



Resurrection Lutheran Church

To Live & Share the Love of Christ

Melissa Pagel, Vicar

Sunday, December 24th, 2023 , Christmas Eve

(Congregational responses are printed in **Bold type.**)

INTRODUCTION

Call to Worship

There is room for you here.

If you're weary and worn,
or hopeful and patient.

**If you're tired and lost,
or wrapped up in hope.**

If you're new to this place,
or have been here before.

Come in, come in.

There is room for you here.

The angels are singing,

"Be not afraid."

The angels are singing,

"Good news and great joy!"

So come in, come in!

There is room for us here.

O Come All Ye Faithful

ELW 283

O, Come, All Ye Faithful



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



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



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

Refrain



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Onkeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2
Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John Francis Wade

Candle Lighting Liturgy

How does a weary world hold onto hope,
practice peace, spread joy, or know love?

How does a weary world combat cruelty?

How does a weary world shine a light into
our bleakest night?

We do all these things with God's help.

For tonight, a child is born in Bethlehem.

Tonight, Christ draws near.

Tonight, we light the Christ Candle.

Tonight, we are not alone.

God is near. Love has drawn close.

Rejoice! For God loves this weary world.

Amen.

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

ELW 276

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly



1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, an - gels sing - ing, bells are ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing:
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885–1933, alt.
Music: W ŻŁOBIE LEŻY, Polish carol

Blessed be God,
the one who forms us,
✠ Jesus who bears the cross,
the Spirit who makes our joy complete.
Amen.

Call to Confession

Did you know that a version of the phrase, “Be not afraid” is written in scripture as many as 365 times? That’s one for every day. God says, “Be not afraid.” The angels say, “Be not afraid.” Over and over again, we are told not to be afraid.

Friends, that sentiment carries us into this moment of prayer. During the prayer of confession we are honest with God about the mess of our lives and we are met with God’s grace. God does not meet us with anger. God does not hold a grudge. God does not keep score. Instead, God wraps us in mercy and holds us in love. So be not afraid and join me in the prayer of confession.

Prayer of Confession

Loving Christ,

Scripture tells us that you were placed in a manger
among livestock and hay
because there was no place in the guest room.

The space was full, and yet—your parents made room.

Scripture tells us that shepherds arrived
from the fields beyond town.

The space was full, and yet—they made room.

Scripture tells us that Mary pondered
what the shepherds had to say.

Her heart was full, and yet—she made room.

Too often we assume there is no more room.

Too often we choose exclusion and close off our hearts.

Teach us how to make room for one another.

Teach us how to make room for you.

**Carve out space in our hearts to love as you love,
for we do not want to build hostility here.**

We want to build your promised day. Guide us forward.

**With hope and honesty we pray,
Amen.**

Words of Forgiveness

Friends, the angels say, “Be not afraid,” but they also say, “Unto you a child is born.”

Christ is born for you.

Christ walked this earth for you.

Christ forgives you. That’s what love does.

It makes room. It offers grace. It learns your name.

So repeat these words of hope after me:

Unto us a child is born.

Unto us a child is born.

Unto us grace is given.

Unto us grace is given.

May this good news change the very fabric of our lives.

Christ has made room for all of us. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Loving God,

We have heard this story before—

the story of a star in the sky and a baby who was laid in a manger.

We have heard this story before—

passed down in hopeful whispers through the generations.

So this night, as we lean our hearts and our ears closer to you,

we ask that you would make room in our souls to hear this story again.

Make room in us for awe.

Make room in us for wonder.

Make room for heartache and compassion.

Make room in our hearts for you.

Pull us into the narrative,

that we might hear the truths in this ancient Word

as if it were the first time.

For we know that you are still speaking.
So speak to us again this night.
We are listening.
We are already making room.
Amen.

WORD

Reading; Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.^[a]

⁸Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,^[b] the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,^[c] praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”^[d]

¹⁵When 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.” ¹⁶So they went

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

Sermon

Melissa Pagel Vicar

Hymn of the Day *Angels, from the Realms of Glory ELW 275*

Angels, from the Realms of Glory



1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,



once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.
seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

Refrain



Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a God who makes room for us—who opens the door, pulls up a seat, puts the kettle on, and says, “Tell me everything.” We believe that God not only treats us this way but also makes room for our neighbors, for strangers, and for our enemies. Jesus modeled this kind of room-making love when he said, “Let the children come to me, “and, “Let me wash your feet,” so we try to follow suit. In a world of closed doors, we believe in saying, “There is room for you here.”

Prayer of the People

Holy God,

We have been waiting a long time for this night—
for the joy and the quiet of Christmas Eve,
for the sound of the angel chorus,
for the old familiar songs.

We have carried weary hearts through the last four weeks of Advent,
longing for the peace and hope of this night,
and now we're finally here.

So as we bow our heads, we offer you our most earnest and honest
prayers, trusting that once
again, you meet us where we are.

So tonight God, we say thank you for the things in our lives that spark
joy:

Thank you for the gift of family recipes and crowded tables.

Thank you for a slower schedule, as many approach vacation.

Thank you for infusing this season with practices of generosity.

Thank you for the bells, and the songs, and the candles in the windows.

Thank you for the children who squeal with joy, and the neighbors who
drop off cookies.

Thank you for every ounce of beauty that marks this season;
it has made it possible for us to join our voices with the angel chorus.

However, God, even in the face of remarkable joy, we still bring weary and worried hearts to you this night. Because we know that many have an empty seat at the table this year. We know that many will celebrate Christmas from a hospital room. We know that many have crunched numbers over and over again to see if they could afford a gift. We know that for far too many, the holidays are a reminder that the world is still not as it should be.

