**Worship Plan for Sunday, December 24, 2023** **\* Christmas Eve**

**Introduction to the day**

In winter’s deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus’ birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

**Gathering**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**Call to Worship**

L: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**All: O, come let us adore him.**

L: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it,

**All: O, come let us adore him.**

L: Those who dwelt in the land of darkness, on them light has shined.

**All: O, come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

L: We have beheld Christ’s glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father

**All: O, come let us adore him.**

L: For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

**All: O, come let us adore him.**

L: In him was life and the life was the light of all people.

**All: O, come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**And now please turn to page 267**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Processional:*Joy to the World* (ELW 267)**

**Greeting**

Welcome to worship today, we are glad to have you with our Faith Lutheran Church community. I'm Pr. John Barton and I will be leading our service today. This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

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.**

**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.**

**Word**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**First Reading:** Isaiah 9:2-7

### 2The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. 3You 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. 4For 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. 5For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. 6For 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. 7His 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.**

**Second Reading:** Titus 2:11-14

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

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel:** Luke 2:1-14

The holy gospel according to 2nd chapter of Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

1In those days a decree went out from Emperor 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 for them in the inn. 8In that 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, 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, praising God and saying, 14“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

**Hymn of the Day:*O Come, All Ye Faithful* (ELW 283)**

**Christmas Eve Prayer**

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of your 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.**

**ASSISTING MINISTER**

We continue as we confess our faith using the words of the Apostle's Creed.

**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**

Trusting in God’s good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

Glory to you, God, for the song of the angels, proclaiming to the world Christ’s holy birth. Give your church a joyful song to sing, that we bring the good news of peace and salvation to all people. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the stars that shine in the depth of the night. Provoke awe in our hearts at the expansive mystery of the cosmos. Open us to find beauty in the clear darkness of night and in the first glimmers of dawn. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the child born to us who establishes a kingdom of justice and righteousness. Break bonds of oppression, bring reconciliation to warring lands, and establish peace from this time onward and forevermore. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for Mary’s loving care. Lead us to tend to one another in time of need. Share the comfort of your presence with all people tonight who are alone or separated from loved ones due to estrangement, incarceration, or illness, especially Jamie, JoLynne Buehring; Arnette Calkins; Vicki Crow; Arlene Dressler; Carole Erickson; Annette Hassell; Patsy Loughboro; Donna McCain; Eric McGavran; Mike and Joanne McGavran; Terry Milroy; Sandra Miller; Thordis Moe; Carol Morris; Michael Myers; Marilyn Rieti; Dee Seel; Joyce Stromberg; Diana Ward; Michael Weller; Harold & MaryAnn Whitford; the homebound; the emergency responders; and those grieving and anticipating surgery/tests. At this time, we also pray for those we name aloud or silently in our hearts. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the faithfulness of the shepherds in their vocation. Grant rest to any who feel exhausted from their work during this season: retail and restaurant workers, church musicians, administrative staff, and clergy, organizers of charitable-giving events, and service workers doing essential tasks. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the multitude of the heavenly host. We rejoice in the zeal of all your saints who have witnessed the appearing of your grace, and who reveal to us your salvation for all. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

**Amen.**

**Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**Offering**

At this time, we remember that the giving of our offering is an authentic part of worship. Whether you give of your time, talents, or treasures, a combination of them, or are discerning how you can give to God's beloved community, thank you so much for all the ways you give and help to make the ministries of this church possible!

**Offering Prayer**

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.**

**Musical Offering: *O Holy Night (Mariah Carey)***

***Please feel free to either listen to our musical offering or sing along.***

**Great Thanksgiving**

**Dialogue (ELW p. 152)**

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. 153)**

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. 153)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow’r and might: Heav’n 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.**

**Thanksgiving at the Table (ELW p. 153)**

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets’ hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary’s openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**Lord’s Prayer (ELW p. 154)**

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.**

**INSTRUCTION FOR COMMUNION**

As you are comfortable, you are invited to come forward to receive communion. All of God's children are welcome to Christ's table.

Gather at the altar rail to receive the communion elements or if you wish to receive a blessing, please cross your arms over your chest. You may commune yourself once you've received the communion elements. Please commune the bread first, turn over the vessel and then carefully open the grape juice. A gluten-free option is available upon request. Please deposit empty cups in the provided baskets on your way back to your seat.

If you would like communion brought to you at your seat, indicate by raising your hand for the Assisting Minister to see and they will bring communion to you.

**Invitation to Communion**

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

**During Distribution:*Let Us Break Bread Together* (ELW 471)**

**During Distribution:*Eat This Bread: Jesus Christ, Bread of Life* (ELW 472)**

**Communion**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

**Prayer after Communion**

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.**

**Candle Lighting**

Instructions: Soon we will be dimming the lights and lighting our candles. Please hold your lit candle upright and let your neighbor light their candle from yours. Parents, please supervise children for safety.

Dim lights

**CANDLELIGHT PRAYER**

P. Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light of Jesus Christ.  Continue to shine your light on us so that we may walk in the light of Jesus’ presence forever.  We need you to shine in the dark corners of our world.  Come to us and shine in our lives that we may reflect your love on earth.  In Jesus’ name we pray.

**All:    Amen**

**CandleLight Carol:*Silent Night, Holy Night!* (ELW 281)**

**Benediction and Candle Extinguishing**

P. The faith of Joseph, the wonder of Mary, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the Shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ Child abide with you always.

**All:   Amen**

(Please extinguish your candles)

**And now please turn to hymn 289**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Sending Song:*Angels We Have Heard on High* (ELW 289)**

**Blessing**

The God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus.

**Amen.**

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

The God of all grace ☩ bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**Dismissal**

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

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