

# *Christmas* *EVE*



*MT SI LUTHERAN CHURCH*  
*DECEMBER 24, 2025*

## **GATHERING**

*Like the iconic figures gathered around the Christ Child in our nativity scenes,  
we gather together because we want to know Jesus more as we seek to bring  
His Reign of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love on earth.*

### **Prelude – Special Music**

*Two bell pieces with Jenna Rhyne and Toren Rhyne*

### **Welcome and Announcements**

#### **Gathering Song**

Sing we the song of Emmanuel  
This, the Christ, who was long foretold  
Lo, in the shadows of Bethlehem  
Promise of dawn now our eyes behold

God, Most High, in a manger laid  
Lift your voices and now proclaim  
“Great and glorious, Love has come to us”  
Join now with the hosts of heaven

Come we to welcome Emmanuel  
King who came with no crown or throne  
Helpless, He lay, the Invincible  
Maker of Mary, now Mary’s son

O, what wisdom to save us all  
Shepherds sages before Him fall  
Grace and majesty, what humility  
Come on bended knee, adore Him

Gloria, Gloria, Gloria, Gloria

Go spread the news of Emmanuel  
Joy and peace for the weary heart  
Lift up your heads for your King has come  
Sing for the Light overwhelms the dark  
Glory shining for all to see  
Hope alive let the gospel ring  
God has made a way, He will have the praise  
Tell the world His name is Jesus

Gloria, Gloria, Gloria, Gloria

### **We Gather at the Scene**

*Pastor:* In 1865, William Chatterton Dix penned a poem that would become the beloved Christmas-time favorite, “What Child is This?” This year for Advent and Christmas, we have been prompted by this carol to ask deeper questions of Jesus’ identity, “What child *IS* this?” When we look beyond the lullaby and behind the scenes, what we discover is that the answers are much more complicated than the lilting lullaby tune conveys. The time of Jesus’ birth was fraught with difficulties. This is the scene into which Jesus was born. We are called, as his disciples, to enter the scene in the midst of our own complicated and difficult time in history, offering Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love as the Christ Child did. Let us sing together:

**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?**

*Pastor:* God so loved the world that God became us in order to know us, to love us, even more deeply. Not just the cross at the end of Jesus’ life, but the difficulty of the time of Christ’s birth can show us the reality of “God-with-us” no matter what. This is a theme from our faith story that can open our hearts to see our own place in the narrative of history. No matter how afraid we are, the Babe “whom shepherds guard and angels sing” lives within us waiting to grow into Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love incarnate.

*Reader 1:* We light these candles for those who need it most.

*Reader 2:* For all who need more Hope.

*Reader 1:* For all who yearn for Peace.

*Reader 2:* For all whose Joy lays dormant.

*Reader 1:* For all who need the salve of Love.

*Reader 2:* For all of who need this Child of Possibility.

*Reader 1:* Our question for this night at the scene of the nativity is this: “How do the messages of this child reverberate into our time, our lives, our world?”

*Reader 2:* What child *IS* this? This, this, is Christ the King who reigns with hope, peace, joy, and love forever. Let us sing together,

**This, this is Christ, the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**



**Prayer of Invocation**

*Reader 1: Let us pray together,*

**Here, at the nativity of your birth,  
give us the courage to face this moment with humility and hope.  
Open us to new understandings of  
the unfolding story of your presence among us.  
Show us the true meaning of the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.  
We pray in the name of the Child, the One Who Reigns in our hearts.  
Amen.**

**Opening Hymn**

*Joy to the World – Red Hymnal #267*

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive its King;  
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy!

He rules the world with truth and grace  
and makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness  
And wonders of his love, And wonders of his love,  
And wonders, wonders of his love.

**Signs of Peace**

*Pastor: Peace be with you!*

***All: And also with you!***

*Pastor: I invite you to greet one another with a peace sign and be sure to send  
peace through the camera to those worshipping online.*

*I invite children to come forward for a message!*

## **PROCLAIMING**

*We open ourselves to the full story of Christ's birth, knowing that his story is the ground of our faith and the light for our path.*

### **Children's Message**

#### **Hymn**

*Away in a Manger – Red Hymnal #277*

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.

