The Nativity of Our Lord December 24, 2023 at 7:00 pm

Prelude – *In dulci jubilo (ELW 288) by Dieterich Buxtehude*

Thanksgiving for Baptism

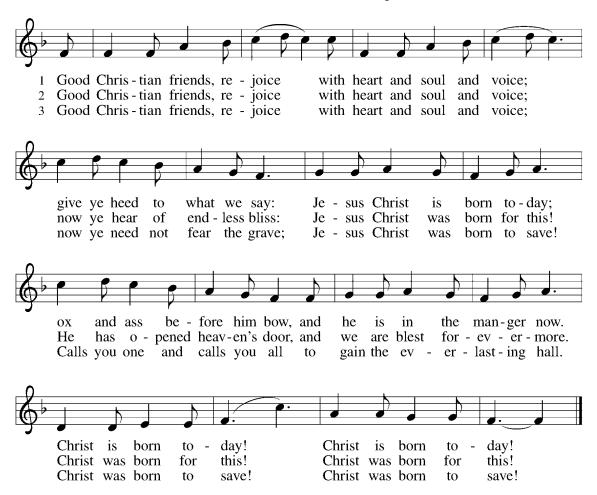
- L In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- C Amen.
- L Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism. We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters and by your Word you created the world, calling forth life in which you took delight.

 Through the waters of the flood you delivered Noah and his family. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom. At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit. By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons, making us heirs of your promise and servants of all. We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ. Shower us with your Spirit, and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

C Amen.

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice



Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866 Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.

Prayer of the Day

L Almighty God, 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.

C Amen.

Word

First Reading 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.

- L The word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.

Second Reading 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.

- L The word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.

Angels We Have Heard on High



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

Music: GLORIA, French carol

Gospel Reading Luke 2:1-20

After the Gospel is announced, the people say:

C 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.

After the Gospel is read, the people say:

C Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily



Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt. Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809–1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831–1915

Nicene Creed

C We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

A brief silence.

Glory to you, God, for the song of the angels, proclaiming to the world Christ's holy birth. Give your church a joyful song to sing, that we bring the good news of peace and salvation to all people. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Glory to you, God, for the stars that shine in the depth of the night. Provoke awe in our hearts at the expansive mystery of the cosmos. Open us to find beauty in the clear darkness of night and in the first glimmers of dawn. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Glory to you, God, for the child born to us who establishes a kingdom of justice and righteousness. Break bonds of oppression, bring reconciliation to warring lands, and establish peace from this time onward and forevermore. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Glory to you, God, for Mary's loving care. Lead us to tend to one another in time of need. Share the comfort of your presence with all people tonight who are alone or separated from loved ones due to estrangement, incarceration, or illness (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Glory to you, God, for the faithfulness of the shepherds in their vocation. Grant rest to any who feel exhausted from their work during this season: retail and restaurant workers, church musicians, administrative staff, and clergy, organizers of charitable-giving events, and service workers doing essential tasks. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Glory to you, God, for the multitude of the heavenly host. We rejoice in the zeal of all your saints (*especially*) who have witnessed the appearing of your grace, and who reveal to us your salvation for all. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

Amen.

MEAL

The Sharing of the Peace

- L The peace of Christ be with you always.
- C And also with you.

Offering

Offertory – *Ding Dong! Merrily on High arranged by Charles Wood*

O, Come, All Ye Faithful



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

At the presentation of the offering, the congregation sings:

In the Bleak Midwinter (verse 3 as printed here)

What can I give him, poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;

if I were a wise man I would do my part;

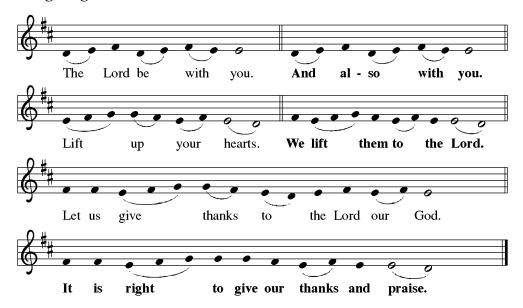
yet what I can I give him – give my heart.

Offering Prayer

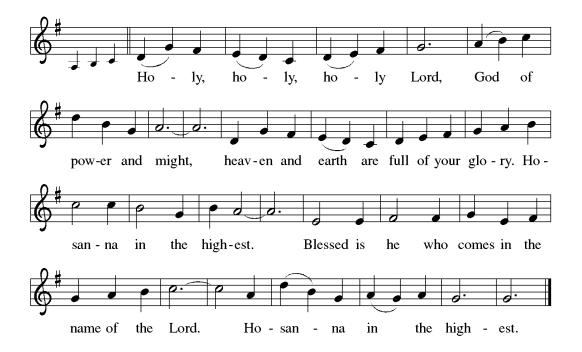
A Let us pray. Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

Great Thanksgiving



P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



P Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world. In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons. 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. Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him. By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son. Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

C Amen

Invitation to Communion

P Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

The Distribution

Admission to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is by invitation of our Lord, presented through the Church to those who are baptized. Those unable to partake of bread or wine are assured that we affirm our Lord's presence in, with, and under either the bread or wine alone. If you are unable to receive Holy Communion at the altar, please notify an usher in order to receive communion at your seat. All are welcome at the table for a blessing. We use bread and red wine at communion. We offer gluten free wafers and grape juice as well, so inform your server at the rail if you desire either.

