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Christmas Lessons and Carols

You can find the live stream at the following locations:

www.youtube.com/@DurhamLutheran

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Prelude: "Sing We Now of Christmas"- Arr. Mark Hayes

Welcome

P: How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

C: **How beautiful in the valleys are the hearts, the minds, the voices of all who proclaim God's love.**

P: Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices; together they shout for joy, for in plain sight they see the return of the Lord to Zion.

C: **In silence and song, in protest and prayer, in love and laughter we proclaim what we know: God is here among us.**

P: Come! Receive this ancient story in your heart, not as history but as a gift.

C: **Opening our hearts to this great mystery, may Christ be born in us today.**

Gathering Song: ELW 269

Once In Royal David's City

Once in Royal David's City



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and Lord of all,
3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;
4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,



where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:
and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;
for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;
we shall see him; but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;



Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
with the poor and meek and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.
there his chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo - ry crowned.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818–1895
Music: IRBY. Henry J. Gauntlett. 1805–1876

Prayer of the Day

L: God-with-us, we gather again at your cradle today to marvel at your presence: the Almighty in one little huggable bundle. Even as we are drawn down to you, you call us to look up, look out, look around. You meet us here, and surprise us by appearing to us new each day. Show us who you are, our God always with us, and we will be astounded by your presence again.

C: **Amen.**

THE FIRST READING

Reflection Question: When have you met God in the wonders of creation?

First Reading - Psalm 148

All Creation Praises God

L: Our first reading is from the 148th chapter of Psalms
Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise him from the skies! ²Praise him, all his angels! Praise him, all the armies of heaven! ³Praise him, sun and moon! Praise him, all you twinkling stars! ⁴Praise him, skies above! Praise him, vapors high above the clouds! ⁵Let every created thing give praise to the Lord, for he issued his command, and they came into being. ⁶He set them in place forever and ever. His decree will never be revoked.

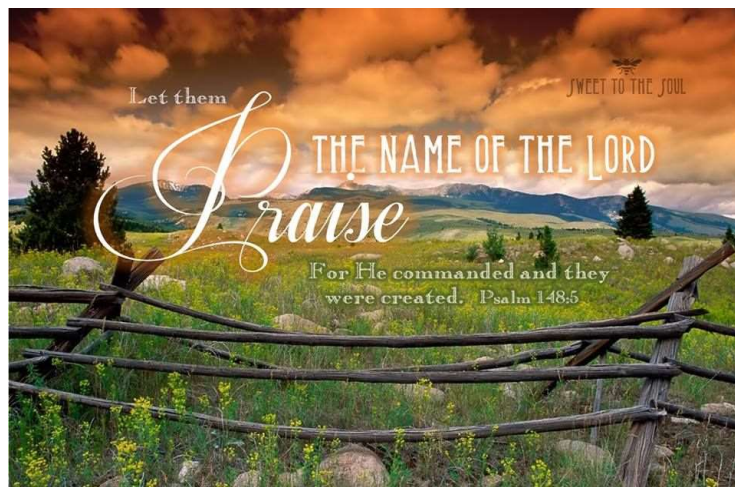
⁷Praise the Lord from the earth, you creatures of the ocean depths, ⁸fire and hail, snow and clouds, wind and weather that obey him, ⁹mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, ¹⁰wild animals and all livestock, small scurrying animals and birds, ¹¹kings of the earth and all people, rulers and judges of the earth, ¹²young men and young women, old men and children.

¹³Let them all praise the name of the Lord. For his name is very great; his glory towers over the earth and heaven! ¹⁴He has made his people strong, honoring his faithful ones— the people of Israel who are close to him.

Praise the Lord!

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.



Prayer

P: Limitless Creator, every atom of the universe praises you, and countless creatures proclaim your glory. Interrupt our routines to surprise us with wonder each day. Welcome us to the chorus of sounding joy.

C: Amen.

Joy to the World



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

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

THE SECOND READING

Reflection Questions: When has someone brought you news so good you could hardly believe it? What message have you recognized as a message from God, even if only in retrospect?

Luke 1:5-20, 24-25 *An Angel of God Visits Zechariah*

P: Our second reading is from the 1st chapter of Luke.

⁵When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. ⁶Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the

Lord's commandments and regulations. ⁷ They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

⁸ One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. ⁹ As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

¹¹ While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. ¹² Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. ¹³ But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. ¹⁴ You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. ^[a] ¹⁶ And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, ^[b] and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly."

