Christ then and now. Emboldened by the good news of Christ's birth, along with the shepherds, Mary and Joseph, and all witnesses to the light of Christ, we declare to the world that we have indeed seen and been transformed by the arrival of "the salvation of our God." O come, let us adore.

## SERVICE OF THE WORD

GATHERING HYMN

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

verses 1 & 4



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!

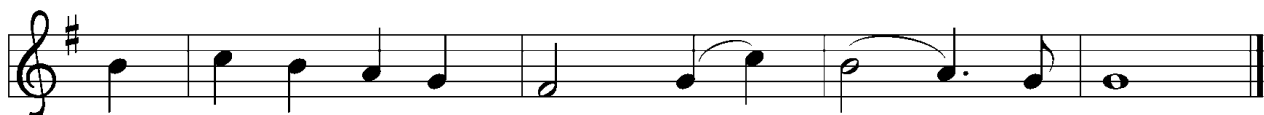


come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:  
 Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!  
 Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:  
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

*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!

## APOSTOLIC GREETING

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: Let us pray together the Prayer of the Day.

**Congregation: All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## FIRST READING Titus 3:4-7

Introduction to the Lesson: *God saves us not because of what we do. Rather, God is a God of mercy and salvation who graciously cleanses us in baptism and renews our lives through the Holy Spirit.*

Reader: <sup>4</sup>When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. <sup>6</sup>This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup>so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL LESSON Luke 2:1-20

Introduction to the Gospel: *The world's deep night is shattered by the light of God's new day. The glory of God is revealed to poor shepherds, who share the good news with others.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Luke in the 2nd chapter.

**Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Worship Leader: <sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor 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 for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>In that 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, 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, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

<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>But 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, as it had been told them.

*After the reading...*

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

**Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons**

### **The Way God Speaks**

It all begins with a word. The author of John’s gospel invites us to step back in time, all the way back to the very beginning, to the space before and beyond the binary poles of night and day, sea and sky, flying birds and swimming fish. When all creation was yet a formless void, God coaxed order and beauty into being with just the sound of a word. By a word, the world was created, and by *the* Word, the world is reconciled and restored.

God speaks—through the messengers on the mountains, “in many and various ways by the prophets” (Hebrews 1:1), and through John, the witness in the wilderness. God tells the world that it is created for good, that all things are made from and for love, and that “grace upon grace” (John 1:16) continues to abound and overflow from the trusted voice and hand of our creator. Are we listening?

The narratives of Advent and Christmas include a host of unlikely voices: divine messengers, childless women, shepherds, stargazers from foreign nations, a locust-eating prophet clothed in camel hair. All

are preparing us to hear the hopes and dreams of God's kingdom from the voice of a carpenter and, later, from some fishermen and tax collectors.

Who are the many and various voices through which God is speaking today? Who are the witnesses to God's saving work in both the darkness and the light? It might not be the voices we would think. Can we trust that God speaks to us through a variety and diversity of voices, even the ones that disarm or challenge us the most?

Listen. Listen to the witnesses. Listen to the powerless and overlooked. Listen to the voices speaking words of liberation and love, despite desperate circumstances. These are the words of the Word creating a new world, the words of eternal life for all the children of God.

## SERMON

### HYMN OF THE DAY *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*



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!



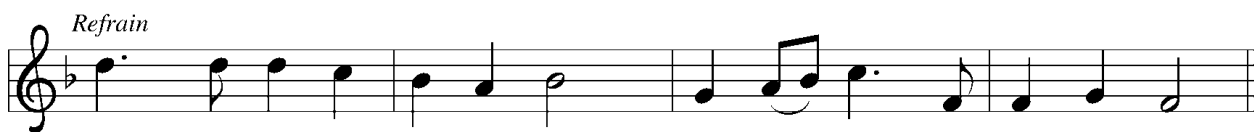
peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."  
late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.  
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



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!"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.

Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809–1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831–1915

## 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 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

Worship Leader: With wonder and thanksgiving for Christ's coming into the world, we pray for the church, the life of the earth, and the whole human family.

*A brief silence.*

Prayer Leader: The church in every land makes a joyful noise to herald your coming, O God. We give thanks for poets, musicians, and hymn writers who give voice to our praise, and for all who lead the church's worship. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: Bring heavenly peace to this world and an end to armed conflict, especially in Ukraine. Raise up leaders in every nation who will honor human rights and establish equal justice for all people. Give courage to all who speak out against oppression and advocate for the powerles. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: Guard the lives of any in danger, especially those who work to protect others. Lead any who are in desperate circumstances to sanctuary, help, and safety. Grant rest to the weary and soothe those who are troubled. We pray especially for those on the prayer list of our congregation, those suffering from violence and terror such as the people of Ukraine and victims of mass shootings, those suffering from natural disasters such as wildfires, floods, drought, and storms such as blizzards and Hurricanes Fiona, Ian, and Nicole, and diseases such as cancer, COVID-19, and the flu, and those others we name now with our lips or in our hearts..... Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: Bless all who gather to worship on this holy day. Be present at our tables and celebrations, and watch over those who travel. Sustain charities, outreach ministries, and food pantries that give generously to people in need. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Prayer Leader: In Christ we have beheld your glory, full of grace and truth. We give thanks for those in every generation who reflect the light of Christ, especially those resting within our Memorial Garden. May their witness shine forth in our time. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Worship Leader: Pondering the mystery of eternal love made flesh in Christ Jesus, we commend all for whom we pray to the mercy of God.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **OFFERING**

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com) (look for the "Donate" button), or by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. **You can also fill out your attendance form on our website.***

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Prayer Leader: God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

**Congregation: 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.**

## THANKSGIVING FOR THE LIGHT AND THE WORD

Worship Leader: The Lord be with you.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

Worship Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**Congregation: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Worship Leader: We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you called light into being, and you set light in the sky to govern night and day. In a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night you led your people into freedom. Enlighten our darkness by the light of your Christ: we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## BLESSING

Worship Leader: God bless you and keep you, † Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

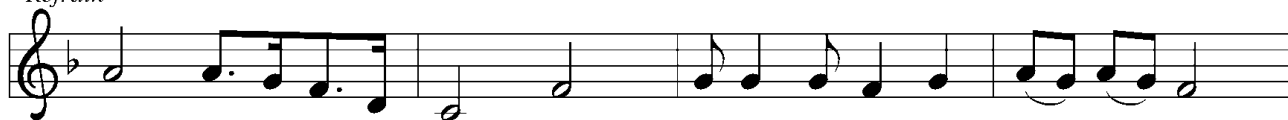




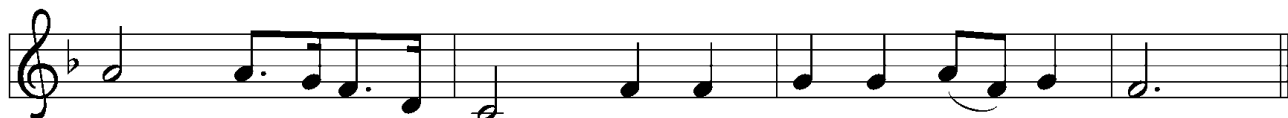
## SENDING CAROL

## *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

*Refrain*



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

*Refrain*



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.

Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

## DISMISSAL

Worship Leader: For us a child is born; for us a son is given! Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now as this service of worship is ending, this week's service to the world is beginning! Go in peace Go in peace. Proclaim this good news!!

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

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