

**First Lutheran Church – ELCA**  
**1200 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue - Worthington, MN 56187**  
Ministers: All baptized members – Jeanette McCormick, Pastor  
**Web Site:** felcwgtn.org & **Email:** felcwgtn@frontiernet.net  
**December 24, 2020; Christmas Eve**

PRELUDE

ELW 296, “What Child Is This?” – Cindy Anderson, piano  
ELW 271, “I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve” – Lori Nienkerk, piano  
ELW 267, “Joy to the World” – Kim and Lance Hellstrom, Andrew Bents, trumpets;  
Lori Nienkerk, organ

**ENTRANCE HYMN:**

ELW 283, “O Come All Ye Faithful”

Kim and Lance Hellstrom, Andrew Bents, trumpets; Lori Nienkerk, organ  
1 O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant! O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come and behold him, born the king of angels:

*Refrain*

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

2 The highest, most holy, light of light eternal, born of a virgin, a mortal he comes; Son of the Father  
now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God  
in the highest: *Refrain*

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n! Word of the  
Father, now in flesh appearing: *Refrain*

**GREETING**

Eve of Light, Eve of Birth, Here is God. Come to earth. So we gather in the name of the Father, and of  
the Son, and of the Holy Spirit to celebrate the birth of Immanuel, God with us! **Amen.**

**GATHERING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS (ELW p. 116)**

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

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hid:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love  
you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. Most merciful God, **we confess that  
we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word,  
and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with  
our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus  
Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will  
and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

### **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

**SONG:** “A Candle is Burning” - (sung to the tune of Away in a Manger, ELW 277) – Taylor Huwe

We honor Messiah with Christ’s candle flame; Our Christmas Eve candles glad tidings proclaim  
O come all you faithful, rejoice in this night; As God comes among us, the Christian’s true light

Merry Christmas! Today is the day we have been preparing for throughout Advent. Jesus is born. *All five candles are lit.* We have been waiting for this day, Loving God. We have prepared ourselves for this special day. On this Christmas Day, let us live as those who let hope, peace, joy, and love reign in our lives. As the candles burn brightly and light our path, let us live as those who have the Christ’s light burning inside us today and everyday. Amen.

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY** (ELW p. 124)

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.**

### **FIRST READING:** Isaiah 9:2-7

A reading from Isaiah.

*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!*

<sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>You 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. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>His 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.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM:** Psalm 96

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. (Ps. 96:11)

<sup>1</sup>Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

**<sup>2</sup>Sing to the Lord, bless the name of the Lord; proclaim God’s salvation from day to day.**

<sup>3</sup>Declare God’s glory among the nations and God’s wonders among all peoples.

**<sup>4</sup>For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, more to be feared than all gods.**

<sup>5</sup>As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; but you, O Lord, have made the heavens.

**6Majesty and magnificence are in your presence; power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

7Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord honor and power.

**8Ascribe to the Lord the honor due the holy name; bring offerings and enter the courts of the Lord.**

9Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; tremble before the Lord, |all the earth.

**10Tell it out among the nations: “The Lord is king! The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity.”**

11Let 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.

**12Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O Lord, for you come to judge the earth.**

13You will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with your truth.

**SECOND READING:** Titus 2:11-14

A reading from Titus.

*The appearance of God’s grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior’s final appearance.*

<sup>11</sup>The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly,

<sup>13</sup>while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**CHILDREN’S SERMON**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 124)**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?**

**You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**GOSPEL:** Luke 2:1-20

The holy gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*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.*

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>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 for them in the inn. <sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>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: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

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

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **SERMON (ELW p. 125)**

It’s interesting how things turn out, isn’t it? This year, I’m here in the sanctuary and only a few of you running the service are with me. Last year, many of you were here in the sanctuary, and I wasn’t. If you all remember, last year I had just returned home with Landon after adopting him in Utah and Dr. Rev. Char Rachuy-Cox graciously filled in for me on Christmas Eve as I was home with Landon.

While I was in the hospital with Landon, one of my pastor friends said, “A baby born right before the start of Advent... there are many sermon possibilities with that you know.” “I know,” I said.

That week was surely one of the most if not the most up and down, packed, confusing, beautiful, messy, blessed weeks of my life. As some of you might remember, we weren’t sure if the adoption would happen. It sounded like it was called off, then it was called back on, but we were supposed to leave much later than planned. Then, we got a call that she was having contractions and we should get out there. Some frantic calls to rearrange tickets were made. Then, we got to the hotel, and it sounded like it’d be a day or so... then we went to find the hospital, only to find out that the birth mom was going into labor, and was somewhere that we could not find. We asked everywhere in the hospital if she was there, we called every hospital in Salt Lake City to see if she was maybe somewhere else and eventually, we found she had been admitted through the ER. The week was a blur of supporting an infant through withdrawal, filling adoption paperwork, re-arranging insurance information, setting up doctors appointments, explaining the adoption agreement to the medical professionals, negotiating a new relationship with Landon’s birth mom, struggling through the chaos and pain of her life with her and trying to figure out our place in that, learning about normal parenting stuff like diaper rash and more.