¹⁸ Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years."

¹⁹ Then the angel said, "I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! ²⁰ But now, since you didn't believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time."

²⁴ Soon afterward his wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant and went into seclusion for five months. ²⁵ "How kind the Lord is!" she exclaimed. "He has taken away my disgrace of having no children."

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.



Prayer

P: God of unbelievably good news, you moved Zechariah from incredulity to faith. Move us to have such faith too, that when the goodness you promise seems too good to be true, we proclaim it anyway.

C: Amen.

Of the Father's Love Begotten
Of the Father's Love Begotten



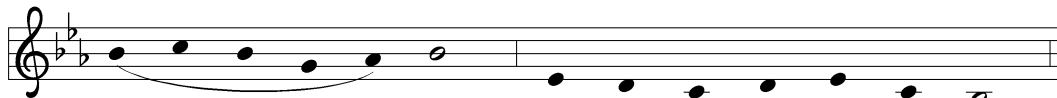
1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten ere the worlds be -
2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, when the vir - gin,
3 This is he whom seers in old time chant - ed of with
4 Let the heights of heav'n a - dore him; an - gel hosts, his
5 Christ, to thee, with God the Fa - ther, and, O Ho - ly



gan to be, he is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
full of grace, by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,
one ac - cord, whom the voic - es of the proph - ets
prais - es sing; pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore him
Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing



he the source, the end - ing he, of the things that are, that
bore the Sav - ior of our race, and the babe, the world's re -
prom - ised in their faith - ful word; now he shines, the long - ex -
and ex - tol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be
and un - wea - ried prais - es be: hon - or, glo - ry, and do -



have been, and that fu - ture years shall see,
deem - er, first re - vealed his sa - cred face,
pect - ed; let cre - a - tion praise its Lord
si - lent, ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring
min - ion, and e - ter - nal vic - to - ry



ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ev - er - more and ev - er - more! A - men.

Text: Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348–413; tr. composite
Music: DIVINUM MYSTERIUM, plainsong mode V, 13th cent.

THE THIRD READING

Reflection Questions: When has someone brought you news so good you could hardly believe it? What message have you recognized as a message from God, even if only in retrospect?

Luke 1:26-38 *Mary Greeted the Angel Gabriel*

L: Our third reading continues in the 1st chapter of Luke.

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named

Joseph, a descendant of King David. ²⁸ Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!”

²⁹ Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. ³⁰ “Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ And he will reign over Israel ^[c] forever; his Kingdom will never end!”

³⁴ Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.”

³⁵ The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ What’s more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ For the word of God will never fail. ^[d]”

³⁸ Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” And then the angel left her.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**



THE ANNUNCIATION
And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God
.. (Luke 1:30)

Prayer

P: God of divine disruption, you surprised Mary with a holy opportunity and gave her the courage to consent. Cultivate such courage in us. Give us the curiosity to say yes, open to where you will lead.

C: **Amen.**

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
 2 “For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
 3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
 4 Of her, Em-man - u - el, the Christ, was born



with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
 all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
 “To me be as it pleas - eth God,” she said.
 in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



“All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
 thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
 “My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God’s ho - ly name.”
 and Chris-tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say:



most high - ly fa - vored la - dy.”
 most high - ly fa - vored la - dy.” Glo - ri - a!
 Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,
 “Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy.”

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924
 Music: GABRIEL’S MESSAGE, Basque carol

THE FOURTH READING

Reflection Questions: Has your commitment to God’s message ever caused conflict or pain in your life? If so, how did God show up to bring you through such times? If not, what examples—personal or historical—can you think of who endured this?

Matthew 1:18-24 *Joseph Dreams of an Angel of God*

P: Our second reading is from the 1st chapter of Matthew.

¹⁸This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus,^[b] for he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet:

²³ “Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’”

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Prayer

P: Gracious God, when serving you causes rifts in our human relationships, inspire understanding and compassion, that even in division or disagreement we might know your goodness.

C: **Amen.**

Carol: ELW 292

Love Has Come

Love Has Come



1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the
2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -
3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;
sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;
last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to
what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the
Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.
gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950

Music: UN FLAMBEAU, F. Seguin, *Recueil de noëls composés en langue provençale*, 1856

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THE FIFTH READING

Reflection Question: When has your fear turned into wonder or even joy?

