



Southeastern Iowa Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## Service of the Word

*The First Sunday of Christmas  
Sunday, December 31, 2023*

### Gathering

#### **Land Acknowledgment**

We acknowledge and honor the Iowa, Peoria, Kiikaapoi, Myaamia, Sauk and Meskwaki, and Oceti Sakowin peoples upon whose ancestral homelands our Synod gathers, as well as all our indigenous siblings who have and continue to care for this place – this land – and call it their home.

#### **Christmas Proclamation**

Many ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed man and woman in their own image; long after the great flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant; twenty-one centuries from the time the promise was given to Abraham and Sarah; thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt and Miriam danced in freedom; eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges; one thousand years from the anointing of David as king, in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days discerned by the prophets; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome; the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus; while the whole world enjoyed a span of peace, Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and nine months of growth in the womb of his mother—now in our own times is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.

## Gathering Hymn

ELW 283 *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

- 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:  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!
  
- 3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God in the highest:  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!
  
- 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:  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

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

## Greeting and Prayer of the Day

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.**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

# Word

## **First Reading**

*Isaiah 61:10—62:3*

A reading from Isaiah.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; who has clothed me with the garments of salvation, who has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. (Isaiah 61:10—62:3)

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Second Reading**

*Galatians 4:4-7*

A reading from Galatians.

When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Special Music**

*Joy to the World*

## **Gospel**

*Luke 2:22-40*

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
according to your word;  
for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel.”

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

*Bishop Amy Current*

**Hymn of the Day**

*ELW 290 Go Tell It on the Mountain*

Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
go tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born!

- 1 While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, throughout the heavens  
there shone a holy light.  
Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
go tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born!
- 2 The shepherds feared and trembled  
when, lo, above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Savior's birth.  
Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
go tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born!
- 3 Down in a lonely manger  
the humble Christ was born;  
and God sent us salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn.  
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.

## **Nicene Creed**

**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**

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.

*Each portion of the prayers ends with these words.*

Hear us, O God.  
**Your mercy is great.**

*The minister concludes the prayers with these words.*

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

## Thanksgiving for the Word

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

## Lord's Prayer

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.**

## Sending

### Sending Hymn

*ELW 267 Joy to the World*

- 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.
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.
- 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

## **Blessing and Sending**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!  
**Praise God, all creatures here below!**

You are the shepherds telling the story.  
**We tell it in the streets and across the land.**

You are the wise ones worshiping with thanksgiving.  
**We worship with gifts of song and service, talents and treasures.**

You are the angels announcing peace.  
**We live with joy and go now in peace.**

Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace!  
Proclaim this good news!  
**Thanks be to God!**

Special thanks to all who contributed to this service: Sarah Bereza, Pastor Megan Clausen, Birdie Engelkemier (violin), Val Harlynn, Pastor Aleese Kenitzer (piano), Pastor Dan Kuckuck, Pastor Will Layton, Pastor Kirsten Lee, Pastor Dennis Rodenberg and the Zion Lutheran Church Confirmation Class, and Bishop Amy Current.

Copyright © 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS006842.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Revised Common Lectionary, Copyright © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts, admin Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission.