

welcome to worship
CHRISTMAS IN JULY
July 26, 2026



The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Atonement

5 Wyomissing Boulevard
Wyomissing, Pennsylvania 19610-2081
610-375-3512 ♦ www.atonementwyo.org

The Rev. Katie Lyon ♦ The Rev. Molly Haggerty ♦ Deacon Tom Yenser, director of music

WELCOME

A CHRISTMAS LITANY

Holy Trinity, three-in-one, we come to this Christmas in July with thankful hearts.

We praise you for the gift of Christ Jesus, our Savior! **Welcome, Lord Jesus!**

The story of Christ's birth never gets old. We savor the beautiful scriptures.

We remember how the Messiah arrived as a baby in Bethlehem.

We sing songs to echo the joy of the angels. **Glory to the newborn King!**

We know that Christ was born into a world darkened by sin and injustice.

In our world today, people are still suffering because of poverty, hunger, and disaster.

Our world is so broken, oh Lord.

Like the angels, we have Good News to share.

Jesus Christ is here to change our stories of hardship into testimonies of hope!

Thank you, Immanuel – God with us.

Guide us, Messiah, so we can bear witness to your mercy and love.

Equip us to serve our neighbors, so that more people can have enough food, good health, fruitful work, and greater justice. **May we demonstrate your grace.**

We are deeply grateful that Jesus can change our stories.

We rejoice in all the great things God has done for us.

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests!" (Luke 2:14)

CAROL MEDLEY (*all sing*):

♪ **Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king.**

Let every heart prepare him room and heaven and nature sing.

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.

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

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: O come let us adore him,

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

GREETING

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: All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Miss Lauryn

READING

Isaiah 9:2-7 (The Message)

²⁻⁷ The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

For those who lived in a land of deep shadows—light! Sunbursts light!

You repopulated the nation, you expanded its joy.

Oh, they're so glad in your presence! Festival joy!

The joy of a great celebration, sharing rich gifts and warm greetings.

The abuse of oppressors and cruelty of tyrants— all their whips and clubs and curses—

Is gone, done away with, a deliverance as surprising and sudden as Gideon's old victory over Midian.

The boots of all those invading troops, along with their shirts soaked with innocent blood,

Will be piled in a heap and burned, a fire that will burn for days!

For a child has been born—for us! the gift of a son—for us!

He'll take over the running of the world.

His names will be: Amazing Counselor, Strong God, Eternal Father, Prince of Wholeness.

His ruling authority will grow, and there'll be no limits to the wholeness he brings.

He'll rule from the historic David throne over that promised kingdom.

He'll put that kingdom on a firm footing and keep it going

With fair dealing and right living, beginning now and lasting always.

The zeal of God-of-the-Angel-Armies will do all this.

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

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

He Came Down

♪ **He came down that we may have love, he came down that we may have love.**

He came down that we may have love, hallelujah forevermore!

He came down that we may have light...

He came down that we may have peace...

He came down that we may have joy...

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-20 (The Message)

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

2¹⁻⁵ About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.

6-7 While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.

8-12 There were shepherds camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

13-14 At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises:

Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

15-18 As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed.

19-20 Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherds returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!

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

SERMON

Pastor Katie

The assembly stands.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Each petition concludes Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.***

*The prayers conclude ... through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.***

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING

If you brought an offering or your pledge card today, please place it in an offering plate that ushers will pass at this time. Thank you for your generous gifts! Did you know you can give using a credit card? Scan the QR code to the right.



Summer Choir

This anthem was written to be sung simultaneously with "Silent Night." As selected voices sing the final stanza, the assembly is invited to join the rest of the choir in singing the first verse of "Silent Night."

Cold are the people, winter of life. We tremble in shadows this cold endless night,
Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping, flowers that will echo the sunrise,
Fire of hope is our only warmth. Weary, it's flame will be dying soon.

Voice in the distance, call in the night. On wind you enfold us, you speak of the light.
Gentle on the ear you whisper softly, rumors of a dawn so embracing.
Breathless love awaits darkened souls. Soon we will know of the morning.

All sing:

♪ **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. (Repeat)**

Spirit among us, shine like the star, your light that guides shepherds and kings from afar.
Shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely, rising in the warmth of your Son's love.
Star unknowing of night and day, Spirit we wait for your loving Son.

The assembly stands.

HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord is here. **His Spirit is with us.**

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.**

Today we give you thanks because in coming to dwell among us as a human being, Jesus revealed the radiance of your glory and brought us out of darkness into your marvelous light. When we turned away you did not reject us, but came to meet us in your Son.

You embraced us as your children and welcomed us to sit and eat with you.

In Christ you shared our life that we might live in him and he in us.

He opened wide his arms for us upon the cross and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin.