Distribution of the Communion Elements takes place as follows:

Exit the pews to the side aisles. Empty cups are obtained from the trays located by the front pews.

Proceed to the altar: Persons on the right side (lectern side) proceed to the back center position at the altar rail and continue filling in clockwise to the front center. The left side (pulpit side) proceeds to the front center at the altar rail and fills in clockwise to the rear center. Serving is continuous. After communing, depart down the center aisle to your seat, putting your cup in the basket.

Hymn - What Child is This

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- 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;



Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.



Text: Luke Wadding, d. 1686, alt. Music: SUSSEX CAROL, English traditional



- 1 It came up on the mid night clear, that glo rious song of old,
- 2 Still through the clo ven skies they come with peace-ful wings un furled,
- 3 And you, be neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,
- 4 For lo! The days are has-t'ning on, by proph-ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold: and still their heav'n-ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world. who toil a - long the climb-ing way with pain - ful steps and slow: when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king."

A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing, look now, for glad and gold-en hours come swift - ly on the wing; when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen-dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still-ness lav to hear the an - gels its ev - er o'er ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an gels sing. the wea - ry road and hear the an be - side gels sing! and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810–1876

Music: CAROL, Richard S. Willis, 1819-1900

Post Communion Blessing

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

C Amen.

Prayer after Communion

A Radiant God, with our eyes we have seen your salvation, and in this meal we have feasted on your grace. May your Word take flesh in us, that we may be your holy people, revealing your glory made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

The Lighting of the Candles

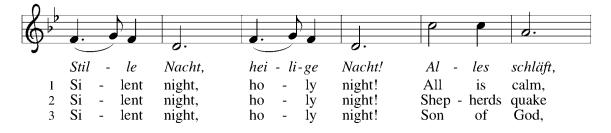
The pastor will light his candle from the Christmas candle. The ushers will light their candles from the pastor's candle. The ushers will then light the candle of each worshiper nearest the center aisle.

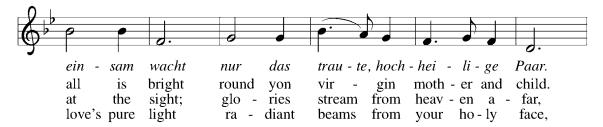
Only <u>unlighted</u> candles should be tipped to the neighbor's candle to be lit.

When all candles have been lighted, <u>Silent Night</u> will be sung. Following the Benediction, the candles will be extinguished.

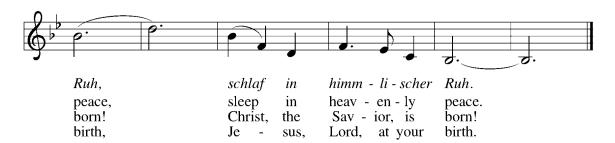
Hymn - Silent Night, Holy Night!

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Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885 Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863 Reading John 1:1-18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Benediction

- P The light of the Father, and of the + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you this and every night.
- C Amen.

(Extinguish candles)

The Dismissal

A Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C We will. Thanks be to God



Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

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

Worship Leadership

Rev. Scott Anderson Vicar Gina Schaefer Dr. Ted Turner, Minister of Music

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The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God with the following recognitions:

♣ In memory of W. A. Stumpf and Helen Stumpf by David and Karl Stumpf, their sons.

Sunday, December 24, 2023 – Advent 4 and Christmas Eve

- ◆ 10:00 am Combined Advent 4 and Christmas Eve Service (Children will be invited to participate in a telling of the Christmas Story)
- → 7:00 pm Christmas Eve service with Candlelight
 (link for live streaming: https://vimeo.com/event/3944187 It will also be recorded for viewing after
 the service: https://vimeo.com/stpaulsdurham/videos)
- ◆ 10:00 pm Christmas Eve service with Candlelight

The Church Office will be closed December 25 through January 1, 2024.

Sunday, December 31, 2023 - Christmas 1

♦ 8:30 am and 11:00 am Service of Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion, The Rev. David Franzen, presiding

Sunday, January 7, 2024 - Celebrating Epiphany

♦ 8:30 and 11:00 am Worship Services (8:30 is in person, 11:00 is in person and live streamed link: https://vimeo.com/event/1478223 as well as recorded for Vimeo site: https://vimeo.com/stpaulsdurham/videos)