In the middle of all that anxiety, change, chaos and uncertainty, we had the most loving, amazing peaceful moments of my life. Sitting with Landon. Watching a nurse knit him a hat on her overnight Thanksgiving shift. Watching medical professionals, lawyers and a judge work tirelessly to help us bring Landon home. About a day after Landon was born, we gathered in a hospital room with a social worker, the birth mom and a friend of hers, and the birth mom signed over her rights. As the social worker read the birth mom her rights and the details of what she was agreeing to, I found myself sitting in the corner simply praying- there really wasn’t anything I could do but that- just pray and wait. As I sat there, I felt this strong, holy presence- the kind of presence I only feel when vigiling with a person who is dying- that type of presence when you know beyond a doubt that God is near. I didn’t say anything to the adoption worker but, she, of her own accord, also noted it. “You could just feel the power of the Spirit in that room...”. Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, your prayers and Christ’s presence was so clear that day.

A year later, on Landon’s birthday, we had a simple day. Some banana pie (as it turns out Landon doesn’t like cake yet), some gifts, some zoom calls with family, but it was full of love. I found myself,

as most moms do, thinking back on the day of Landon's birth with gratitude, joy and love. As with all births, the beauty, joy and hope of Landon's birth was palpable not because everything that was going on was so perfect and peaceful. On the contrary, his birth, the adoption process, his milestones, his triumphs in life have been precious because of all the pain, worry, uncertainty and agony surrounding it. That moment the hospital was so powerful, undoubtedly, because it was a moment of hope and light for us in the middle of a time of trial.

I've heard some comments lately that if such and such event, activity or tradition cannot happen, "It won't be Christmas." And, my words are not meant to trivialize or minimize the losses I know we all are going through this year. We experience God's presence in traditions and family, and to not have these things, at least not in the same ways, is hard. But this year, perhaps, the brokenness, the brokenness and pain of this world, can help us focus on the real meaning of Christmas. We often re-write the Christmas story as the birth of Christ in a perfect time, place and way. But that is all simply a lie. Jesus was born to parents who had to make the long journey to be counted. Why? Because the Jews lived under the control and power of Rome. The Emperor Augustus told them to go be counted and so they went. They had no choice. There was no room in the inn, so Jesus was born in a manger. Jesus wasn't born to the rich and powerful. His mother was a teenager, and Mary and Joseph were managing the reality of a possible scandal surrounding Jesus' birth (as they had not been married at the time he was conceived). In the backdrop, and as we will soon commemorate in Epiphany, is a jealous king, Herod, who will try to kill Jesus and, in fact, successfully kill many Jewish infants. Like so many refugees today escaping death, Mary, Joseph, and the child fled to another country. The world isn't perfect on this Christmas, but it surely wasn't perfect on the first Christmas either.

That really is the entire point, and oftentimes in the desire to make Christmas "perfect," to keep our traditions, make sure the ham doesn't burn, get everyone on our shopping list the perfect gift, etc. we gloss over the central, core truth of the meaning of Christmas. That first Christmas was so holy and precious not because the world was perfect but because God loved us so much that God sent God's Son into the world. God didn't wait for the world to be perfect but God sent God's Son right into the pain and mess of it all. God didn't try to "soften the blow" by sending God's Son to be an earthly king and live in a palace but, instead, sent Jesus to be the son of poor, ordinary parents.

That's the story of Christmas, and that's the story we need to live into right now. This Christmas is just as special, holy and real because Jesus is coming into our broken world today. Jesus is born into your messy living rooms as you watch this with your sweatpants and comfy socks on. Jesus is born into your cars sitting in the parking lot, listening to this service on the radio, while you are bundled up in coats, because this is the best we can do. Jesus is born into your Zoom calls to family and under your Christmas trees, no matter how much or little might be there. Jesus is born into every Covid ward of every hospital in this nation. He is born into every store and restaurant struggling ... and maybe... failing to make it. He's born into online classrooms and council meetings.

My prayer is that this year, we might be able to, not in spite of not being able to do things "as normal" but maybe because of it, we might be transformed so that we can see what Christmas really always was about. In the same way, as we all weather this crazy storm of 2020 together, may we be changed for the future so we don't "go back to normal" but maybe go forward to something better. Because every year people are feeling the brokenness of Christmas. People who have lost loved ones, people who have been through a divorce, people in the hospital, people who can't put much under the tree, people who are struggling with addictions or mental health concerns. Any given year, there are always many people for whom Christmas is not the "most wonderful time the year." Our goal and mission isn't to

make Christmas perfect for anyone but rather, to simply shine Jesus' light into all of these places of despair.

