

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Holy Communion



*Millcreek Lutheran Church
December 24, 2025*

Prayer: Almighty God, whose order in creation makes every birth a miracle; but who ordered Jesus' birth to be uniquely divine: Become real in our lives as we put our faith in Jesus your Son; that we may know you have come to be with us in everyday life. We pray in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

The Service

Prelude

Musical Offering *O Holy Night*,
by Deb Buffington & Lisa Martin

We Gather as God's People

***Please stand as the organ begins playing *O Come, All Ye Faithful*,
LBW(green) #45.***

45

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful

1 Oh, come, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri - um - phant! Oh,
 2 The high - est, most ho - ly, Light of light e - ter - nal,
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this hap - py morn - ing;

come ye, oh, come . . . ye to Beth - le - hem;
 Born of a vir - - gin, a mor - tal he comes;
 Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!
 Je - sus, to thee . . . be . . . glo - ry giv'n!

Come and be - hold him Born the king of an - gels:
 Son of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
 Glo - ry to God . . . In . . . the . . . high - est:
 Word of the Fa - ther, Now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

Refrain

Oh, come, let us a - dore him, Oh, come, let us a - dore him,
 Oh, come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Christmas Dialog (standing)

In the name of the Father, + and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

On the holiest of nights,

We come, joining the shepherds who are stunned by wonder.

On thi smost silent night,

We come, our hopes and dreams joining those of Mary & Josesph.

On this night of carols and candlelight,

we come, our glad songs joining with the choir of angels over us.

Prayer of the Day (standing)

Let us pray. 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. **Amen.**

Angels We Have Heard on High (standing) LBW (green) #71

During the first stanza, the figures of Mary and Joseph are placed in the creche.

During the second stanza, the figures of the shepherds are placed in the creche.

During the third stanza, the figure of the Christ child is placed in the creche.

71

Angels We Have Heard on High

1 An - gels we have heard on high, Sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
 2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro-long?
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;

And the moun-tains in re-ply, Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
 What the glad - some tid - ings be Which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
 Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.

Refrain

Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o; Glo -

ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

Lighting of the Christ Candle (seated)

Tonight is the night for which we have been waiting. Our Advent wreath will now be completed by the lighting of our Christ candle. With the birth of Jesus, our lives will be forever changed. We will be transformed by his model and message. We light this candle to represent that Christ is truly the center of our lives.

We Hear God's Word

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7 (seated)

A reading from Isaiah 9:2-7.

² 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. ³ You have multiplied exultation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴ 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. ⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶ For 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. ⁷ Great will be his authority, 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.

Holy Wisdom. Holy Word.

Thanks be to God.

Please Stand as you are able.

As the organ begins to play, please stand for the gospel procession. The gospel procession symbolizes Christ's physical presence among his people. Please turn to face the book as the procession passes and the gospel is read.

Processional Hymn:

***Joy to the World* vs. 1 & 2**

LBW(green) #39

Joy to the World

39

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive its
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their songs em -
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow Nor thorns in - fest the
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na - tions

King; Let ev - ry heart pre - pare him
 ploy, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 ground; He comes to make his bless - ings
 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.

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:1-20 (standing)

The Holy Gospel according to Luke. **Glory be to you, O Lord.**

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And 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 in the guest room.

⁸ In that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And 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!”

¹⁵ When 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.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sequence Hymn:

***Joy to the World* vs. 3 & 4**

LBW(green) #39

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: (seated)

O Little Town of Bethlehem

LBW (green) #41

O Little Town of Bethlehem

41

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, And, gath - ered all a - bove
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly The won - drous gift is giv'n!
 4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, De - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep The si - lent stars go by;
 While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of won-dring love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts The bless - ings of his heav'n.
 Cast out our sin, and en - ter in, Be born in us to - day.

Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing light.
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er Pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear his com - ing; But, in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ-mas an - gels The great glad tid - ings tell;

The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to-night.
 And prais - es sing to God the king, And peace to all the earth!
 Where meek souls will re - ceive him, still The dear Christ en - ters in.
 Oh, come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Im - man - uel!