So in between our joy and our weariness, God, we ask that you would make room. Pour yourself into the cracks of our hearts. Bind yourself to our good days and our bad days. Carve out space for your love in the center of our beings so that no matter where we go we might trust the angels' song when they say, "Be not afraid," and, "Joy to the world!" Until then, until the day when joy overpowers weariness, until the day when there is room for all at every table, until your promised day, **Amen.**

The Passing of the Peace
(Please be seated for the offering)

The Offering and Noisy Offering

Offering Prayer
(Please stand)

God of field and forest, sea and sky,
you are the giver of all good things
Sustain us with these gifts of your creation,
and multiply your graciousness in us,
that the world may be fed with your love,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

MEAL

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 thanks and praise

It is indeed right...Join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy

ELW 207



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.



Words of Institution

In the night he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus....Do this in remembrance of me.

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

Invitation to the table

Jesus was always pulling up a seat, saving space, making room for people, and he has made room for you.

So come to this Table.

Come with your faith and your doubt.

Come with your questions and your hopes.

Come with your grief and your love.

Just come because there is room for you here.

This is Christ's table. All are welcome.

Communion Hymn *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

ELW 279

O Little Town of Bethlehem



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



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



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



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908

Prayer after Communion

God of angel choruses
and teenage mothers,
there are a million other places we could be,
but tonight we wanted to be here.
Tonight, we needed to be here—
online and in person,
worshiping together
on this joy-filled Christmas Eve.
For when we gather around this Table
we remember the ways that you always make room for us.
You are always pulling up chairs,
welcoming the children, the tax collectors, and the outcast.
At your dinner party, no one gets turned away.
Help us to carry that inclusive spirit into the rest of our lives,
for we know that love like that
is what turns weariness into joy. With grateful hearts we pray, **Amen.**

SENDING

Candlelight Service

(Please tip unlit candles toward that one that is lit. Continue passing the light until all candles are lit. You may carefully raise your candle during the 3rd verse)

Silent Night, Holy Night! *Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht!*



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
 1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885
 Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

Blessing

Family of faith, as you leave this place,
you go into a weary world—
so speak tenderly.

Do the good that is yours to do.

Choose connection. Hold onto hope.

And remember that Christ took on flesh for you

You are God's beloved. So go rejoicing. The world needs it.

Amen.

(Extinguish the candles)

Sending Song *Go Tell it on the Mountain* **ELW 290**

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

Refrain



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

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

Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

Dismissal

Go in peace to live and share the love of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

+++++

This Week at a Glance- December 24th

Monday Office Closed

Tuesday- 9:00am Quilters

Thursday- Food Pantry 5:30pm-7:30 pm

We are looking for new Council members. The Council meets once per month. If you have any questions or feel you are a good fit, contact Vicar Melissa.

Upcoming Events

December 31st On going Adult Education starts at **8 am** meeting in the upstairs lounge. We begin with **Crossways: Present and Future**, exciting ministry opportunities!

St John's Homeless Shelter

SAVE YOUR USED CHRISTMAS CARDS

Please save all your Christmas cards when putting away your Christmas decorations this year. We will be using them for a project at St. John's Homeless Shelter next year. There will be a box placed in the narthex after Christmas for them to be collected.



Thank you for the altar poinsettias. They look so beautiful.

Jim & Judy Gatske

*In memory of Harvey & Ruth Wittig
Nell & Vic Gatske and Glen Tesch*

Sandy Krakow

In memory of her Dad

Jodi & John Koch

Jean Halloran

For family & Friends

Jan Hansen

In Memory of Dave Hansen

Jeff & Carol Borremans

In memory of Jesus

Birth

Eleanor Vogl

In memory of Vogl family

Dick & Joanie Swigert

Please be sure to pick up your poinsettias after worship.

Greetings Crossways Community!

We are excited to share one of the outcomes from our continued work on strategic planning. This fall, we gathered at Pine Lake Camp for our annual Crossways Board of Directors retreat. We were grateful for our time together in order to engage in deep discussion, board development exercises, and future planning for this ministry.

After input from listening sessions, along with discussion and prayers of discernment, the board voted unanimously to adopt the following new mission and vision statements:

Crossways Mission Statement:

Following Christ's call to cultivate inclusive communities,
equip servant leaders,
and create formative faith experiences.

Crossways Vision Statement:

Crossways will establish space and programs for people of diverse ages, abilities, and backgrounds to connect their daily lives with the calling to care for neighbor and creation.

Thank you for continuing to walk with us as invested members of the Crossways Community. We encourage you to remain actively involved and in communication with us as we grow this ministry together. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions, comments, concerns, or requests. We look forward to your next visit to Crossways and a chance to live into our new mission and vision with you!

Crossways Board of Directors
Rich, Joe, Wendy, Beth, Chris, Melissa, Steve,
Kim, Dan, Laura, Keith, Paul, Karoline, Craig, & Tom

Assisting this week Dec 24th

Usher: Gary McFarlane

Communion Deacon: Jodi Koch

Counters: Debbie La Plante & Larry Nelson

Lector: Bill Hartung

Assisting us next week Dec. 31st

Usher: Gary McFarlane

Communion Deacon: Jim Gatske

Counters: Debbie La Plante & Larry Nelson

Lector: Sandy Krakow

Church Council Members

Vicar: Melissa Pagel

Council President: Larry Peterson

Secretary: Jean Kaster

Vice President: Bill Hartung

Organist: Adria Cary

Secretary: Jodi Koch

Choir Director: Beth Krepline

Treasurer: Debbie LaPlante

Financial Secretary: Chris Peterson

Resource & Finance: Jim Gatske

Education: Debbie LaPlante

Worship: Carol Borremans

Food Pantry: Larry Peterson

Celebration: Craig/Christina Marcin

Church Support & Property: Bill Hartung

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