



St. John's of Hatboro
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



Christmas Eve Service

2 pm & 8 pm Services

December 24, 2025

The Good News for Today: God becomes us.

Thank you for worshiping with us at St. John's. Please fill out your yellow attendance card and place it in the offering plate when we collect the offering later in the service.

Gathering Music

Prelude

STAND

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace.

Amen.

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,

we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; we have not always embraced your message of peace. We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear. We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones; our reluctance to embody your good news. Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.

God's grace upon grace flows over you. ☩ Christ's presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

Amen.

Hymn: O Come, All Ye Faithful (Verses 1, 2 & 4) – ELW 283 (Red Book)

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*

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*

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2

Welcome & Greeting

Welcome to St. John's, where we are building a loving, accepting community centered on growing in Christ, and giving people a place to belong at any stage of their journey with God.

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

And also with you.

Hymn: Angels We Have Heard on High (Verse 1) - ELW 289 (Red Book)

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.

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864

Prayer of the Day

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.

SIT

The Readings

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.

The Word of the Lord,

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 96 (*Read Responsively*)

- ¹ Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
- ² **Sing to the Lord, bless the name of the Lord;
proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**
- ³ Declare God's glory among the nations
and God's wonders among all peoples.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**¹⁰ Tell 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."**

¹¹ 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.

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

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

Titus 2:11-14

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹² training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ 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.

STAND

Hymn: The First Noel (Verse 1) - ELW 300 (Red Book)

1 The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in
fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay, keeping
their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was
so deep.

Refrain

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!
Born is the King of Israel.

Text: English traditional

Gospel Acclamation

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

Luke 2:1-20

The Holy gospel according to St. Luke the second chapter,

Glory to you, O Lord

¹In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. ²It was the first time a list was made of the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³Everyone went to their own town to be listed.

⁴So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. ⁵He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby. ⁶While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. ⁷She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. That's because there was no guest room where they could stay.

⁸There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were taking care of their sheep. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

¹³Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said,

¹⁴ “May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!
And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!”

¹⁵ The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem. Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. ¹⁸ All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over. ²⁰ The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SIT

Sermon – “A Not So Silent Night” — Pastor Bo Bannister

Hymn: Go Tell It on the Mountain Verse 1 - ELW 290 (Red Book)

<i>Refrain</i>	1	While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night, behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. <i>Refrain</i>
Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere; go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!		

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt.

STAND

The Nicene Creed

With the whole church let us confess our faith.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the

Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Gathering God, you bring your people from every corner of the earth together before the manger that you have made a throne. Unite the church in love as we rejoice in the news of your coming. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creating God, you brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Join our voices with the roaring seas, the exulting fields, and the trees of the forest singing for joy on this holy night. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Transforming God, the world trembles amid violence and war. Empower our hands, feet, and hearts with your Spirit to shatter the rod of the oppressor and turn swords into plowshares. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Shepherding God, you lead us to your love in the face of our neighbor. Send us into the world to find your Word made flesh in one another, especially those who are sick or struggling. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Nurturing God, you dwell with us in humble places. Sustain housing and clothing ministries in this community, that all find shelter and warmth. We pray especially for youth seeking safety and care. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Abiding God, you remain at the side of all the departed. Grant all who mourn hope in the resurrection and peace in Christ Jesus. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Please share a sign of peace with one another.

SIT

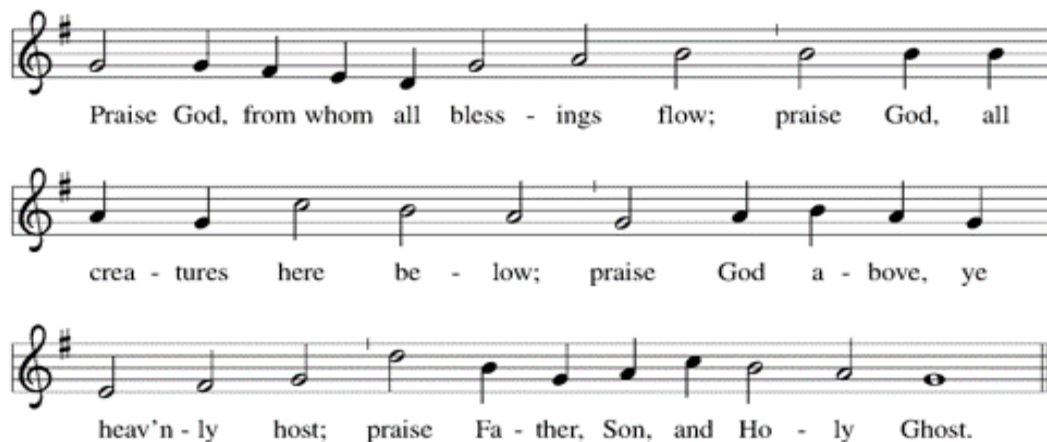
Announcements

Offering

Offertory

STAND

Offertory Hymn: Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow (ELW 885 / Red Book)



Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711, alt.
Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

Offering Prayer

God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior.

Amen.

