

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church  
229 South Broad Street  
Jersey Shore, PA 17740  
570-398-1676

Sunday, December 25, 2022  
A Service for Christmas Day



### **Introduction to the day**

*The angel said to [the shepherds], “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).*

*As we gather we hear again the good news the angels proclaimed: God has come for all people through the birth of the one named Jesus. Through Bethlehem’s manger God comes into the chaos, messiness, and vulnerability of the world. In all things and at all times, we rejoice that God comes to save us and reigns in love. We come to adore Jesus who is Savior, Christ, and Lord.*

## **SHARING OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS**

### **Prelude**

*The assembly stands*

### **Confession and Forgiveness**

Amid the troubles and fears of this world, let us confess our sin and welcome God’s forgiveness, grace, and love.

*Silence is kept for reflection*

Mary accepted your call to be the mother of Jesus.

**Forgive our lack of faith and trust.**

Your Son was born in the poverty of a stable.

**Forgive our neglect of the poor.**

The shepherds left their flocks and went to Bethlehem.

**Forgive our selfishness and complacency.**

With great joy the angels proclaimed, “Do not fear. For I bring you good news of great joy. Today is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

In ☩ Jesus, who is Savior, Christ, and Lord, our sins are forgiven. May you know the peace which the angels sang from the heavens. Indeed, God’s forgiveness is good news of great joy! **Amen.**

**Gathering Carol** *Angel, from the Realms of Glory* 275

**Greeting**

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

**And also with you.**

**Canticle of Praise** *Angels We Have Heard on High* 289

**Prayer of the Day**

**Eternal Father, you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of our salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

L: Let us read the Psalm responsively by verse.

**Psalm 8**

<sup>1</sup>O LORD, our Sovereign,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

<sup>2</sup>**Out of the mouths of babes and infants**

**you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,  
to silence the enemy and the avenger.**

<sup>3</sup>When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars that you have established;

<sup>4</sup>**what are human beings that you are mindful of them,  
mortals that you care for them?**

<sup>5</sup>Yet you have made them a little lower than God,  
and crowned them with glory and honor.

<sup>6</sup>**You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;  
you have put all things under their feet,**

<sup>7</sup>all sheep and oxen,

and also the beasts of the field,

<sup>8</sup>**the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.**

<sup>9</sup>O LORD, our Sovereign,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

**“For unto you is born a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord”**

**Lesson:** Isaiah 12:2-6

<sup>2</sup>Surely God is my salvation;  
I will trust, and will not be afraid,  
for the Lord GOD is my strength and my might;  
he has become my salvation.

<sup>3</sup>With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. <sup>4</sup>And you will say in that day:

Give thanks to the LORD,  
call on his name;  
make known his deeds among the nations;  
proclaim that his name is exalted.

<sup>5</sup>Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;  
let this be known in all the earth.

<sup>6</sup>Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

**Response: *O Come. All Ye Faithful 283 verse 1***

**Lesson:** Matthew 1:18-21

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

**Carol: *Lo, How a Rose e'er Blooming 272 verse 1 and 4***

**Lesson:** Luke 1:26-35

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

**Carol: *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly 276***

**Christmas Homily**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

A: With wonder and thanksgiving for Christ's coming into the world, we pray for the church, the life of the earth, and the whole human family.

*A brief silence.*

The church in every land makes a joyful noise to herald your coming, O God. We give thanks for poets, musicians, and hymn writers who give voice to our praise, and for all who lead the church's worship. God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: This day dawns with new hope for all living things, and from ocean depths to mountain peaks the earth rejoices. Inspire in us an urgent zeal to protect the planet and renew its resources (*local environmental concerns may be named*). God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Bring heavenly peace to this world and an end to armed conflict. Raise up leaders in every nation who will honor human rights and establish equal justice for all people. Give courage to all who speak out against oppression and advocate for the powerless. God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Guard the lives of any in danger, especially those who work to protect others. Lead any who are in desperate circumstances to sanctuary, help, and safety. Grant rest to the weary and soothe those who are troubled (*especially*). God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Bless all who gather to worship on this holy day. Be present at our tables and celebrations, and watch over those who travel. Sustain charities, outreach ministries, and food pantries that give generously to people in need (*local organizations may be named*). God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: Bless our ELCA port chaplains who go aboard ships to distribute gift bags, conduct worship services, and offer other forms of assistance and hospitality to the crews. And continue to bless the ministry of Seafarers' International. God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

A: In Christ we have beheld your glory, full of grace and truth. We give thanks for those in every generation who reflect the light of Christ. May their witness shine forth in our time. God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

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

**Amen.**

## **Responding in Love**

**Our Offerings** *This is our response to God's grace.*

## **CHOIR ANTHEM *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day***

*The assembly stands.*

## **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE: CHRISTMAS**

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 daughters and sons.

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**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER P 145** (*in the beginning of the hymnal*)

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: Glory to God in the highest!  
Come to the table of peace.

