

# Candlelight Service



# CHRISTMAS EVE - CANDLELIGHT

December 24, 2023

## AS WE GATHER

Christmas is a celebration of love. Loving thoughts and deeds certainly are part of this holy season as goodwill among people seems more pronounced than at other times of the year. What is the source of that love? It is the love of God that is fully expressed in Christ Jesus, the babe in the manger. For centuries, hymn writers and poets have found meaningful ways of describing that love of God. A poem by English writer Christina Rossetti simply but beautifully shares the Gospel truth that blesses this season.

Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love divine;  
Love was born at Christmas,  
Star and angels gave the sign. (LW 46:1)

Through the words of gifted hymn writers and poets and the evangelists Luke and Matthew, we hear the angels and we see the star. Once again, the message of God's love echoes in our world!

**PRELUDE** "Masters in This Hall"

Jody & Evan Gawron

## RINGING OF THE BELLS

**CALL TO WORSHIP** "On Christmas Night"

Choir

## GREETING

P: Peace be with you,

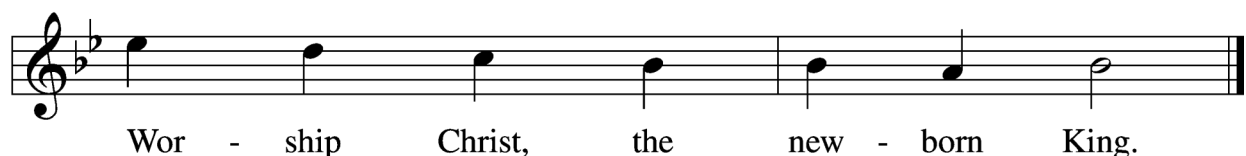
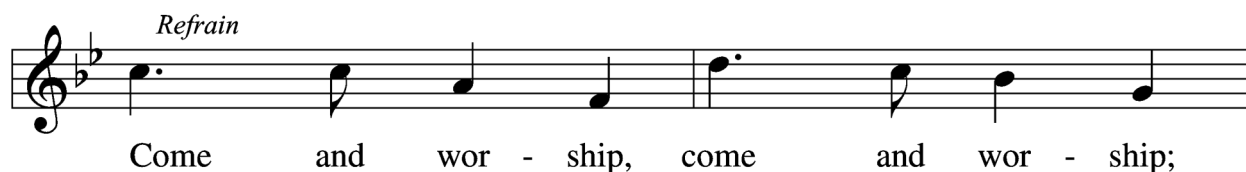
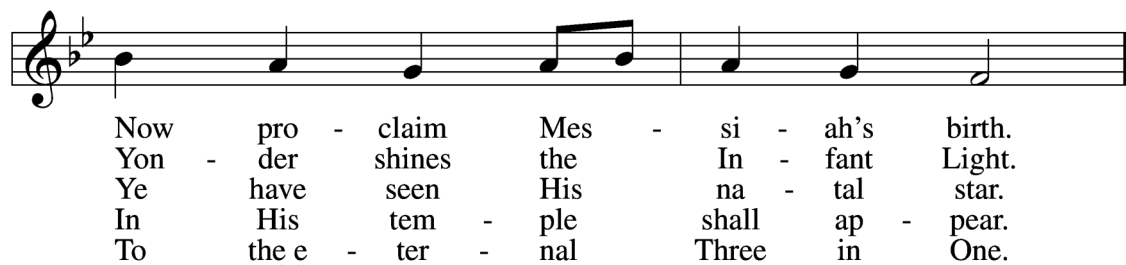
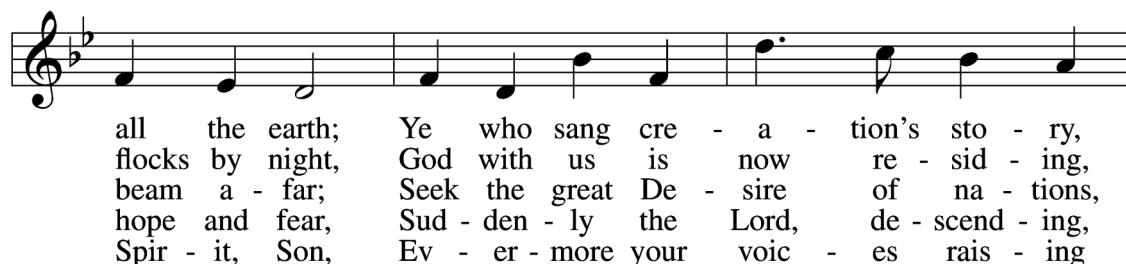
C: And also with you.

