



For
unto us
a child is born,

Unto us
a son is given

AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED

Wonderful Counsellor

THE MIGHTY GOD

The Prince of Peace

Isaiah 9:6

Emmanuel Lutheran Church
December 24, 2025 9 pm

AS WE GATHER

It is at the darkest time of the year that we celebrate that “to us a child is born, to us a son is given” (Isaiah 9:6). Tonight we remember “God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people” (Titus 2:11). Jesus came into the darkness of our world, as He was born of Mary, to redeem us. God shines a great light on all who live in this land of deep darkness tonight to increase our joy. He is called “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). We celebrate the birth of the One who rules with justice and righteousness now and forever.

OPENING HYMN

LSB 361 “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

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| <p>1 O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by; Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light. The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.</p> <p>2 For Christ is born of Mary, And, gathered all above While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wond’ring love. O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth, And praises sing to God the king And peace to all the earth!</p> | <p>3 How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv’n! So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heav’n. No ear may hear His coming; But in this world of sin, Where meek souls will receive Him, still The dear Christ enters in.</p> <p>4 O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray; Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!</p> |
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INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

People: **those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.**

Pastor: There were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

People: **And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Let us confess our sins to the Lord.
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace,

People: we gather on this not-so-silent night to celebrate the birth of the One who brings us peace. Yet, we are not at peace with You, with one another, or with ourselves. Our sinfulness can cause us to be filled with fear. For the sake of Jesus, the Child who was born and the Son who was given to redeem us from all lawlessness, purify us as Your people and make us zealous for good works.

Pastor: The angel said to the shepherds, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people." So, as God's servant, I say to you, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy." As a called and ordained servant in Christ's church and with His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Let us join our voices with the multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

People: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"

INTROIT

Pastor: When all was still, and it was midnight, Your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne.

People: Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

Pastor: The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His anointed. He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then He will speak to them in His wrath, and terrify them in His fury, saying, "As for Me, I have set My King on Zion, My holy hill."

People: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Pastor: When all was still, and it was midnight, Your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne.

HYMN OF PRAISE

LSB 380 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the_angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

REFRAIN

**Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the_incarate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel! Refrain

3 Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

REFRAIN

**Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"**

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SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, we praise and thank You for bringing salvation for all people. Train us as we wait for our blessed hope that will come when You appear again in glory at the end of the age; for You live and rule with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

People: **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING Isaiah 9:2–7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. ³You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. ⁴For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of

David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord. **People: Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE Titus 2:11–14

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹²training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord. **People: Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL Luke 2:1–20 (The birth of the Christ Child)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” ¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON HYMN

LSB 383 "A Great and Mighty Wonder"

- 1 A great and mighty wonder,
A full and holy cure:
The virgin bears the infant
With virgin honor pure!

REFRAIN

**Proclaim the Savior's birth:
"To God on high be glory
And peace to all the earth!"**

- 2 The Word becomes incarnate
And yet remains on high,
And cherubim sing anthems
To shepherds from the sky.

REFRAIN

- 3 While thus they sing your Monarch,
Those bright angelic bands,
Rejoice, O vales and mountains,
And oceans, clap your hands.

REFRAIN

- 4 Since all He comes to ransom,
By all be He adored,
The infant born in Beth'lem,
The Savior and the Lord.

REFRAIN

- 5 All idols then shall perish
And Satan's lying cease,
And Christ shall raise His
scepter,
Decreeing endless peace.

REFRAIN

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SERMON "A Lifetime to Unwrap"

NICENE CREED

People: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN

LSB 365 "Away in the Manger"

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
- 2 The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
- 3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

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PREFACE

- Pastor: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Pastor: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them to the Lord.
Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

- Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, our Savior, Christ the Lord, for You shone Your light into our dark world to bring salvation for all people, giving Yourself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and sin and to make us a people for Your possession. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the heavenly host, we praise and honor Your glorious name and join in their unending hymn.

SANCTUS Page 368 in hymnal vv 1-2

1 Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains

REFRAIN

**Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song?

REFRAIN

**Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

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PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: All glory, honor, and favor to You, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, for You have had mercy on this dark, sinful world and have appeared in it, bringing redemption for all people.

In the beginning, all was created by Your Word; then You were born of the virgin Mary and became God in the flesh. Shine the light of Your love on us this night so that, faithfully eating Your body and drinking Your blood, we may receive the fullness of Your grace and peace.

To You alone, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be all glory in the highest, for You rule and reign as one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

People: **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

LORD'S PRAYER

People: **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.**

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: **Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

LSB 366 "It Came upon the Midnight Clear"

1 It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to all,
From heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

2 Still through the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heav'nly music floats
O'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hov'ring wing,
And ever o'er its babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

3 All you, beneath your heavy load,
By care and guilt bent low,
Who toil along a dreary way
With painful steps and slow:
Look up, for golden is the hour,
Come swiftly on the wing,
The Prince was born to bring you peace;
Of Him the angels sing.

4 For lo, the days have come to pass
By prophets seen of old,
When down into the circling years
Came Christ as was foretold.
His word of peace shall to the earth
God's ancient promise bring,
And all who take this gift will hear
The song the angels sing.

Text: Public domain

LSB 370 "What Child Is This"

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The babe, the son of Mary!

2 Why lies He in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.

Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you;
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The babe, the son of Mary!

3 So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh;
Come, peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise the song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
The babe, the son of Mary!

Text: Public domain

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray.

On this night, a great Light has shined on us as the Child who was born. The Son who was given has welcomed us to His banquet feast, where we have eaten His body and drank His blood in, with, and under the bread and wine that was given and shed for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and purify us as a people for His own possession. Make us zealous for the good works that You have prepared beforehand that we should walk in them; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and rules with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

People: Amen.

THE LIGHTING OF CANDLES

THE GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

LSB 363 "SILENT NIGHT"

1 Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,

Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

3 Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

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BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

People: **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

LSB 387 "Joy to the World" vv 1-2,4

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains

Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

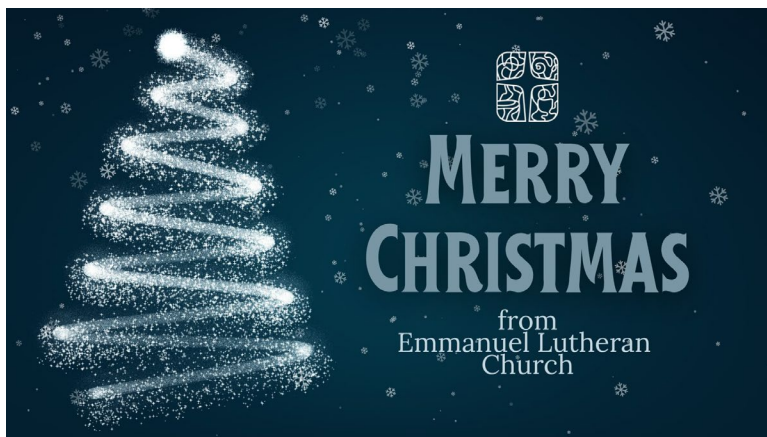
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.

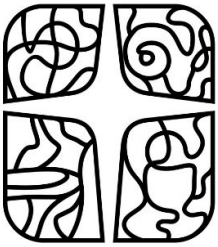
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DISMISSAL

Pastor: Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

People: Thanks be to God





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51 Wilburn Place Asheville, NC 28806

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