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.

### **We Hear the Story**

#### **THE PROMISE:**

*First Lesson*

*Isaiah 9:2-7*

#### *Lighting of the 1<sup>st</sup> Candle*

#### *O Holy Night*

O Holy Night! The stars are brightly shining,  
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth;  
Long lay the world, in sin and error pining  
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;  
Fall on your knees, O, hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!  
O night, divine, O night, O night divine.

Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is love and His gospel is peace;  
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother,  
And in His name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
Let all within us praise His holy name;

Christ is the Lord, O, praise His name forever!  
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!  
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim!

**AN ANGEL VISITS:**

*Second Lesson*

*Luke 1:26-45*

*From Holden Evening Prayer, "The Annunciation"*

*Duet: An angel went from God.....Mary said.....I live to do your will*

My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you,  
You have looked with love on your servant here,  
and blessed me all my life through.  
Great and mighty are you, O Holy One, strong is your kindness evermore.  
How you favor the weak and lowly one, humbling the proud of heart.  
You have cast the mighty down from their thrones,  
and uplifted the humble of heart,  
you have filled the hungry with wonderous things, and left the wealthy no part.  
Great and mighty are you, O Faithful One,  
strong is your justice, strong your love,  
As you promised to Sarah and Abraham, kindness forevermore.  
My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you,  
You have looked with love on your servant here, and blessed me all my life  
through.

*Lighting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Candle*

**JESUS IS BORN:**

*Third Lesson*

*Luke 2:1-7*

*Lighting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Candle*

**Special Music**

*One Small Child – Dave Spurling*

**SHEPHERDS HEAR:**

*Fourth Lesson*

*Luke 2:8-20*

*Lighting of the 4<sup>th</sup> Candle*

*What a Glorious Night*  
The shepherds came to see the baby  
Stood by his mother's side  
Here laid the Savior inside a manger  
Oh what a glorious night - Oh what a glorious night

CHORUS: I hear the angels singing hallelujah  
Let the earth receive her king  
I know that love has come, sing it out  
Jesus Christ is born - Jesus Christ is born

The shepherds wondered  
They couldn't hide it - Told everyone in sight  
All were amazed when they heard how  
God came down on the glorious night  
God came down on this glorious night

CHORUS

Glorious, Glorious - What a glorious night  
Glorious, Glorious - What a glorious night

CHORUS

All is calm now, all is quiet  
A star shining in the sky, below in Bethlehem  
The king is sleeping  
Oh what a glorious night – Oh what a glorious night

**PROMISE OF MESSIAH:**                      *Fifth Lesson*                      *John 1:1-14*

*Lighting of the Christ Candle*

**Hymn of Response**

*O Come All Ye Faithful – Red Hymnal #283 vs. 1 & 2*

Oh, come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!  
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him, born the King of angels:  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes; Son of the Father  
Now in flesh appearing! O come Let us adore him,  
O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

**Sermon**

### **Hymn of Response**

*O Come All Ye Faithful – Red Hymnal #283 vs 3 & 4*

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, in the highest:  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus to thee be glory giv'n! Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

### **RESPONDING**

*Our faithful response is to praise God for this story of Emmanuel,  
God-With-Us, even and especially in the midst of difficulty,  
for God is indeed with us even still.*

### **Prayers of the People**

*Pastor:* In this moment of silent contemplation, we lift up our hopes for the world, for its people, for the kind of kingdom embodied by the child who became the Christ. We have been lifting up prayers during Advent by placing them on the city of Bethlehem “wall”. You are invited to visit that display as you leave tonight, saying a silent prayer for all those who are suffering from the violence of this world, no matter where they are, what they believe, whether you understand or agree with the actions of any government. All people deserve peace and safety and we pray especially this night for “peace on earth.” Let us pray:

*Reader 2:* Holy Living One, Child of Light, Spirit of Resilience, we come to you today weary of the violence of history. We know you are with us, for you came to our human story when we needed your message so much. We still do.