**HYMN** "Angels from the Realms of Glory"

LSB 367



1 An - gels from the realms of glo - ry, Wing your flight o'er  
2 Shep - herds in the field a - bid - ing, Watch - ing o'er your  
3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, Bright - er vi - sions  
4 Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, Watch - ing long in  
△ 5 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther,



Text (sts. 1, ref, 2-4): James Montgomery, 1771-1854, alt.; (st. 5): Salisbury Hymn Book, 1857, Salisbury, alt. Tune: Henry T. Smart, 1813-79 Text and tune: Public domain

stand

## INVOCATION

P: In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

## OPENING SENTENCES John 1:14; Psalm 96:3; Psalm 98:1

P: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

C: **and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

P: Declare His glory among the nations,

C: **His marvelous works among all the peoples!**

P: Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done marvelous things!

C: **His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him.**

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P: Joined in worship on this sacred night, let us make confession to our heavenly Father, confident of His forgiveness for Jesus' sake.

*Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination*

P: Almighty Father,

C: **we confess that we are sinners by nature and by thought, word, and deed. We have not always given You the best of what we have and are, and have not fully made room for You in our lives. With repentant hearts, we turn to You for mercy, seeking Your grace. In Your loving kindness forgive, restore, and lead us so that we may be renewed and live to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

P: With joy I announce God's Good News to You. Our gracious God in His mercy has given His Son to be born, to live, and then to die for you and to rise again in glory. For His sake God forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit. Be at peace and rejoice in the Lord.

C: **Amen.**

**HYMN OF PRAISE "Joy to the World"**

LSB 387



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her  
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their songs em -  
3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor thorns in - fest the  
4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na - tions



King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him  
ploy, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
ground; He comes to make His bless - ings  
prove The glo - ries of His righ - teous -



room And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture  
plains Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing  
flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is  
ness And won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His



sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
found, Far as, far as the curse is found.  
love, And won - ders, won - ders of His love.

## **SALUTATION**

**P:** The Lord be with you.

**C:** And also with you.

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P:** Let us pray. Gracious heavenly Father, with joy we celebrate our Lord's birth as the fulfillment of Your promise of redemption from sin. Grant that as Your Holy Spirit works in our lives, there always be room for Jesus as Lord of our hearts, who now lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

**C:** Amen.

sit

## **CHOIR "A Question for Christmas"**

## **OLD TESTAMENT READING**

Isaiah 7:10–14

<sup>10</sup>Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup>"Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." <sup>13</sup>And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

**P:** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

## **EPISTLE**

1 John 4:7–16

<sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup>Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup>In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup>Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>13</sup>By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. <sup>14</sup>And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup>Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup>So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**GRADUAL** Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a

P: To us a child is born, to us a son is given;

**C: and the government shall be upon His shoulder.**

P: And His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

**C: Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

P: Sing to the LORD a new song,

**C: for He has done marvelous things!**

**CHOIR** “A Star, A Song”

stand

**HOLY GOSPEL**

Matthew 1:18–25

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: <sup>23</sup>“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup>but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ.**

## THE APOSTLES CREED

**All:** I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the + life everlasting. Amen.

sit

## HYMN OF THE DAY "Once in Royal David's City"

LSB 376



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y Stood a  
2 He came down to earth from heav - en, Who is  
3 For He is our child - hood's pat - tern, Day by  
4 And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His  
5 Not in that poor, low - ly sta - ble With the



low - ly cat - tle shed, Where a moth - er laid her  
God and Lord of all, And His shel - ter was a  
day like us He grew; He was lit - tle, weak, and  
own re - deem - ing love; For that child so dear and  
ox - en stand - ing by Shall we see Him, but in



ba - by In a man - ger for His bed: Mar - y  
sta - ble, And His cra - dle was a stall; With the  
help - less, Tears and smiles like us He knew; And He  
gen - tle Is our Lord in heav'n a - bove; And He  
heav - en, Set at God's right hand on high. Then like



was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.  
poor and mean and low - ly Lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.  
feels for all our sad - ness, And He shares in all our glad - ness.  
leads His chil - dren on To the place where He is gone.  
stars His chil - dren, crowned, All in white, His praise will sound!

Text: Cecil F. Alexander, 1818-95, alt. Tune: Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805-76 Text and tune: Public domain

OFFERING

stand

OFFERTORY "We Give The But Thine Own"

LSB 781 st. 1, 2 & 6



1 We give Thee but Thine own, What - e'er the gift may be;  
 2 May we Thy boun - ties thus As stew - ards true re - ceive  
 6 And we be - lieve Thy Word, Though dim our faith may be:



All that we have is Thine a - lone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee.  
 And glad - ly, as Thou bless - est us, To Thee our first-fruits give!  
 What - e'er for Thine we do, O Lord, We do it un - to Thee.