Following the words of institution...

Remembering his love for us on the way, at the table, and to the end, we proclaim the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Blessing, praise, and thanks to you, holy God, through Christ Jesus, by your Spirit, in your church, without end. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us, as our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

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

God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

The assembly is seated.

DISTRIBUTION

Everyone is welcome to receive Holy Communion at Atonement. Follow the directions of the ushers to receive bread and a pre-filled cup of wine or grape juice (in purple cups) from the communion assistants. Deposit your empty cup in the basket at the end of the front pew and return to your seat by the side aisles. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. Children are welcome to receive communion with their parents' permission. We have been made aware that several trays have run out of grape juice in recent weeks. We are working to correct the situation, but in the meantime, please be assured that taking just the bread without the wine or juice is still receiving full communion, and with it, all of the blessings that God bestows.

Please take a moment to sign and pass the attendance pads found in the pews, check in to Atonement on your favorite social media platform, share a photo with your digital community, and say something gentle in the spirit of Jesus!

CAROL MEDLEY (*all sing*):

♪ O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;

Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,

Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed.

Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ, her little child.

Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;

Oxen lowing, little knowing, Christ the child is Lord of all.

Swiftly winging, angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing:

Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,

The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.

The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,

The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice.

Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today!

Ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.

Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, you are with 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.**

BLESSING

The blessing concludes... Receive this gift, dear one. Love has come for you. **Amen.**

--Kate Bowler, *"The Lives We Actually Have"*

CAROL MEDLEY (*all sing*):

♪ **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!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"
Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.
Hail the heaven-born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen 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.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest! **And peace to God's people on earth.**
Go in joy. Tell the good news! **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Caroling, Caroling

arr. Bish

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Assisting with Worship

Ron & Tammy Foreman, greeters ♦ Youth Ushers Team ♦ Ellen Bryan, assisting minister
Tom Herman, Carolyn Wheeler, Sue Ziemer, Tom Ziemer, communion assistants
Crystal Shirk, Matt Shirk, sound booth
Susan Mehos, altar captain ♦ Dami Johnson-Agiri, sexton
Summer Choir

WARMEST WELCOME to this congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America! We are a Lutheran church, but we're not just for Lutherans—we belong to our community.

CHILDREN are very welcome at Atonement! Activity bags and children's bulletins are available with the ushers. The nursery will not be staffed for the summer, but the PRIVACY ROOM at the back of the church is available for families who would like a little extra wiggles room.

RESTROOMS are located in the hall next to the worship space. A FAMILY RESTROOM with a changing table is also located in the Privacy Room at the back of the worship space.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS are Monday—Thursday, 10:30am—2:30pm or by appointment.

ATONEMENT VOLUNTEERS SERVE AT OPPORTUNITY HOUSE the third Saturday of every month. Contact Bob Eisenbrown at 484-332-8788 if you would like to join the team.

DONATING TO THE COMMUNITY AID THRIFT SHOP can benefit Common Ground. Use the code **50244** when you make a donation.

FOOD DONATIONS of canned goods, cereal, and other non-perishable, non-expired items for Lutheran Pantry are always accepted in the grocery cart in the narthex.

COMMON GROUND DONATIONS of clothing and toiletries can be placed in the large bin next to the coatroom in the narthex.

PRESCHOOL still has openings for Together Time, T/Th Toddlers, and 3-year-olds. Contact Jen Dauber at jdauber@atonementwyo.org for information.

OUR LANDSCAPING TEAM is looking for new members! Contact John Lehr for details at 610-304-6818 or johnt.lehr@gmail.com.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION continues throughout the summer at 9am in room F122.

MINISTRY MEAL SIGN-UP SHEETS are in the narthex. Join us for a meal while helping us focus on strategic planning and getting to know one another in the process.

USHERS NEEDED! Ushering is a great way to meet people and serve the Atonement community. The commitment is about one week per month. Please contact the office if you have questions or would like to be added to one of our usher teams.

JOIN US IN THE NARTHEX for Christmas cookies and frozen hot chocolate after worship, then stay to help assemble SHOWER KITS for Common Ground!

FREE BASEBALL TICKETS for Reading Fightin Phils Recovery Awareness Night are available in the narthex – first come, first served. Game is Thursday, August 13, 7:00pm.

YOUTH-LED WORSHIP - High school and college youth will lead worship next Sunday, August 2, at 10:00am. All youth who have finished Grade 4 through college are invited to be a part of the music ensemble for the event. We will hold two rehearsals in the nave: Thursday, July 30, 7:00-8:00pm and Sunday, July 2, 9:00-10:00am. Those who can only attend on Sunday morning are still welcome to participate. Please contact Deacon Tom for further information, tyenser@atonementwyo.org.