December 24th, 2022



7pm - Hybrid Worship Lutheran Church of the Living Christ

"If you came to this place expecting a tame story, you came to the wrong place. If you came for a story that does not threaten you, you came for a different story than the one we tell. If you came to hear of the coming of a God who only showed up so that you could have a nice day with your loved ones, then you came for a God whom we do not worship here..."

Too often we expect the childrens' Christmas pageant; we expect "the Little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay;" we expect a silent night. While these images are comforting and beautiful, they do little to touch the world-shattering reality that is the Nativity of our Lord. Birth is always messy; having a baby in the same area the livestock are kept ratchets up the mess; bring in some shepherds for good measure and things are going to get even more chaotic.

What did you expect? A sanitized birthing room attended by only the best medical team around? Absolute silence from a newborn? We picture this birth as some sort of painless, sweat-free, quiet, bodily fluid free miracle. But it's not...that is not how any of this works. God crashes into this world in the very real, very messy, very labor-filled, very HUMAN way of birth. God is with us, enfleshed, incarnate. What did you expect?

Welcome to Lutheran Church of the Living Christ

Welcome!

If you came as a guest today, we hope you leave as a friend. May this worship service surround you with the love of God through Christ and fill you with the Holy Spirit.

Invitation to Communion

We welcome all to commune at LCLC. It is not our table, nor this congregation's table, nor our denomination's table. It is the table of Jesus Christ. By his invitation there is a place for everyone. We believe that Jesus is present in the bread and wine that forgives sin, nourishes faith, and calls us to be witnesses to the gospel.

Notes about our worship service

Guidance is printed in *italics* throughout. "P" indicates the speaking part of the presiding minister; "L" indicates a speaking part of a lay leader; "C" and parts in **boldface** indicate speaking parts of the whole congregation. You may also follow along with the service by looking at the screen in the front of the sanctuary.

Liturgical pieces are set to familiar Christmas tunes. This liturgy is provided by the Eastern Missouri Conference of the Central States Synod.

Please be mindful of others' comfort with touch. Ask before giving a handshake or hug.

PRELUDE "'Still, Still, Still" by Paul Manz

CHORAL PRELUDE

WELCOME

The assembly is invited to stand as worship begins.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Written by Roddy Hamilton

P: When all has gone quiet and the world begins to sleep cooried in and snug beneath a blanket of frost

L: When the universe holds its breath and angels begin to stretch their wings and stars begin to slide into constellations of hope

C: When music seems to hang in the air and creation hums its own carol about the longing for light and birth again from wintertime

P: Then the waiting ones gather to listen to these rumours and whisper about the birth of a child made all of light

L: And together pass the word that soon and very soon advent will slip into sign and waiting into birth

C: So let us gather with ever beating hearts staying with Mary and Joseph wondering, laboring, longing, expecting the promise to break through the night

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

L: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who lived in a land of deep darkness – on them light has shined.

C: We long for a light to guide us.

The first candle is lit.

L: You have multiplied the nation,you have increased its joy.C: We long for God's joy in our lives.

The second candle is lit.

L: For 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.

C: We long to be relieved of all that we carry.

The third candle is lit.

L: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

C: We long for his coming among us.

The fourth candle is lit.

L: He is named Emmanuel:

God with us.

In this tiny baby, this vulnerable child, we find our light, our joy, our comfort.

C: Thanks be to God.

The final candle is lit.

L: Jesus Christ, you are the light of the world!

C: The light no shadows can overcome.

OPENING HYMN - O Come, All Ye Faithful, ELW #283



GREETING

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

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The people who were mired in shadows, the midnight dread of deadly expectation, have seen a great light! Unexpected dawn breaks into the shadows as a mother labors to bring new life. This great light has come, a gift from You, O God of hosts! Your son, born to Mary, shines in our world as a beacon of change. Shine on, that filled with the light of your love born to us our world may bend in the arch of justice. For in your coming we proclaim, "On earth peace among those whom God favors." Through Christ Jesus, born to us this day.

C: Amen.

The assembly is seated.

CHOIR ANTHEM

FIRST READING - Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

The 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: Word of God, Word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 96

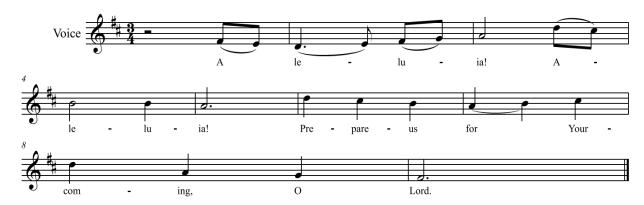
- L: Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.
- C: Sing to the Lord, bless the name of the Lord; proclaim God's salvation from day to day.
- L: Declare God's glory among the nations and God's wonders among all peoples.
- C: For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, more to be feared than all gods.
- L: As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; but you, O Lord, have made the heavens.
- C: Majesty and magnificence are in your presence; power and splendor are in your sanctuary.
- L: Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord honor and power.
- C: Ascribe to the Lord the honor due the holy name; bring offerings and enter the courts of the Lord.
- L: Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; tremble before the Lord, all the earth.
- C: Tell it out among the nations: "The Lord is king!