Text: William W. How, 1823-97 Tune: William H. Monk, 1823-89 Text and tune: Public domain

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

**P:** Let us pray for God's great mercy, asking that He would hear our petitions and grant them according to His gracious will. Almighty and everlasting God, as we recall the first Christmas, we thank You for the gift of Jesus Christ, who came to earth in deep humility. We bless You that there was room in Your heart for the people of earth and for the sacrifice of Jesus as He left the glory of Your eternal kingdom in coming to earth to be our Savior, our Brother and our Friend. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

**P:** As we think of Your chosen servants Mary and Joseph, we thank You for the gift of family. Grant that we always treasure the gifts we receive through them and seek to be those who cherish our family, our church family, our friends, and our neighbors. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

**P:** As we fill this sacred space with song, we thank You for the gifts of poetry and music and for writers and composers who have enriched our celebration with their devotion and creativity. Grant that we ever seek to bring You all that is the best and most beautiful in our worship. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: We thank You for those who serve in the various vocations of life, including those whose daily work goes unnoticed or underappreciated. We commend to Your special care, Lord, those in the military, our first responders and medical personnel, and all whose service keeps them distanced from their family homes in these days. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: We pray for all situations and conditions of people, especially those on our hearts at this time. Be with all who need our petitions and our concern. Bless them according to their needs, Lord, and give us opportunities to be of comfort and assistance in Your name. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

P: As we pray, gracious God, we remember our dear ones who have completed their earthly lives and now are in Your eternal keeping. Grant that we follow their footsteps in ways of peace and love throughout our lives as we live to Your glory as those on whom Your favor rests. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: hear our prayer.**

### Special Prayers

P: These and any other things You would have us ask of You, heavenly Father, grant to us for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER** (Sung to melody of "Away in a Manger")

Our Father in heaven, all praise to your name!  
Your kingdom among us, Your will done the same  
By people and angels, Come, Lord, rule alone;  
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.

The bread that we yearn for provide us each day;  
As we forgive others, our sins take away;  
In times of temptation, oh lead us, be near;  
From evil deliver Your children most dear,

For Yours is the kingdom, o'er all things You rule;  
And Yours is the power; our supporter are You;  
To You be the glory, we sing loudly again  
From all of creation, forever! Amen.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

P: Let us pray. O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## **BENEDICTION**

P: The blessing of God Almighty—the Father, who gave His Son to redeem the world; the Son, who has revealed to us God’s grace, mercy, and love; and the Holy Spirit, by whose blessed work in us we live our lives as children of God—be and remain with you, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

sit

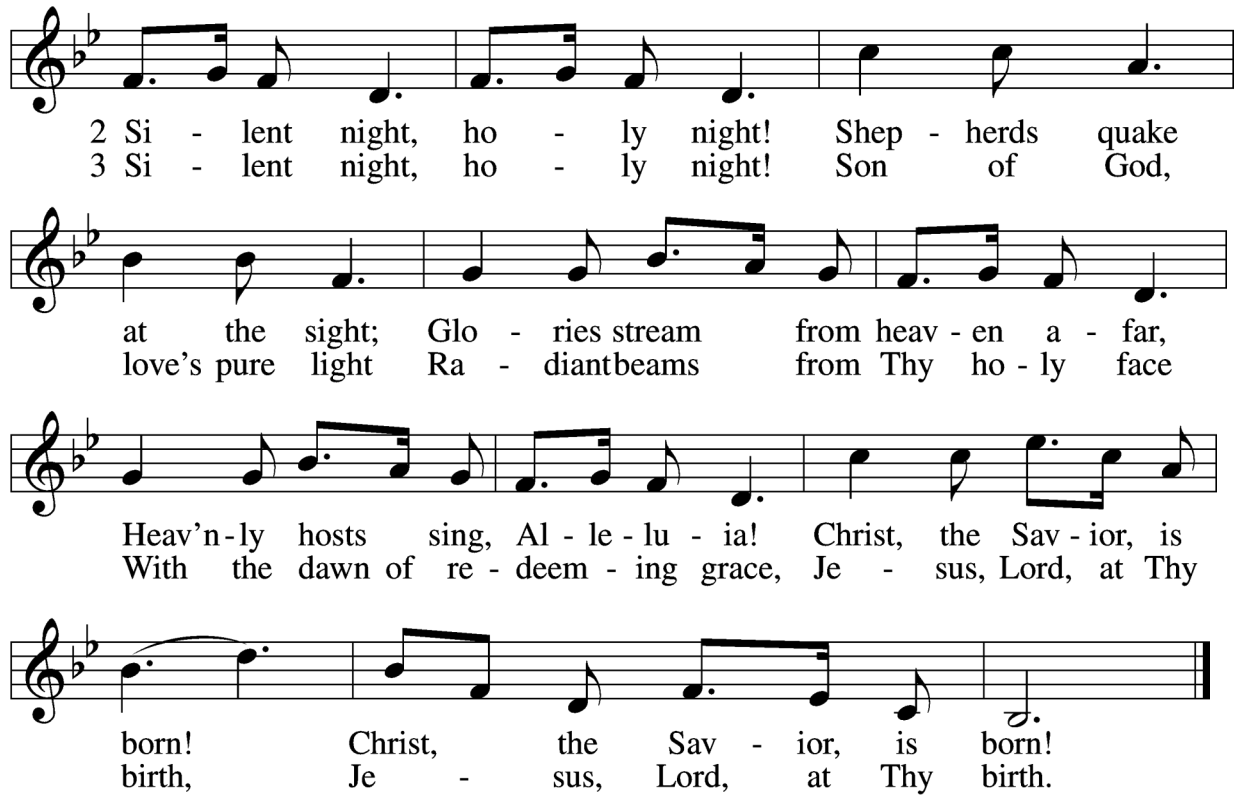
## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