Luke 2:8-20 *The Shepherds Receive Good News*

L: Our fifth reading is from the 2nd chapter of Luke.

⁸That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! ¹²And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

¹³Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

¹⁵When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. ¹⁷After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. ¹⁸All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, ¹⁹but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. ²⁰The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.



Prayer

P: Radiant God, you showered the shepherds with starlight and surprised them with a newborn ruler in a manger. Send your love to us on angel wings of wonder. When awe leaves us trembling, speak peace to our hearts.

C: Amen.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
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.



Refrain
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

THE SIXTH READING

Reflection Question: When has an elder, mentor, parent, or prophet told you something you needed to hear?

Luke 2:25-38 *Anna and Simeon Recognize the Infant Savior*

P: Our sixth reading continues in the 2nd chapter of Luke.

²⁵ At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him ²⁶ and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, ²⁸ Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. ³⁰ I have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared for all people. ³² He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!"

³³ Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. ³⁵ As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul."

³⁶ Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. ³⁷ Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four.^[a] She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. ³⁸ She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Prayer

P: Holy God, Simeon and Anna waited a lifetime to witness your arrival. They didn't know just what they were waiting for, but they kept the faith and proclaimed Jesus' birth with confidence and joy. Thank you for the elders in our church and our lives who have proclaimed good news boldly for us to hear, too.

C: Amen.

Carol: ELW 276

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly



1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, an - gels sing - ing, bells are ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing;
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885-1933, alt.
Music: W ZŁOBIE LEŻY, Polish carol

THE SEVENTH READING

Reflection Question: Who is still waiting for God to bring peace, joy, or hope amid the deepest tragedies of life?

Matthew 2:1-18 *Herod Kills the Innocents of Bethlehem*

L: Our second reading is from the 2nd chapter of Matthew.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ²“Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.”

³King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. ⁴He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

⁵“In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said, “for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.’”

⁷Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. ⁸Then he told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!”

⁹After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! ¹¹They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

¹²When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

¹³After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

¹⁴That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, ¹⁵and they stayed there until Herod’s death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “I called my Son out of Egypt.”

¹⁶Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men’s report of the star’s first appearance. ¹⁷Herod’s brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸“A cry was heard in Ramah— weeping and great mourning. Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted, for they are dead.”

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Prayer

P: God of mercy, a tragedy followed Jesus' birth. Hold the prayers of everyone who cries to you in your compassionate heart. Sow the seeds of mercy in us so that we will weep with the grieving and advocate for the innocent.

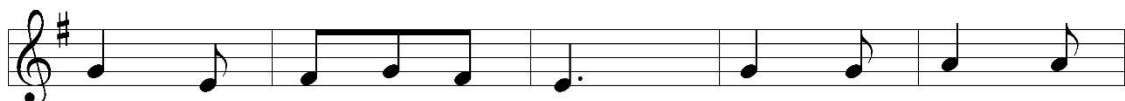
C: Amen.

Carol: WOV 646 We Three Kings of Orient Are

We Three Kings of Orient Are



1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are; bear - ing
2 Born a king on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I
3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I; in - cense
4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a
5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and



gifts we tra - verse a - far, field and foun - tain,
bring to crown him a - gain; king for - ev - er,
owns a de - i - ty nigh; prayer and prais - ing,
life of gath - er - ing gloom; sor - rowing, sigh - ing,
God and Sac - ri - fice; heav'n sings al - le -



moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.
ceas - ing nev - er, o - ver us all to reign.
glad - ly rais - ing, wor - ship - ing God Most High.
bleed - ing, dy - ing, sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
lu - ia: al - le - lu - ia the earth re - plies.



Oh, star of won - der, star of night, star with roy - al beau - ty bright;



west - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light!

Text: John Henry Hopkins Jr., 1820–1891, alt.
Music: THREE KINGS OF ORIENT, John Henry Hopkins Jr., 1820–1891

THE IMMIGRANT'S CREED-Jose Luis Casal adapted for Sojourners with permission from the author.

I believe in Almighty God, who guided the people in exile and in exodus, the God of Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon, the God of foreigners and immigrants.

I believe in Jesus Christ, a displaced Galilean, who was born away from his people and his home, who fled his country with his parents when his life was in danger. When he returned to his own country he suffered the oppression of Pontius Pilate, the servant of a foreign power. Jesus was persecuted, beaten, tortured, and unjustly condemned to death. But on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, not as a scorned foreigner but to offer us citizenship in God's kingdom.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the eternal immigrant from God's kingdom among us, who speaks all languages, lives in all countries, and reunites all races.