The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will give justice to the peoples with equity."

- L: Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.
- C: Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O Lord, for you come to judge the earth.
- L: You will give justice to the world with righteousness and the peoples with your truth.

The assembly stands for the reading of the gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (to the chorus of The First Noel)



GOSPEL READING - Luke 2:1-20

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

In 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.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Following the reading the assembly is seated.

CHOIR ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

The assembly is invited to stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY Hark the Herald Angles Sing, ELW #270



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The prayers reflect the wideness of God's mercy – for the church and its ministry; for the well-being of creation; for peace & justice; for the poor, oppressed, & sick; for all who suffer; for the congregation; & for special concerns/occasions.

With wonder and thanksgiving at Christ's expected coming, we pray for the church, the life of the earth, and the whole human family. *A brief silence.*

Your infinite love is born to us this night. With choirs of angels the church proclaims the good news. Send us out as messengers of the hope that has come to all people. God of great expectation, hear our prayer.

You are pleased to dwell with your creatures and the whole earth sings for joy. Renew the splendor of creation from the smallest cell to the widest galaxies. Guide us to be wise stewards of your gifts for the sake of generations to come. God of great expectation, hear our prayer.

Your authority is over the nations. Break the rod of oppression in every land and free all people from fear. Bring peace where there is war, compassion where there is suffering, and healing where there is disease (*regions in crisis may be named*). God of great expectation, **hear our prayer.**

You cherish those who are most vulnerable. Protect infants and children, and bless those who care for them. Watch over women giving birth, attend the dying, and relieve any who are in pain (*especially*). Shelter refugee families and those who have no home. God of great expectation, **hear our prayer**.

Your lovingkindness embraces everyone in need. Help any for whom this season is lonely or joyless. Comfort those among us, or known to us, who are experiencing distress of body or mind, missing loved ones, or grieving (*especially*). God of great expectation, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You welcome those who have died into the joyous light of glory. We give thanks for the saints of every time and place who have praised you with lives of faith and humility. Inspire us by their example to love you by serving others. God of great expectation, hear our prayer.

Pondering the mystery of eternal love made flesh in Christ Jesus, we lift our prayers to God with great expectation. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of Christ, God among us, be with you always. **C: And also with you.** *Share a sign of peace by waving, flashing a peace sign, or other form of distanced greeting.*

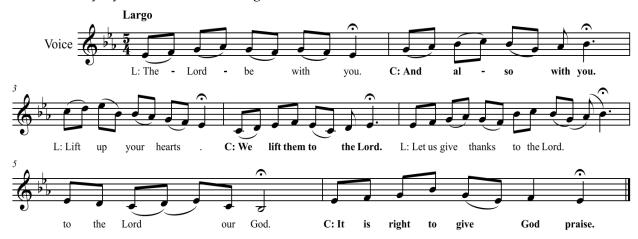
OFFERING PRAYER

- L: This night we celebrate the long-anticipated coming of peace and goodwill-
- C: For unto us is born in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.
- L: Wrapped in flesh, bound in cloth, the gift of the Christ child is the gift of life and love.
- C: This gift is beyond measure beyond price.
- L: We therefore bring this offering, not as payment
- C: but as joyful thanksgiving for the Christ child. Amen.

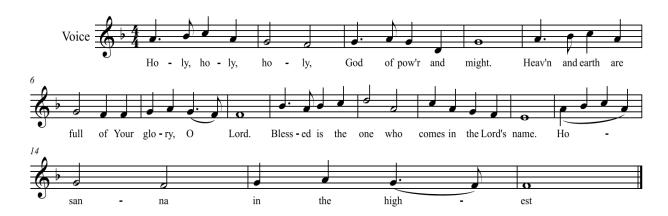
Offering plates are located in the narthex and can be accessed before or after the worship service. If you would like to give online, click the "Donate" tab on our website: <u>www.lc-livingchrist.org</u>

COMMUNION LITURGY

(to the tune of Of the Father's Love Begotten)



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. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth, the hosts of heaven and all creation, we praise your name and join their unending hymn: (to the tune of In the Bleak Midwinter)



Illuminating God, source of creation, our salvation and our hope, we praise you for your creative labor of life and love. When we strayed from your path, you spoke to us through unexpected prophets: Isaiah envisioned a blossoming desert; Mary proclaimed a world turned upside down; John the Baptist cried out for repentance. At this expectant hour, your Son Jesus came to bring us extraordinary love and to heal all the suffering world.

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 life among us, his death as one of us, and his resurrection, the first of all of us, we anticipate his coming in righteousness and peace.

Send your Spirit on us and on this meal we share: that we may work for justice, build hope for your already but not yet reign, and share the anticipated love and joy of your Son. All glory and honor is yours, in your holy creation, both now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us.

C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

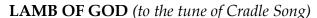
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

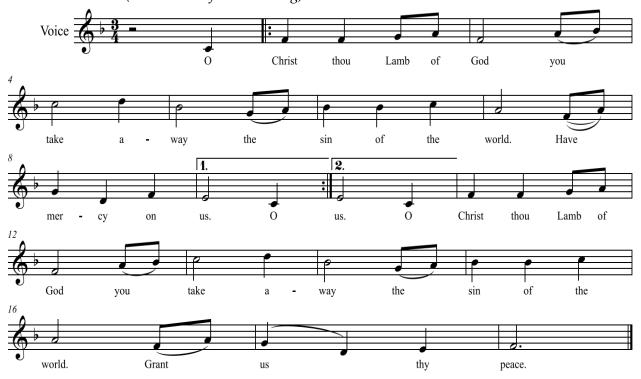
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace. Ponder the great mystery. **C: Amen.**

The assembly is seated.





DISTRIBUTION

Time is given for the sharing of bread and wine. You may come forward to receive communion at the altar or partake with prepackaged elements at your seat. However communion is given and received, we trust Jesus is present in the bread and cup we share as a gathered community.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN O Little Town of Bethlehem, ELW #279



The assembly is invited to stand for the end of the service.

BLESSING

P: The body and blood of Jesus Christ strengthen you and fill you with peace.

C: Amen.

PRAYER

P: Lord Jesus Christ, you came to us in an unexpected place –

C: a tiny infant, lying in a feeding trough.

P: Lord Jesus Christ, even now you have come to us in an unexpected place –

C: in bread and wine, in communion shared.

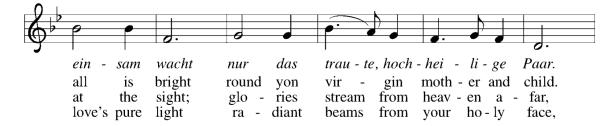
P: May your presence now be known in us,

C: that we may proclaim to all the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

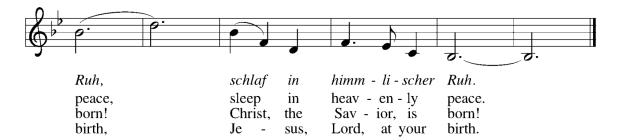
As the music begins, handheld candles will be lit and overhead lights will be dimmed.

HYMN - Silent Night, Holy Night, ELW #281









BLESSING

P: May the Word that Mary pondered fill you with hope.

C: Amen.

P: May the Word that Joseph cradled in his arms enfold you with love.

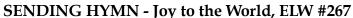
C: Amen.

P: May the Word that angels proclaimed in song bring anticipated peace to our world.

C: Amen.

P: May the God + of Great Expectation be with you, that you may proclaim the good news of great joy:

C: Unto us is born this day a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Amen.





DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace. Know that Love has come.

C: Love has come. Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE "There's A Song In The Air" arr. Darrell Archer

Thank you for joining us this night as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. May the fullness of God's grace and love surround you, that you may share it with all whom you encounter.

Announcements

- 1. There will be an in-person worship service tomorrow at our normal time of 9:15 am. This service **will be** available on Zoom.
- 2. On 1/1 we will worship at 9:15am and will be joined by Pr. Stephanie Doeschot.

Tonight's Worship Leadership

Preaching/Presiding: Pastor Christopher Yanker

Assisting Minister: Angela Bennett

Lector: Jeanne Calderwood

Children's Message: Rod or Ann

Zoom and Slides: Laurie/Gary Brown **Musicians:** David Eggers, Greg Ott **Ushers:** Glen Albers and Ann Schultz

Greeter: Judy Holmes

What Are You Here For? By Quinn G. Caldwell

If you came to this place expecting a tame story, you came to the wrong place.

If you came for a story that does not threaten you, you came for a different story than the one we tell.

If you came to hear of the coming of a God who only showed up so that you could have a nice day with your loved ones, then you came for a God whom we do not worship here.

For even a regular baby is not a tame thing. And goodness that cannot threaten complacency and evil is not much good at all, and a God who would choose to give up power and invincibility to become an infant for you, certainly didn't do it just you could have dinner.

But.

If you came because you think that unwed teenage mothers are some of the strongest people in the world.

If you came because you think that the kind of people who work third shift doing stuff you'd rather not do might attract an angel's attention before you, snoring comfortably in your bed, would.

If you came because you think there are wise men and women to be found among undocumented travelers from far lands and that they might be able to show you God.

If you came to hear a story of tyrants trembling while heaven comes to peasants.

If you came because you believe that God loves the animals as much as the people and so made them the first witnesses to the saving of the world.

If you came for a story of reversals that might end up reversing you.

If you came for a tale of adventure and bravery, where strong and gentle people win, and the powerful and violent go down to dust, where the rich lose their money but find their lives and the poor are raised up like kings.

If you came to be reminded that God loves you too much to leave you unchanged.

If you came to follow the light even if it blinds you.

If you came for salvation and not safety, then: ah, my friends, you are in the right place.

Source: "All I Really Want: Readings for a Modern Christmas"