St. John's practices open communion; all are invited to the Table. You do not need to be a member of St. John's or any church to receive what Christ has freely given to all. As the ushers dismiss your row, you may come forward through the center aisle. Pre-

filled cups contain grape juice, and empty cups will be filled with wine at the rail. Please let us know if you'd like a gluten-free wafer. If you are unable to come to the rail but would like to receive communion, please let the ushers know and we will come to you. It is our general practice that young children who have not yet received their First Holy Communion are invited to come forward for a blessing; however, if parents desire their children to receive communion, they are welcome.

Great Thanksgiving

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.

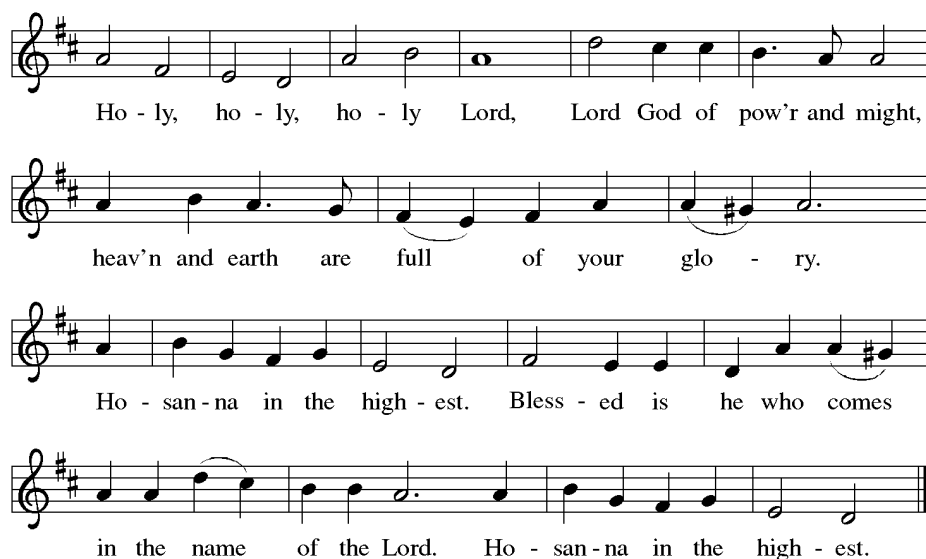
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right to glorify you, Father, and to give you thanks, for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and forever.

Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance.

Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we sing:

Sanctus



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Hymn: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (ELW 270 / Red Book)

Verse 1 & 3

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

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

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 we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth,
born to give us second birth.

Refrain

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

Eucharistic Prayer

Glory in the heights of heaven, and peace on earth to all humankind! God, your glory knows no bounds, and your love is inexhaustible. The Word that was in the beginning, and through whom all things were made, you sent to dwell among us, full of grace and truth, that believing in him, we may have the springs of life within us. We bless you that in love for the world, your Son laid down his life and overcame death's powers to be our hope of life everlasting, that in love he poured out his Spirit to lead us through encircling darkness into all truth, and that in love he returned to the Source of light to draw all to himself.

To the very end Jesus loved those whom he had been given, and prayed that his love and joy might be in them. On the night he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, and having blessed it, he broke the bread and gave it to his friends, saying: "Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

In the same way, he took wine, and having given thanks for it, he poured it out and gave the cup to them, saying: "Drink this, all of you. This is my blood which is poured out for you. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection, we await the day when the home of God is fully among us, when God will be all in all, when the glory of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. You will dwell with us; we will be your peoples, and you will wipe every tear from our eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away. Behold on Christmas, you are making all things new, God.

Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen.

Amen.

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate, to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world.

Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen.

Amen.

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age, that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection, we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son. Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

Amen.

Let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us to pray:

The Lord's Prayer

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.

SIT

Invitation to Communion

Come in all you who are weary,
For the night is cold out there.
Though our lives are very humble,
What we have, we have to share.
There is wine here to revive you;
There is bread to make you strong.
Come and rest from all your troubles,
Rest from pain, and rest from wrong.

Distribution of the Elements

STAND

Post-Communion Blessing

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you keep you in his Grace.

Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

Amen.

Candlelight — A litany from the first Chapters of Genesis and John's Gospel

The pastor lights his candle from the Christ Candle.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth,

The Word was with God in the beginning.

the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

All things were created through him, and without him not one thing was created.

Then God said, "Let there be light;" and there was light.

In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

And God saw that the light was good.

*The pastor will light the ushers' candles who will light the candles of those at the end of each pew. **Never tip a lit candle and spill hot wax!** When all candles are lit "Silent Night" is sung.*

Hymn: Silent Night – ELW 281 (Red Book)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>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.</p> <p>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!</p> | <p>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.</p> |
|--|---|

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885

Blessing

God bless you and keep you, † Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever.

Amen.

Hymn: Joy To The World (Verses 1 & 4) — ELW 267 (Red Book)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 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. | 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. |
|---|--|

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

Dismissal

Glory to God in the highest!

And peace to God's people on earth!

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

Thanks be to God.

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