Invitation to Grateful Giving (seated)

Thank you to our members, friends, and former members who have helped support this congregation's mission of "Helping God restore and renew our community, our congregation, and ourselves" over the past year. As you leave the church this evening, there is a wooden box with a cross on a stand, where you may leave your offerings.

We Share in God's Meal

Hymn: What Child is This? (seated)

LBW (green) #40

CHRISTMAS

40

What Child Is This

Em D G D Em Am B

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.

Em B Em^{sus 4} Em

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.

Bm G D Em Am B

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;

Bm G D Em B Em^{sus 4} Em

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!

The Prayers (standing)

Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people. [A brief silence.]

Angels sing with praise, and shepherds run with haste, we glorify and praise you in this place. Send us into the world, proclaiming the salvation you have revealed this night. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

As creation resounds with praise, inspire us with awe, reverence, and a renewed care for all that fills the fields, skies, and seas. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Uphold the leaders of the earth with your justice and righteousness. Break the rod of the oppressor in every land, and bring peace where there is conflict- especially eastern Europe and the Middle East. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Draw near to persons experiencing homelessness, those who are alone this holiday season, and all for whom this world makes no room. Wrap all your children in bands of love and mercy. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Watch over those who give birth this night and attend to those who are dying. Be present in our joys and in our sorrows.

God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

The heavenly host praises you. With thanksgiving for Mary, Joseph, and all your saints, sustain us in the blessed hope revealed this night. Fashion us by their example into a people zealous for good deeds, sharing your love and mercy with all. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Musical Offering, On This Christmas Night, MLC Choir

Thanksgiving at God's Table (standing)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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 children.

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. **Amen.**

Hymn:

LBW (green) #55

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

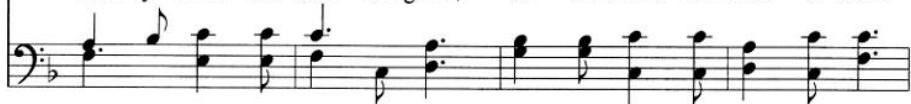
Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

55



Give ye heed to what we say:
 Now ye hear of end - less bliss:
 Now ye need not fear the grave;

Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 Je - sus Christ was born to save!



Ox and ass be - fore him bow, And he is in the man - ger now.
 He has o - pened heav - en's door, And we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all To gain his ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save!

Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save!



Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

The Lord's Prayer (in unison)

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 debts,

As we forgive our debtors;

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.

Please use the center aisle to come forward, forming a continuous line to receive the bread and wine. Children who do not receive communion may come forward to receive a blessing. Dolls and stuffed animals are also welcome to receive blessings.

Following communion, the acolytes will begin at the front of the church to light the candles. Please pass the light to the next person in your row.

Once all have returned to their seats, John 1:1-14 is read.

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

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

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

¹⁴ And 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.

Hymn: Silent Night, Holy Night (standing)

LBW (green) #65

Please follow the pastor in holding your candles aloft during the third stanza.

Silent Night, Holy Night!

65

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright Round yon
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep-herds quake at the sight; Glo - ries
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light Ra - diant
vir - gin moth - er and child. Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild,
stream from heav - en a - far, Heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, Al - le - lu - ia!
beams from your ho - ly face, With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,
Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
Je - sus, Lord, at your birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885
Tune: Franz Gruber, 1787-1863

STILLE NACHT
immanuel

We Are Sent to Serve in God's World

Closing Dialog, Blessing, & Dismissal (standing)

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Go in peace. Rejoice in Christ our Savior. **Thanks be to God!**

Please extinguish lit handheld candles at this time. Candles may be returned to the designated spots as you leave worship this evening.

Closing Hymn: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (standing) LBW(green) # 60

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!"

Thank you

Thank you to the following people who helped lead our worship this evening:

Interim Pastor Pastor Frank Terhune

Lay Leader Jennifer Rosengrant

Organist/Pianist Debbie Tice

Ushers/Audio Scott Johnson & Frank Hoffman

A special appreciation goes out to our brass ensemble for playing prior to the service. We also thank the extra musicians helping with the choir anthem tonight.



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*The flowers are given to the honor and
glory of God and in memory of David,
by the family.*