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# The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Eve

Service of the Word Incarnate

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*St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church*

*December 24, 2020*

*202 Van Buren Street*

*Evans City, Pennsylvania 16033-1127*

*(724) 538-5810*

*The Rev. Brandon A. Johns, Pastor*

**SILENT PRAYER** (*As you prepare for worship, you are invited to pray in this way:*)  
+ Gracious God, from ancient times the promise of your salvation has sustained your people with hope. With Mary and Joseph, teach us to treasure in our hearts the birth of Jesus, and with shepherds and angels, lead us to praise his holy name. Amen.

**BELL CHOIR PRELUDE**                      *Silent Night*

**PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST**

On the twenty-fifth day of December...

Unknown ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed man and woman in His own image...

Several thousand years after the flood,  
when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant...

Twenty-one centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah;  
thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt...

Eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the Judges;  
one thousand years from the anointing of David as King;  
in the sixty-fifth week according to the prophecy of Daniel...

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,  
the whole world being at 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 having passed since his conception,  
was born in Bethlehem of Judea of the Virgin Mary.

Now is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

## OPENING HYMN: *It Came Upon A Midnight Clear*



1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,  
4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav’n’s all - gra - cious king.”  
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.  
and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

## GATHERING DIALOGUE

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

**The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it.**

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

**We have beheld Christ’s glory,  
glory as of the only Son from the Father.**

To us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

**In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people.**

## APOSTOLIC 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!**

## HYMN OF PRAISE: *Angels We Have Heard on High*

1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
 2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun - tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
 What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
 come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.

*Refrain*

Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo - ri - a

ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

## **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 only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7**

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

<sup>7</sup>His 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. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

## **PSALMODY: *Away in A Manger***

**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.**

## **SECOND READING: Titus 2:11-14**

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

<sup>14</sup>He 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.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice***

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
 now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.  
 He has o - pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.  
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!  
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!  
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

## **GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20**

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke, the second chapter.

### **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph 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. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And 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.

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

<sup>15</sup>When 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." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

This is the Holy Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

# SERMON

## HYMN OF THE DAY: *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king;  
2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous - ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."  
late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.  
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;  
Veiled in flesh the God - head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!  
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!  
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king!"



## **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 THE CHURCH**

In the Word made flesh, we see God's love for us and for all people. Trusting in God's saving power, let us pray for the Church, the world, and all those who long for peace and good will.

For the spread of the joyful news that the Savior has come, let us pray to the Lord.

**Christ the Lord, bring joy to the world.**

For the renewal of the whole Christian Church in unity, let us pray to the Lord.

**Christ the Lord, bring renewal to your Church.**

For the increase of peace among the nations of the world, let us pray to the Lord.

**Christ the Lord, bring peace on earth.**

For the light of Christmas to shine on us all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Christ the Lord, bring us the light of your truth.**

For those who are lonely, grieving, forgotten, or abused, let us pray to the Lord.

**Christ the Lord, bring them comfort and aid.**

For the poor and those who find no room in the world, let us pray to the Lord.

**Christ the Lord, bring help to the poor.**

For the sick and the homebound, let us pray to the Lord.

**Christ the Lord, bring them comfort and healing.**

For Mary, the mother of our Lord, for Joseph, his guardian, and for all those who have died in the faith, let us pray to the Lord.

**Christ the Lord, bring them to eternal life.**

Rejoicing in your birth and trusting in your mercy, O Christ, we commend all for whom we pray.

**Amen.**



## PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you!**

*We pass the peace of Christ, which is wholeness through reconciliation, from wherever we are, trusting the Holy Spirit, who makes us one, moves between us no matter the distance.*

## SPECIAL MUSIC

*Away in a Manger St. Peter's Bell Choir*

## OFFERING

*As we continue as a community in diaspora, financial offerings can still be dropped off at the church, mailed, or made electronically. As always, these avenues of offering are for the sake of serving the desire of the community to steward the gifts God has given us, not as a demand for your salvation. Please remember that although we are physically apart for a time, St. Peter's remains a hub of ministry and service, and relies on your ongoing financial support to ensure our ministry of worship, faith formation, and care for one another and our neighbor is able to continue.*

## OFFERTORY 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 blessings for others. With all the hosts of heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## CANTICLE OF THANKSGIVING: *Let All Together Praise Our God*



1 Let all to - geth - er praise our God be - fore the  
6 Un - lock the door a - gain to - day that leads to



high - est throne; to - day God o - pens heav'n a - gain and  
par - a - dise; the an - gel bars the way no more. To



sends the on - ly Son, and sends the on - ly Son.  
God let prais - es rise, to God let prais - es rise!

## THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

(written by Ambrose of Milan in ~380; text of *Savior of the Nations, Come*)

Savior of the nations, come; virgin's son, make here your home.  
Marvel now, O heaven and earth: God has chosen such a birth.  
For your Word made flesh, O God,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

Not by human flesh and blood, but the mystic Breath of God,  
was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of woman, blossom fresh.  
For your Word made flesh, O God,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

Wondrous birth—oh, wondrous child—from his throne, a virgin mild!  
Very God, and Mary's son, eager now his race to run!  
For your Word made flesh, O God,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

From God's heart the Savior speeds, back to God his pathway leads;  
out to vanquish death's command, back to reign at God's right hand.  
For your Word of life, O God,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

Now your manger, shining bright, hallows night with newborn light.  
Night cannot this light subdue; let our faith shine ever new.  
For your Word made flesh, O God,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

Praise we sing to Christ the Lord, virgin's son, incarnate Word!  
To the holy Trinity, praise we sing eternally!  
For your Word made flesh, O God,  
**we give you thanks and praise.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

Taught by God's Word Incarnate, we are bold to 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**

## BENEDICTION

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the Magi, and the peace of the Christ-Child.

And may Almighty God, Father, (+) Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

## LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES/ANTHEM

*"O Holy Night"*

Curt Johns

*(During the anthem, you are invited to light your hand candles.)*



## CLOSING HYMN: *Silent Night, Holy Night*

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

## DISMISSAL

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son to save us from sin and death.

**Now send us to serve others in his name.**

Most Blessed Son, you came down from heaven to dwell among us.

**Go with us now and teach us to live with one another in your peace.**

Holy Spirit, comfort us through this life and live in our hearts,  
making us a new people of love and joy.

**Lead us forth to declare to all people that a Savior has been born.**

Go in peace, remember the poor,  
be kind to one another, and serve the Lord!

**Thanks be to God!**

## POSTLUDE

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**The 2021 offering envelopes** - are available outside of the glass doors. The envelopes are numbered and dated for 2021 so please wait to use



them until the new year! Please remember to keep your membership active a contribution and communion of record in this calendar year or the preceding year is necessary.

**Altar Flowers** - Now is the time to fill in your 2021 flower reservation, first come – first served. The flower chart is online and can be accessed with by using the following link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040845ABAB28A0F49-sponsors>

Or by contacting the church office to see if there is an open date for sponsorship. The altar flowers are \$35. Mark an envelope, write FLOWERS and the amount.

**Eternal Candle** - If you would like to sponsor the eternal candle for a month in 2021 you may also sign up to do that on the flower / candle chart that is located at the above link or by calling or emailing the church office. The cost to sponsor the candle is \$15.00 for the month and your donation can be placed in your offering envelope.

**Thank You** - to everyone who helped in any way to provide gifts and gift cards for children and families at Glade Run Lutheran Services this Christmas season.

**Recipe Book** - It's not too late!!!! WELCA is assembling a St. Peter's cook book and we don't want to miss out on including your favorite recipe's in the book. Pick up a form to submit your favorites in the church office or contact Christine Johns for more information.

**Christmas Eve Offering** – tonight's offering will go toward 2022 National Youth Gathering and a Christmas bonus for Pastor Johns.

## **Christmas Luminary Sponsorship**

### **Luminaries have been placed in loving memory of:**

- Milton & June Blinn, Gary Blinn, Joyce Blinn Bader  
by Ron & Alvera Blinn
- Bob Domhoff, and Charles M. & Mabel A. Peters by Marlene Domhoff
- R. Paul Wingard, and Charles M. & Mabel A. Peters by Lucille Wingard
- Charles & Helen Flach, and Robert & Virginia Baird  
by Patti & Charlie Flach
- Troy Barkley, Jr., Betty Westerman, & Darlene Neibar  
by Troy & Beverly Barkley
- Paul, Olive & Gerald Marburger by Janice & Karen Marburger
- Dot Marburger & Jean Sutton by Robin & Steve VanDyke
- Our loved ones by Teresa O'Malley
- George & Greg King by Bea King
- Paul Wingard, Geneveve & Lee Brosius by Luann & Perry Brosius
- Sue Ludwik by Joseph Ludwik
- Tom Scherer by Wesley & Linda Schmidt

### **Luminaries have been placed in honor of:**

- Scott Barkley & family by Troy & Beverly Barkley
- My sisters & brothers by Randy, Becky, Berty & Rick  
by Robin VanDyke
- Pat & Dave VanDyke by Robin & Steve VanDyke
- Our friends & family by Teresa O'Malley
- Mark, Elaine & Ava Brosius, Pam, Paige & Paul Volz, and Lucille  
Wingard by Luann & Perry Brosius
- My family by Joseph Ludwik
- My children, grandchildren & great grandchildren by Barb Graham
- Our parents by Wesley & Linda Schmidt

### **Luminaries have been placed to the Glory of God:**

- Gloria Deo by Teresa O'Malley