I believe that the church is the secure home for the foreigner and for all believers.

I believe that the communion of the saints begins when we accept the diversity of the saints.

I believe in forgiveness, which makes us all equal before God, and in reconciliation, which heals our brokenness.

I believe that in the resurrection God will unite us as one people in which all are distinct and all are alike at the same time.

I believe in life eternal in which no one will be a foreigner but all will be citizens of the kingdom where God's reigns forever and ever. Amen.

Welcoming New Member: Leslie Ann Patience

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The pastor will read the first and last prayer, those in the congregation are invited to read the other prayer aloud as they feel called. The congregation may turn and face the aisle.

P: As we gather in this Christmas season, we give thanks for God's presence in our church, our world, and our lives, and we pray that love be tangible for all who need it.

A brief silence.

Holy God, you were given to us as a child, so we see your face in all children, especially those who don't have what they need to thrive. Inspire us to greater care for the youngest among us. Empower us to seek the needs of children in our community, inspire us to work for the wellbeing of children far from our home, guide us in making worship a more welcoming place for all ages, and ignite in us even greater love for the children in our lives. May our love for you be shown in love for all children. Love incarnate,

C: Be born among us.

Wonderful Counselor, as we approach a new year, strengthen and guide our congregation for another year of service. As you became love embodied for us, so let us be love embodied for others in our words and our actions, in our worship and our outreach. Love incarnate.

C: Be born among us.

Mighty God, all the earth knows the joy of your arrival. From snowy fields to sunny deserts, mountains to seas, forests to beaches, fill the earth with your presence. Bring healing to the hurts of climate change, and guide us in our stewardship of the earth, that both heaven and nature might have reason to sing. Love incarnate,

C: Be born among us.

Everlasting Father, you are parent to all people. You love not only those who gather here, or those who gather in our nation, or those who gather in your name, but all people. Draw us together across difference, that we recognize your image in that of neighbors and enemies alike. Remind us again of your great love for us and for all. Love incarnate.

C: Be born among us.

Prince of Peace, send your peace powerfully upon the earth. Bring peace to warring nations, to our own divided nation, to our streets and neighborhoods, and to unsafe homes. Help us to channel your peace when we would rather lash out or seek revenge. Create a safe and welcoming place for all who need one. Love incarnate.

C: Be born among us.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P: God, you came down that we might know love, and we do. Thank you.

C: Amen.

Choir Anthem: "He is Born, Sing Noel"- Arr. Loyd Larsen

Offering Carol: ELW 294

In the Bleak Midwinter



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
 2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;
 3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
 heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;
 If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
 if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
 the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
 yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830–1894
 Music: CRANHAM, Gustav Holst, 1874–1934

Presentation of the Gifts

Offering Prayer

P: Together we pray. Holy Spirit, please bless these small gifts we give.

C: You set the table with plenty of love.

P: Prepare room in your home

C: for my neighbor and me.

P: Prepare a place in your vision

C: for my neighbor and me.

P: Prepare a seat at your table

C: for my neighbor and me.

P: Holy Spirit, you have blessed these gifts we give.

C: You set the table with plenty of love.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Great Thanksgiving

P: God is with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Offer your hearts to God

C: We do, because we know God cares for us.

P: We give thanks to God.

C: God always deserves our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

P: God, yours was the First Thought; before any human lived or knew your name, you whispered, and creation built itself around your words. Before your ancient people knew the depth of your love, you promised them goodness, and led them to freedom.

C: Your love grows unseen.

P: Before the world knew your face, your own child was born in a quiet stable.

C: Your love blooms in the dark.

P: Before we knew the depth of your love, your child died, crucified, and you forgave, and new life grew in the grave.

C: Your love echoes in the silence.

P: Once you made Mary agelessly blessed. Once you turned turncoat disciples into the family of the forgiven. You wrote the words for their hope, and they sang the song of joy. What you have done for them you have also done for us. So we sing your praise:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord



Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er, God of might:



heav-en and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high-est.



Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na



in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Text: "Sanctus," tr. English Language Liturgical Consultation
Music: *Mass of Creation*, Marty Haugen, b. 1950
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THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE (said by Pastor)

On a night of betrayal, Jesus pulled close friends closer to eat with them one last time.

