

GREETING

Gathered in Christ. **We serve with grace.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the Word made flesh, our life and our salvation. **Amen.**

Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin. *Silence is kept for reflection.* God of life, **you promise good news of great joy for all people, and call us to be messengers of your peace. We confess that too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security. We nurture conflict and build barriers. We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation. Have mercy on us. Where we are self-centered, open our hearts. Where we are reluctant, give us courage. Where we are cynical, restore our trust. Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you. Amen.**

Hear the good news: We are children of God and heirs of God’s promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In † Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG “*What Child is This*” #296

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Oh Lord God, **you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity. Through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 63:7-9

⁷I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. ⁸For he said, “Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely”; and he became their savior ⁹in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 148

¹Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise God in the heights.

²**Praise the LORD, all you angels; sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

³Praise the LORD, sun and moon; sing praise, all you shining stars.

⁴**Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.**

⁵Let them praise the name of the LORD, who commanded, and they were created,

⁶**who made them stand fast forever and ever, giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

⁷Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;

⁸**fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, doing God’s will;**

⁹mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;

¹⁰**wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds;**

¹¹sovereigns of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;

¹²**young men and maidens, old and young together.**

¹³Let them praise the name of the LORD,

whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

¹⁴**The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING: HEBREWS 2:10-18

¹⁰It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying, “I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.” ¹³And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again, “Here am I and the children whom God has given me.” ¹⁴Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW 2:13-23

Glory to you, O Lord. ¹³Now after [the wise men] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” ¹⁴Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.” ¹⁶When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸“A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.” ¹⁹When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰“Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” ²¹Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazorean.” The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON “*God’s Protection and Safe-Keeping, Not Always What We Think*”

HYMN OF THE DAY “*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*” #282

APOSTLES CREED

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: With wonder and thanksgiving for Christ's coming in the world, we pray for the church, the life of the earth, and the whole human family. A *brief silence*. Merciful God, broaden the church's hospitality and welcome. Open our hearts to any in need of refuge and help, especially those who are persecuted. Prosper the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Life-giving God, restore the health of the soil, the seas, and the air. Increase the joy and praise of all living things. In the coming year strengthen local, national, and international efforts to prevent further harm to the environment. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Liberating God, deliver your people from cruel oppression. Increase justice in every nation and keep the dream of freedom alive. In this new year bring the blessing of peace and put an end to violent conflict throughout the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Uplifting God, raise all who are bowed down by trouble and need, especially individuals and families living in poverty, hunger, oppression, and those troubled that we name now in our hearts. Protect and nurture all children. Sustain those who parent, teach, and care for the young. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Abiding God, accompany this community in the coming year. Increase our love for one another and the neighbors we serve outside our doors. Enrich our worship and deepen our faith. Sustain the ministers who will come to offer the Word and Sacrament and the one who will offer Word and Service, all who minister in your name (Pastor Dan Bollman, Pastor Sonja Pancoast, Pastor Chuck Hubbard and Deacon Ro). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, the holy innocents who perish in every generation are safe in your keeping. We give you thanks and praise for all the faithful who have gone before us into everlasting life with you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

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

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERTORY SONG "*GIVE THANKS*"

C: Give thanks with a grateful heart. Give thanks to the holy one. Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son. And now let the weak say I am strong. Let the poor say I am rich; because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks. Give thanks.

OFFERING PRAYER

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. **Amen.**

HYMN "I Wonder as I Wander"

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky How Jesus the savior, did come for die for poor orn'ry people like you and like I. I wonder as I wander, out under the sky

when Mary birthed Jesus, t'was in a cow'stall with wise men and farmers and shepherds and all and high from God's heaven a starlight did fall And the promise of ages, it then did recall

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing a star in the sky or a bird on the wing Or all of gods angels in heaven to sing He surely could've had it, 'cause he was the king

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky I wonder as I wander

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky How Jesus the savior, did come for die For poor orn'ry people like you and like I. I wonder as I wander, out under the sky

I wonder as I wander out under the, sky.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Wise and holy One, you are beyond our imagination, beyond our understanding, beyond our humanity, because you are beyond us, **we turn to you for sanctuary; we come to you for protection.**

Wise and holy One, you are not completely beyond our imagination, because Jesus Christ shows us what you are like; you are not completely beyond our understanding because Jesus teaches us the way; you are not completely beyond our humanity because Jesus Christ is one of us. **And because you are beside us we can walk alongside you as a companion, we can speak honestly with you as a friend; we can keep silence with you as the One who loves us.**

Wise and holy One, not completely beyond us, not only beside us but deep within our being, **Spirit of God when we feel confused, help us to make sense of life and offer it to others; when we feel abandoned, help us to know your love and share it with others; when we feel at a loss, help us to rediscover hope and offer it to others; when we fail to love you, help us to know your forgiveness and share it with others; encourage us to leave what is past and travel on, with you and all your people, into your glorious future. AMEN**

LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING

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

SENDING SONG "Go Tell It on the Mountain" #290

SONG OF PEACE

DISMISSAL

Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news. **Thanks be to God.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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;



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.

Refrain

What Child Is This



- 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;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

It Came upon the Midnight Clear



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 lay to hear the an - gels sing.
and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - 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

Starting next week, January 8th, worship will begin at 9:00 a.m.

*Thursday Jan 5, soup supper at 5:30 pm at Bethlehem with final discussion of "While We Wait",
plus conversation with everyone on their thoughts about the Advent Discovery.*

Come be a part of the sharing!

Thank you to the congregation and the church council for the thoughtfulness, kindness, words and generosity shared and given to me in Christmas cards and monetary gifts on Christmas Eve! Together, we tried discovering new things, we lifted up traditions, and we shared ministry with others! We lived into our baptismal calls of loving and serving God, loving, and serving others! May you be blessed in His love throughout 2023 as I am with you! Ro

*BLC's annual meeting of the congregation will take place Sunday, January 15th
following the 9 o'clock worship.*