

The Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Eve  
December 24, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.  
Christmas Eve Worship for Children & Families



ST. JOHN'S  
LUTHERAN CHURCH



*Welcome! This Christmas Eve worship service is designed especially for families with young children. As we gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we invite you to hear the familiar story of that first Christmas in Bethlehem so long ago. Please join your heart and voice in the beloved carols, prayers, and responses in this service. May Christ, our new-born King, give to each one of us a very happy and holy Christmas celebration!*

*If you would like to know more about our life together in Christ here at St. John's Lutheran Church, we invite you to speak with an usher, welcome center contact, or the pastor.*



### **Prayer Before Worship**

God, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to be born a little child like me. Let your Holy Spirit work in me to hear the Christmas news tonight with eager ears and a joyful heart. Amen.

## Pre-Service Music

"A Christmas Prelude" (Charles Callahan)

## Ringling of the Bells

## Welcome

## Invocation

Pastor: In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**All: Amen.**

## Lighting the Advent Wreath & Christ Candle

*Advent helps us get ready for celebrating Jesus' birth at Christmas. The four candles of the Advent wreath stand for the four weeks of Advent. The light grows as we get closer to the celebration of Jesus' birth! Now it's time to light the center candle, the Christ candle. Christmas is here! The pastor prays this prayer:*

Pastor: We praise you, O God, for this Advent wreath. It has helped us to get ready for Jesus' coming. As we light the Christ candle on this wreath, we give you thanks for sending Jesus into the world to be our Savior. Bless us as we celebrate his birth.

**All: Amen.**

*(we sing)* Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!  
Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him Born the king of angels;  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

## Christmas Sentences

*Jennifer will teach the response to the children so that everyone can join in saying it together.*

Jennifer: Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth.

**Children: Oh, come, let us adore him!**

Jennifer: For unto us a child is born; unto us a Son is given.

**Children: Oh, come, let us adore him!**

Jennifer: And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**Children: Oh, come, let us adore him!**

Jennifer: Jesus our Savior is born. Alleluia!

**Children: Oh, come, let us adore him!**

## Christmas Gathering Song

"Away in a Manger"

*Please stand*

Away in a manger, no crib for a 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.

The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay,  
Close by me forever, and love me I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,  
And take us to heaven to live with you there.

*Please be seated*

## Psalmody

Psalm 100 (*from the New International Reader's Version*)

Sing a new song to the Lord.

Shout for joy to the Lord, everyone on earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness.

Come to him with songs of joy.

Know that the Lord is God.

He made us, and we belong to him.

We are his people.

We are the sheep belonging to his flock.

Give thanks as you enter the gates of his temple.

Give praise as you enter its courtyards.

Give thanks to him and praise his name.

The Lord is good. His faithful love continues forever.

It will last for all time to come.

## Welcoming the Christmas Message

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

*Children are invited to ring bells each time "Gloria in excelsis Deo" is sung.*

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!

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be Which inspire your heav'nly song?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo!

## Christmas Message

"The Symbols of Christmas"

*You are invited to join in singing the stanzas of this carol after each part is performed.*

### Introduction: A Christmas Tree

O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Thy leaves are so unchanging  
O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Thy leaves are so unchanging  
Not only green when summer's here  
But also when it's cold and drear  
O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Thy leaves are so unchanging

### The Creation Star Chrismon: Genesis 1-2

O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Such pleasure do you bring me  
O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Such pleasure do you bring me  
For every year this Christmas tree  
Brings to us such joy and glee  
O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Such pleasure do you bring me

## **Christ the Light of the World Chrismon: John 8**

O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
You'll ever be unchanging  
A symbol of God's love and care  
You'll ever be unchanging  
Each shining light, each silver bell  
No one alive spreads cheer so well  
O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
You'll ever be unchanging

## **Make a Joyful Noise Chrismon: Psalm 100**

O Christmas Tree, o Christmas Tree  
What happiness befalls me  
O Christmas Tree, o Christmas Tree  
What happiness befalls me  
When oft at joyous Christmas-time  
Your form inspires my song and rhyme  
O Christmas Tree, o Christmas Tree  
What happiness befalls me

## **Jerusalem Cross Chrismon: John 19**

O Christmas Tree, o Christmas Tree  
Your boughs can teach a lesson  
O Christmas Tree, o Christmas Tree  
Your boughs can teach a lesson  
That constant faith and hope sublime  
Lend strength and comfort through all time  
O Christmas Tree, o Christmas Tree  
Your boughs can teach a lesson