Jesus taught them, Jesus served them, Jesus took bread and said, This is my body, given for you, so you can eat it whenever you are hungry and every time you are hungry you can know my love.

Then Jesus took a cup filled with wine, and said, My forgiveness is more than words. This is my blood, poured out for you, so you can drink it to know that I forgive every sin.

This is the body of Jesus, the blood of Jesus. Jesus, we remember you died.

C: We remember.

P: We remember God's love sparked life in your dead body.

C: We remember.

P: We remember you shall return to empty every grave.

C: We remember.

P: And we remember these gifts as we pray the way Jesus taught us:

C: 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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Holy Spirit, you are here now in this food, where you embody forgiveness; and in these people, whom you have leavened with grace. People of God, God’s love grew unseen, but now you know it; God’s love echoes in silence, but you have sung the song. Now come taste the goodness of God’s mercy and notice what God has done for you.

Communion Carol – ELW 272 Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming
Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
 2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
 3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the
 4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man

sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
 mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
 air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
 woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who

seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
 vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
 dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
 dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to

mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
 bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
 sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.
 the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851–1934, sts. 1–2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845–1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876–1948, st. 4
 Music: ES IST EIN ROS, *Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 1599

Prayer after Communion

P: God, what you have planned for us unfolds slowly.

C: Your love is often unrecognizable, unappreciated, gentle and unnoticed.

P: But in this place we have noticed what others do not see.

C: We have tasted your unspoken goodness. And now we will magnify your love.

Announcements

BLESSING

P: Go into the world bearing Love incarnate with you. Accompany the lonely, celebrate with the joyful, comfort the mournful, confront the oppressor and lift up the oppressed, join heaven nature in songs of praise.

God bless you with the delight of all creation's praise. † Christ bless you with the courage of God's servants saying yes. Spirit bless you with the surprise of an old promise finally fulfilled. Go with the blessing of God, who is both Giver and Gift.

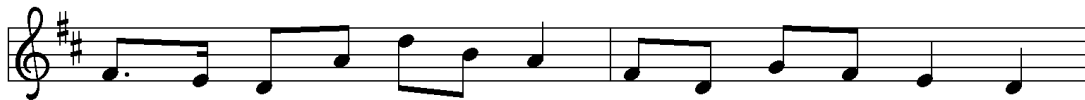
C: Amen.

Sending Carol - ELW 299

Cold December Flies Away



1 Cold De - cem - ber flies a - way at the rose - red splen - dor.
2 In the hope - less time of sin shad - ows deep had fall - en.
3 Now the bud has come to bloom, and the world a - wak - ens.



A - pril's crown - ing glo - ry breaks while the whole world won - ders
All the world lay un - der death. Eyes were closed in sleep - ing.
In the lil - y's pur - est flow'r dwells a won - drous fra - grance.



at the ho - ly un - seen pow'r of the tree which bears the
But, when all seemed lost in night, came the sun whose gold - en
And it spreads to all the earth from the mo - ment of its



flow'r. On the bless - ed tree blooms the red - dest flow'r. On the tree blooms the
light brings un - end - ing joy, brings the end - less joy of our hope, high - est
birth; and its beau - ty lives. In the flow'r it lives, in the flow'r, and it



rose here in love's own gar - den, full and strong in glo - ry.
hope, of our hope's bright dawn - ing, Son be - lov'd of heav - en.
spreads in its heav'n - ly bright - ness sweet per - fume de - light - ful.

Text: Catalanian carol; tr. Howard Hawhee, b. 1953
Music: EL DESEMBRE CONGELAT, Catalanian carol
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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DISMISSAL

P: Glory to God in the highest!

C: And peace to God’s people on earth!