*Reader 1:* We ask, “What child is this who we follow, and who are we in the scene of this unfolding story?” The manger heralds the truth, “We are not alone.” We thank you for your presence breaking into our lives, showing us the light of hope, peace, joy, and love. And we ask for the courage to step into the scene, preparing the way for your reign.

*Pastor:* Please speak your own prayers aloud  
or in the silence of your hearts after each petition is shared:



We give you thanks, O God, this day...

We name our sorrow this day...

We ask for your healing presence to be with us this day...

We ask for your forgiveness this day...

As we ask for forgiveness we hear your response to our confession  
in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

Be with us as we seek to be the Body of Christ in the world.

We pray this in the way you taught us, saying together...

**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.  
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.**

### **Offering**

*Pastor:* What gifts are adequate for the King of Kings, the Child of Light? Our theme song says “so bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come peasant, king, to own him.” Whether what we have to give is simply the gift of our presence and gratitude, or if we are privileged with coffers of precious resources, we give what we can. In this way, we “take ownership” of our role in the scene, in the unfolding story of Light in the dark corners.

## **COMMUNION**

### **\*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.**

It is good, Holy One, to give thanks to you, always and everywhere.

You created us, you loved us into being,  
you delivered us, and you spoke to us through prophets.  
And then the time came for you to be with us, Emmanuel.

Let us sing together:

***All Singing:* In a time of trouble, poverty, and pain,  
Living was a struggle. Hoping was a strain.  
Fear and desperation robbed the world of joy.  
In a weary nation, Mary had a boy.**

Mary's boy became a man, compassionate and kind.  
He invited all to follow the way of the kingdom, the commonwealth of God.  
Wherever he went, he tended to those who suffered. Let us sing together:

***All Singing:* Teaching, feeding, healing,  
Jesus showed the way,  
Sacred love revealing day by day by day,  
Practicing resilience, cultivating care,  
Centered in persistence, every act a prayer.**

His own suffering at the hands of the elite

...

in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,  
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,  
gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.  
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup,  
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,  
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,

...

By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other,  
and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory  
and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Amen.

***All Singing:* So, my friends and neighbors, Spirit leads the way  
May we welcome strangers, building trust each day.  
May we live like Jesus in our time and place  
'Til this weary nation knows amazing grace.**

Amen. Thanks be to God! Come,  
let us gather at the table of amazing grace.

## **Communion Special Music**

*A Hallelujah Christmas Song – Worship Team*

### **SENDING FORTH**

*Just as our theme carol asks, “What child is this?” we, too, have come with our questions this day. We go into the world with answers of Good News, being the Body of Christ through our words and deeds.*

### **Lighting of Candles**

*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 worshipper nearest the center aisle and then passed through the row. Silence until all candles are lit. (The unlit candle should be tipped when lighting it from a neighbor’s candle so the lit candle doesn’t drip wax if tipped.)*

*Once all candles are lit we continue with our worship.*

### **WE ASK, WE ANSWER**

As we prepare to go into the world,  
let us ask and answer the question we came with.

#### **What child IS this?**

This is the one born into a time when hope was hard.

#### **What child IS this?**

This is the one whose lowly status would send  
a message of peace with justice.

#### **What child IS this?**

This is the one who promises us joy even when life is difficult.

#### **What child IS this?**

This is the “King of Kings”  
who shows us the way of true love for all people.

#### **What child IS this?**

This, this, is the babe whose Light  
spreads through our lives to others and to the world.

### **Closing Hymn**

*Silent Night, Holy Night – Red Hymnal #281*

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 host 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**

*Please extinguish your candles*

**Dismissal**

Go now in hope, peace, joy and love!

**Thanks be to God!**

**Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!**

**Postlude**

*It was a joy to worship with you this evening. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! We worship at 9:30am on Sunday mornings. You can also catch worship on YouTube – the link is on the front page of our website:*

*[www.mtsilutheran.org](http://www.mtsilutheran.org)*

*There are gift bags for each family as you leave today.*

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