## Alpha and Omega Chrismon: Revelation 21

O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Thy leaves are so unchanging  
O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Thy leaves are so unchanging  
Not only green when summer's here  
But also when it's cold and drear  
O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree  
Thy leaves are so unchanging

"Oh Christmas Tree" (an old German Christmas carol)

### Offering

*Shepherds came to worship Jesus, and the wise men brought their gifts to honor him. We, too, bring our offerings to Jesus as an act of worship. Children are invited to bring their family's offering and Connection Card forward, placing this into the wooden manger at the chancel steps.*

### Music at the Offering

### Prayers of the People

*Please stand*

Pastor: Filled with wonder and joy that God's Son is born for us, we pray. Each of our prayers ends with the words, "Lord in your mercy..." Please respond each time by saying, "Hear our prayer." We pray:

Pastor: Dear Father in heaven, thank you for sending us your Son to be our Savior, born as a little baby like us. Thank you for Mary and Joseph, who welcomed him at his birth and took care of him. Bless all parents as they care for the children you have given them. Lord, in your mercy...

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Jennifer: Thank you for all the blessings that you have given us, like food, families, and homes. Let us remember to take care of these gifts and share them to help the people around us. Lord, in your mercy...

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Jennifer: Please give safe travels to all the people who are visiting friends and families this Christmas. Bless our world with joy as we celebrate the love you show us in your Son, Jesus. Lord, in your mercy...

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Lord God, trusting in your mercy and grace, we ask all these things in the name of Jesus, our Savior.

**All: Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

Pastor: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**All: 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.**

*Please be seated*

### **Christmas Carol Sing**

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinner 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!"

The first Noel, the angels 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 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.

*Prior to the singing of "Silent Night," the lights in the sanctuary will be dimmed.  
Worshippers are invited to crack their glow sticks.*

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.

*Please stand*

### **Christmas Blessing**

Pastor: Jesus Christ, whose birth we remember and celebrate with joy, guide your days and years as you live in God's grace.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

**All: Amen.**

### **Sending**

Pastor: Go in peace. Jesus is born for you!

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **Sending Christmas Hymn**

"Joy to the World"

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!

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!

### **Postlude**

"A Christmas Postlude" (Charles Callahan)



**We're glad you chose to worship with us at this special service.  
Please join us as we continue to celebrate the birth of Jesus:**

Friday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)  
Candlelight Communion Service at 7:30 p.m.

Monday, December 25 (Christmas Day)  
Worship with Holy Communion at 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, December 31 (First Sunday after Christmas)  
Worship with Holy Communion at 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, December 31 (New Year's Eve)  
Worship with Holy Communion at 5:00 p.m.



**Our Ministry Of Worship**

Officiant/Preacher	Pastor Meehan
Worship Assistant	Jennifer Hills, Director of Discipleship
Organist/Pianist	David Leahey, Director of Music
Acolyte	Breanna Tillman
Usher	Angela del Pielago Arnaldo del Pielago





## Altar Flowers

Donations to the Flower Fund To the Glory to God



## Poinsettias

Jeannette Bottomley	In honor of my daughter, Susan
Ethel Sullivan	In honor of all of our loved ones
Patricia Zissios	Memory of Charles Zissios
Pastor and June Meehan	In honor of the Christ Child
Mark and Jean Gilbertson	Christ Our Savior
Robert and Flannery Macynski	In honor of our children: Sarah, Lindsay, David, and Georgiana
Steve and Linda Tracy	In Memory of Loved Ones
Cathy Long	Cathy, Emily, & Andrew, In memory of John Long
Eric and Andrea Klanderman	Commemorating family at the season
Denise Canter	Audrey and Alden Wallace
Brian and Christy Hoins	In memory of Valerie Shaw



## **Acknowledgments**

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**St. John's Lutheran Church**  
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**Alexandria, VA 22310**



*A member congregation of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod*

### **St. John's Lutheran Church Staff**

Pastor	Rev. John Meehan
Director of Discipleship	Jennifer Hills, DCE
Director of Music	David Leahey
Office Administrator	Michelle May
Finance Administrator	Jennifer Smith
Communication Specialist	Jacqueline Fuller

### **Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) Staff**

Director of ECEC	Amanda Parks
ECEC Administrator	Kari Wells

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