P: Go in peace. Carry God’s love.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude: “Masters in This Hall” Arr. Mark Hayes

Our outreach envelopes for December are going to the food banks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS			
Dec	BIRTHDAYS	ANNIVERSARIES	BAPTISMS
29	Leo Grzelkowski	Jayne & Jim Miller	Matthew Mueller
30	George Kreitz	Laura & Dave Helfrich	

THIS WEEK’S ACTIVITIES		
Sunday, December 28 Lessons and Carols	10:00 AM After Worship	Communion Worship Durham Dialogue WELCA Flowers and Carols to Homebound
Monday December 29	1:00-3:00 PM	Admin Office Hours
Wednesday December 31	New Years Eve	Office Closed
Thursday, January 1	HAPPY NEW YEAR	No Office Hours
Friday, January 2	1:00 PM-3:00 PM	Admin Office Hours
UPCOMING ACTIVITIES		
Sunday, January 4 Epiphany	10:00 AM	Communion Worship Undecorating Church
Monday, January 5	1:00 PM- 3:00 PM	Admin Office Hours
Wednesday, January 7	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM 12:00 PM	Office Hours Chat & Chew with Pr. Jim
Thursday, January 8	10:00 AM - 1:00 PM 1:00 - 3:00 PM	Office Hours Adult Bible Study @ Hlavaty's
Saturday, January 10		Faith Alive Workshop Newtown, PA
Sunday, January 11 Baptism of Our Lord	10:00 AM	Communion Worship
Monday, January 12	1:00 PM- 3:00 PM	Admin Office Hours
Tuesday, January 13	7:00 PM	Council Meeting Annual Reports Due!
Wednesday, January 14	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM 12:00 PM	Office Hours Chat & Chew with Pr. Jim
Thursday, January 15	10:00 AM - 1:00 PM 1:00 - 3:00 PM	Office hours Adult Bible Study @ Hlavaty's
Saturday, January 17	9:00 AM 3:00 PM	Soup Preparation at Durham-Help Needed! Soup Sale at Durham- Take out Only

Worship Assistants

Preacher	Rev. James Heckman
Organist Choir Director	Carolyn Williams
Altar Guild	Mark Harwick and Nancy Moskella
Greeter(s)	Nancy Moskella
Acolyte	Oaklee Wagner
Lector	Mark Harwick
Head / Communion Usher	Mark Harwick
Council Communion	Kathryn Wagner
Counting Team	Kathy Hlavaty and Scott Gaun
Technology & Livestreaming	Ken Anderson
Administrative	Kathryn Wagner
Custodian	Dianna Streletz



For Healing of those in our Congregation: Barbara Altemus; David Antoni; Joe Hlavaty; George Kreitz; Paul McGinn; Bradley Mundt; Barbara Naska; Joanne Ziegenfuss

For Healing of Friends and Family: Phyllis Allebach; Bob Benoure; Jason Bigley; Hans Buss; Deb Carmichael; Jane Carr; Christine Connelly; Stephanie Courtney; Dan Croke; David Davis; Nancy Edelen; Marissa Embardino; Carol and Leon Errico; Gabriella Froehlich; Debbie Gardner; Michael Gardner; Candie Gimbar; Baree Lee Goodman; Penni Griffith; Penny Houck; Bill Hunt; Lois James & family; Martine King; Tim Koplin; Linda Lyle; Frank Manfredonia; Jim McAnally; Letitia McCrea; Connor McDevitt; Stacy Mecham; Hunter

Nebbia; Keith Newcomb; Lucia Otero; Jennifer Phelps; Adrienne Rozzi; Connie Rugen; Laurel Sheetz; Jami Silfies; Holly Snyder; Debbie Statler; Donna Storm; Edward Thaler; Russ Trauger; Joe V.; Karen von Ruffer-Hills; Kelly Walsh; Jacqueline Ward; Dean Erika Wesch; Ann & Henry Wong and Family; Wayne Yeisley; Barbara Yob.

For those who are Homebound: James Altemose; Jayne Miller

For families and friends grieving the loss of: Al Boorse; Althea Crouse, Esther Crouse; Dennis Phillipps; Jeff Starling; Linda Wetherill

If you want to add or remove someone from the prayer list, please contact Joan Mammana either by phone (610-258-5717 or 610-417-6553) or by email at: joanmammana@icloud.com

Soup Sale!

Saturday Jan 17th



Soup Prep

9am- Help needed, peeling and chopping vegetables. Bring your own peeler and knife if you wish otherwise we have some at the church.

All are welcome, for any amount of time. Help is so appreciated!



Bring a covered dish for a light luncheon as we fellowship while the soup is cooking.

Soup Sale 3pm- 6pm



We also need help in the afternoon around 3 to start jarring and selling the soup and then cleaning up.

We will be making Cream of Potato and Beef Vegetable. It will be take-out only again and selling it for \$10 a quart. Bring a qt jar and lid if you can please.

All proceeds will be going to food banks, meals on wheels and to world hunger. 10