stand

## **CANDLELIGHTING**

P: With renewing faith, growing hope, and expanding love on this most holy night, we sing “Silent Night, Holy Night.”

**HYMN** "Silent Night" LSB 363 – st. 1 Choir, st. 2 & 3 Congregation



2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake  
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,  
at the sight; Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,  
love's pure light Ra - diant beams from Thy ho - ly face  
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 Thy  
born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!  
birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Text: Franz Joseph Mohr, 1792–1848; tr. John F. Young, 1820–85  
Tune: Franz Xaver Gruber, 1787–1863  
Text and tune: Public domain

**THE SENDING**

**P:** Go in peace. Serve the Lord!

**C:** Thanks be to God!

**POSTLUDE(S)** "Joy To the World"

Jody & Evan Gawron

Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Series B, Quarter 1.  
Copyright © 2023 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved. Used by permission.



# CHRISTMAS – NEW YEAR’S EVE SCHEDULE 2023

## Christmas Day

Monday, December 25 (9:00 A.M.) “The Diamond Found in the Manger”

## New Year’s Eve

Saturday, December 30 (5:00 P.M.) & Sunday, December 31 (9:00 A.M.)  
“A Time for Everything”

**Welcome to Peace** in the name of the Risen Savior!

**We request that visitors register** by using the Communication cards found in the pew card holders. We ask that you share your name and address so that we can recognize your visit with us. All members are requested to register by using the Communication cards found in the pew card holders. Members, please indicate all family members present and those who took communion, so that the Pastor and Elders can be spiritually accountable for you and your family.

**Are your cell phones turned off?** Cell phones are indeed a great convenience in life these days. However, please, out of courtesy, silence cell phones during the worship service. Thank you!

**Hearing assist devices and large print bulletins** are available for those who may need them. Please see an Usher or the Elder who will be happy to assist you.

**A Mother’s Room is available** for parents of young children if the need arises. The Mother’s Room in the west hallway. The worship service is able to be heard in the Mother’s Room.



Today we celebrate the Lord’s Supper. Holy Communion. Scripture teaches that Holy Communion is a sacred act, established by Christ Himself and is given to His Church. As members of **The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod**, we hold the doctrine of the Real Presence, in with and under; meaning that Jesus gives His Body and Blood with the bread and wine, as He Himself says, *“This is my body... This is my blood... for the forgiveness of sins.”* (Matthew 26:26ff)

The Holy Scriptures also teach us to receive this meal in a way that is responsible and healthy. As overseer, St. Paul wrote- *“let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself”* (1 Cor. 11:28-29). Out of genuine care for God’s people we ask that those (1) who have not been baptized and instructed in the faith or (2) who come from another church body, not in altar or pulpit fellowship with us, refrain from receiving Holy Communion.

For those preparing to receive Holy Communion, Luther encourages us to ask ourselves these questions:

Do I **repent** of my sins, desiring to turn away from them, back to the Lord?

Do I **believe** Jesus died and rose for me and gives me His Body and Blood this day “for the forgiveness of sins”?

Do I **intend** to use this means of grace to change my life, following His will and way?

We ask that all who receive the Lord’s Supper fill out a “Care Card” and place it in the offering plate. Please note that reduced-alcoholic white wine is available in the center cups of the communion tray.

### **Peace Lutheran Church The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod**

1228 S Park Ave.  
Neenah, WI 54956  
920-725-0510

Ricky P. Schroeder, Pastor  
pastor@peaceneenah.com  
Josiah Fitch, Associate Pastor  
assocpastor@peaceneenah.com

### **WORSHIP SERVICES:**

Holy Communion Celebrated at all Services

Saturday 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 9:00a.m.

Sunday Bible Study 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School (Sept. –May) 10:30 a.m.

Website: [www.peaceneenah.com](http://www.peaceneenah.com)

YouTube: Peace Neenah