I actually like that you all will be in your cars and in your living rooms. Because, it means you are already on your way to the mission of Christmas. The mission of Christmas is to be like the shepherds we heard about today. The mission of Christmas is to come, hear the Good News, and go, spreading the joy and hope of Christmas to all the places.

When we sing Silent Night, I encourage you to light your electronic candle if you are in the parking lot, or, if you are home, find a candle and light it by you. And then, as you drive home or as you go on with your day, keep the candle on, maybe move it or put it somewhere that can remind you that Christmas isn't over, but you are carrying that light that has blessed your life into all beautiful, broken and ordinary places. You are called to Go Tell It on the Mountain- and your family room, your farm, your store, your lab, your Zoom, everywhere.

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of God's hand.

#### **HYMN OF THE DAY:**

ELW 289, "Angels We Have Heard on High"

Kim and Lance Hellstrom, Andrew Bents, trumpets; Lori Nienkerk, organ

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*

3 Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king. *Refrain*

#### **APOSTLES CREED (ELW p. 126)**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.\* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

#### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

The shepherds sing, “Jesus Christ is born!” Let your church throughout the world proclaim this good news, over the hills and everywhere. Unite the voices of all your faithful people in songs of praise and rejoicing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Heaven and nature sing, “Joy to the world!” Give respite to flocks, fields, and those who tend them. Come near to us in the beauty of nighttime, the shining of the stars, and the hush of a world at rest. May our wonder at your creation rouse our care for all the earth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The angels sing, “Peace on earth!” Come quickly to still the strife of this world. Hush the noise of war and violence in places of unrest. Inspire leaders of nations to seek lasting peace and sustainable provision for all in their care. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Mary sings melodies of comfort to her newborn child. Bring rest and reassurance to those facing struggles this night. Shelter travelers and those without homes. Console those who lie awake due to pain or anxiety. Heal those who are sick or hurting. We especially remember: **Members:** Todd Hallstrom, Ron Almjeld, Linda Towne, Charlene Wachter, Bob Dieter, Mary Kraft, Marilyn Frisch, Julie & Denny Christensen, Dianne Sanderson, Betty Nelson; **Members in Nursing Homes:** Bobbie Elvin, Gene Wachter, Sandra Marsh; **Members in Care Facilities:** Joan Doeden, Jean Bender; **Family Members & Friends:** Lois Gruis, Josh Hansen (Mary Ingenthron’s son), Lee Morrison (Terry Morrison’s son), Henrietta Lais, Tom Morgan (Sandy Randall’s dad), Peggy Konold (Norma Radenbaugh’s daughter), Brad Martens (Valerie Veen’s son) ; **Our service men and women and Love INC.** Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Lord, we know this season is a challenging one for so many of us. Be people who are not able to gather with their families. Keep all of us safe. Be with all of those who are working tonight and tomorrow to provide for us. Help us find ways to bring love and care to this hurting world. Bless those who are administering the vaccine. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The heavenly chorus sings, “Glory to God in the highest!” We give you thanks for all the saints who have proclaimed your glory in word and deed. Let us join them this night in joyful praise around your eternal throne. We remember families tonight who have lost their loved ones this year and we ask that you surround them with your tender care. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

#### **OFFERING AND CGC MOMENT**

ELW 257- “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” - Noah Hoehn, harmonica piece

#### **OFFERING PRAYER (ELW p. 129)**

Let us pray. Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### **GREAT THANKSGIVING/DIALOGUE (ELW p. 129)**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **PREFACE (ELW p. 130)**

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. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

### **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 130)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.**

### **THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE (ELW p. 130)**

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.

### **LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 134)**

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

**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 (ELW p. 134)**

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

### **COMMUNION (ELW p. 134)**

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. Amen.

### **COMMUNION MUSIC SELECTIONS**

#### **ELW 272, "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" - Matt Russell**

1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung! Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, amid the cold of winter, when half-spent was the night.

2 Isaiah had foretold it, the rose I have in mind; with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind. To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior, when half-spent was the night.

3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air, dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere. True man, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us and lightens ev'ry load.



4 O Savior, child of Mary, who felt our human woe; O Savior, king of glory, who dost our weakness know: bring us at length, we pray, to the bright courts of heaven and into endless day.