**COMMUNION**

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say*  
The body of Christ, given for you.  
The blood of Christ, shed for you.  
*and each person may respond* **Amen.**

**SONG AFTER COMMUNION** *Jesus, Name Above All Names*

(repeat twice)

*Jesus, name above all names, beautiful Savior, glorious Lord,  
Emmanuel, God is with us, blessed Redeemer, living Word*

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

God our redeemer,  
you have fed us at this table  
with gifts of grace, truth, and life.  
As you have gathered us in joy,  
send us forth as messengers of your peace.  
Make us shine with the good news of your glory,  
born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
**Amen.**

**Blessing**

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary,  
the obedience of Joseph,  
the joy of the angels,  
the eagerness of the shepherds,  
and the everlasting peace of Jesus  
who is Savior, Christ, and Lord.  
Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you and keep you now and forever. **Amen.**

**Sending Carol** *Go Tell It on the Mountain 290*

**Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Serve our Savior, Christ, and Lord.

## **C: Thanks be to God.**

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We welcome our visitors and ask that you sign a Visitor Attendance and Holy Communion Card that is located in the pew rack. We ask that cards be returned via the offering plate during Communion. We offer two choices for Holy Communion, wine or grape juice. Those worshipers desiring grape juice are asked at the communion rail to place their right hand over their heart after receiving “The Body of Christ.”

**Remember in prayer:** Rowan Aldridge, Dave Barner, Agnes Cryder, Don & Helen Delaney, Joanne Fisher, Joann Hall, Mick Miller, David Mitchell, the Snyder family, Charles and Candace Welshans, and all of our shut-ins.

We also remember in prayer Family Promise; Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton – ELCA; Bishop Craig A. Miller - USS; for our Companion Synods in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany; and we pray for peace in Ukraine and an end to war.

We pray for the safety of our military troops around the world including Mark Baier, Isaac Boring, Jade Cordrey, Ben Cramer, Trevor and Nehemiah Eberhart, Patrick Hamlin, Paul Laidacker, Kenny Leitch, Steven Moore, Maddison Myers, Tyler O’Neal, Adam Shaffer, Richie Speicher, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, and Jenna White. We also lift up in prayer their families who strive to keep a normalcy in the family and continue on often with added stress.

Special thanks to this week’s helper: Lector –Deb Heydrich; Assisting Ministers—Joyce Braucht, Carl Schaefer; Head Usher –Lon Myers; Teller –Bob Wehler; Bulletin Sponsor –John and Kathie Horne.

Next week’s helpers: Lector –Kathy Brundrick; Assisting Ministers – Deb Heydrich, Ron Brundrick; Head Usher –Bob Wehler; Teller –BraydenWehler; Bulletin Sponsor—; Flowers --

The Sanctuary Candle is given to the glory of God by Cozette Stoltzfus.

The Lutheran Church Women’s Prayer Chain is a vital ministry of St. John Lutheran. Anyone in need of prayers is asked to contact any of the following persons:

Gloria Ely – 570-873-3597      Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

**Christian Education** is seeking volunteers to lead Children’s Church once a month. If interested please see Cathy Eisner. The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays are open.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO RESUME NURSERY.** We are in need of adult and teen volunteers to supervise toddlers/babies in the nursery during church. Please contact Molly Hollick, or Ken Dougherty if you would be willing to help out or have any questions. Our hope is to get enough volunteers to have a monthly rotation cycle.

**Annual Reports** - A reminder to the chairs of all ministries of St. John Lutheran – your annual reports must be submitted to the office **by January 15** to be included in the annual report to the congregation at the annual congregation meeting on February 6, 2022.

**Your 2023 Offering Envelopes** are available in the Tower of the Church. Please pick up yours and any of your relatives. Only a small number of people use envelopes but it is an important stewardship tool. If there are no envelopes with your name on, please contact Laurel Gottschall for envelopes. It costs us \$3.60 to mail one box of \$1.30 envelopes. Please save us money and pick up your envelopes or give electronically. Forms are available from the office or you can give on-line via the Vanco app.

There are **Advent/Christmas Envelopes** in each pew. Of this year's Advent/Christmas offerings, half will go to Mission Support of the ELCA and half will go to United Churches of Lycoming County. Only a small number of people use offering envelopes so these envelopes are available for those who wish to use.

#### THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

Sunday, December 25, 2022

*Christmas Day*

9:30 a.m. Nave Worship Service.

Wednesday, December 28, 2022

10:00 a.m. Trinity Episcopal Worship. You are invited to attend.

4:00 p.m. Gloria's Birthday

6:30 p.m. **NO** Choir rehearsal

Sunday, January 1, 2023

9:30 a.m. Children's Christmas Pageant

9:30 a.m. Nave Worship Service.

Some of you remember a guitar-playing singer and Methodist pastor, Woody Wolfe, who came to St. John Lutheran many years ago. For most of his life Woody has traveled to various children's hospitals from his home in Danville playing for children and inspiring them with music. Woody also works with Pastor Aucker as a flex chaplain at Geisinger. In addition to his ministry with children, he has traveled 16 times over the years to the country of Ukraine and inspired children in orphanages in that country before the war began.

He can go on for hours speaking about the friendly people and the volunteer doctors and nurses from the United States who have traveled to Ukraine to provide medical care and have adopted children from Ukraine. He has also provided hospitality to some of the Ukrainian children and their parents who have come to Geisinger for surgeries that could not be done in Ukraine. Despite the war and the intimidation of his family, Woody is traveling to Ukraine on January 6 to return to some of those orphanages who are now packed with children whose parents died during the war to minister to them with song.

On previous trips they have purchased food for the orphanages with monetary donations from people here in the United States. In the past, the cost of food in Ukraine was quite inexpensive as the American dollar was worth much more than Ukrainian money.

I know this is a difficult time of the year as many struggle to pay for oil, Christmas gifts, food, etc., but if the Spirit moves you and you wish to make a direct impact upon the children of Ukraine, checks may be made out to "**Raising Hope – Ukraine**" a non-profit in Lancaster or place **cash in a sealed envelope with your name and address** and I will hand them directly to Woody on January 1.

Pastor Aucker