**ELW 294, “In the Bleak Midwinter” - Joshua Hein**

1 In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

2 Heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain; heav'n and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign; in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

3 What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd; I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man I would do my part; yet what I can give him--give my heart.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (ELW p. 136)**

Let us pray. Radiant God, with our eyes we have seen your salvation, and in this meal we have feasted on your grace. May your Word take flesh in us, that we may be your holy people, revealing your glory made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**SENDING OF COMMUNION (ELW p. 136)**

Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are *sick, homebound, and imprisoned*. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**CANDLELIGHT SOLO**

“O Holy Night” - Sarah Hoehn, Soloist

**LIGHTING OF CONGREGATIONAL CANDLES**

ELW 281, “Silent Night” (Morgan Rukstales, Aubrey Anderson, Taylor Huwe)

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 your holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

**BLESSING (ELW p. 136)**

Lord God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go,  
but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**DISMISSAL (ELW p. 137)**

Go in peace. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

ELW 290, "Go Tell It On the Mountain" - Hein Family  
ELW 30, "The First Noel" - Cindy Anderson, piano piece

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Office Hours** - Monday—Thursday 8:00 am – 12:00 pm (noon) —1:00 - 4:30 pm & Friday 8:00 am—12:00 pm (noon).

**Due to the rising** numbers of Covid-19 infections, we will not have in-person worship or youth activities through January 19. Council will revisit this decision at their January meeting. **Services** will be on-line or drive-in. You can drive to the church on Wednesday or Sunday and listen to the service on FM 107.9 on your radio. We will have bulletins and communion supplies in the mailbox in the parking lot and by the front steps. There will be ushers to direct you.

**Gift Cards** will only be available in the office during office hours. Please call ahead to see if someone is available to get you cards. Thank You!

**2021 Offering Envelopes** will be available for pick up in your mailbox by Wednesday, December 16. Please pick them up during office hours and reminder to not use them until January 2021 as the numbers are not the same as this year. Thank you.

The office will be closed Friday, December 25 for the  
Christmas Holiday.



### Christmas Services – Drive-In (FM 107.9) & On-Line ONLY Friday, December 25

9:00 AM—Intimate traditional communion service with Christmas hymns.

**2020 Offering** – The last day to get your offering in for 2020 will be Monday, December 28. Please drop it off during office hours. All offering received through the mail will need to be in before Christmas. This allows us to get it deposited for this year. Thank you!



**Annual Reports are due into the church office by Wednesday, December 30. Please get your reports in by this date as we will be sending out the reports this year and Natalie will need a few extra days to get the reports in the mail on time. Thank you!**



The office will be closed on Thursday, December 31, 2020 & Friday, January 1, 2021 for the New Year's holiday.

**Radio Broadcast:** You can sponsor the broadcast in memory or in honor of a family member or an event in your life. The cost to sponsor a broadcast is \$75.00. Please sign up on the sheet in Centennial Hall or you can call the church office. Thank you.

**Early Risers Bible Study** will not zoom for Bible study on Tuesday, December 29. See you in the new year.



**Members:** Janice Berger, Sandy Rogers, Todd Hallstrom, Ron Almjeld, Linda Towne, Charlene Wachter, Bob Dieter, Mary Kraft, Marilyn Frisch, Julie & Denny Christensen, Dianne Sanderson, Betty Nelson

**Members in Nursing Homes:** Bobbie Elvin, Gene Wachter, Sandra Marsh

**Members in Care Facilities:** Joan Doeden, Jean Bender

**Family Members & Friends:** Lois Gruis, Josh Hansen (Mary Ingenthron's son), Lee Morrison (Terry Morrison's son), Henrietta Lais, Tom Morgan (Sandy Randall's dad), Peggy Konold (Norma Radenbaugh's daughter), Brad Martens (Valerie Veen's son)

**Our service men and women**

**Our Missionaries:** Chuck & Sybil Rounds in Costa Rica and Love INC.

*Merry Christmas*

**POINSETTIAS:** The poinsettias adorning our sanctuary this Christmas Season are given to the glory of God by the following people:

In memory of loved ones by Doug & Ardys Jacobson, Jeff & Lynnette Faragher & family, Glen & Lynnea Faragher & family & Mark & Susan Jacobson & family.

In memory of loved ones by Judy Selberg & family.

In loving memory of our parents, Martin & Jeanette Waage & Sam & Ruth Casper by Alan & Barb Waage.

In memory of loved ones by Lonnie & Nancy Myrom.

In memory of Albert Cross by Agnes Cross, John & Nancy Cross & family, Dan Cross & Rick & Sarah Cross.

In memory of Merlin Robinson by his family.

In memory of Gary Milbrath by his family.

In memory of loved ones by Ron & Winora Hallstrom.

In loving memory of Clarence Wasmund by Marie & family.

In loving memory of Vernon Mews by Marie.

In loving memory of Alvin & Jerry Larson & Fred & Rose Hurlbut; In honor of our men & women in the armed forces by Brenda Hurlbut.

In loving memory of Allen Hurlbut by Brenda & family.

In memory of Craig Nienkerk, Iven & Helen Wachter & Merle & Lois Nienkerk by Lori & family.