

The Nativity of Our Lord – Christmas Day

December 25, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.

Holy Communion, Setting 2



Welcome! On this Christmas morning the people of God gather to celebrate the birth of the Word made flesh, Christ our Lord. Luke recounts the familiar story of shepherds and angels; John's Gospel tells of the Word that dwells among us, full of grace and truth. The meaning of Christmas is made clear: the Light shines in the darkness. It is in the liturgy that we encounter the Word made flesh—in the people of God gathered together as the body of Christ, and in the meal around the holy table. We go forth to be bearers of light as we proclaim this good news to all the ends of the earth.

Join your heart and voice in praising our Incarnate Lord in today's worship service. Hymn references are from *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB). If you would like more information about St. John's and our ministry, please speak with one of the greeters, ushers, or the pastor. A very blessed and holy Christmas to everyone!



Prayer Before Worship

Gracious God, on this blessed morning we join with all of creation in singing our thanks for the gift of all gifts: the birth of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Let his coming be at the center of our Christmas celebration, and help us to carry the good news of his birth out into the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prelude-Service Music

"A Christmas Prelude" (Charles Callahan)

Ringling of the Bells

Welcome

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their baptism

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

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

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake 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.

C Amen.

SERVICE OF THE WORD

Processional Hymn

"Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful" (LSB 379)



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
2 High - est, most ho - ly, Light of Light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, O come___ ye to Beth - le - hem;
Born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal He comes;
Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!
Je - sus, to Thee___ be___ glo - ry giv'n!



Come and be - hold Him Born the king of an - gels:
 Son of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
 Glo - ry to God In the high - est:
 Word of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

Refrain



O come, let us a - dore Him, O come, let us a - dore Him,



O come, let us a - dore Him, Christ the Lord!

Public domain

Greeting

P Today Christ is born: Alleluia, alleluia!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
 and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

Opening Dialogue

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

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

L For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.

C And his Name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

L O, sing to the Lord a new song;

C For he has done marvelous things.

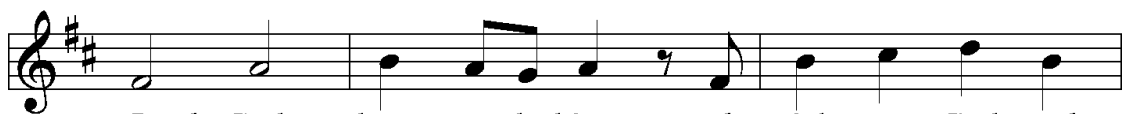
L The Word became flesh and lived among us.

C We have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

Gloria in Excelsis



A Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to His peo-ple on earth.



C Lord God, heav - en - ly king, al - might - y God and



Fa - ther: We wor - ship You, we give You thanks, we
 praise You for Your glo - ry. Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly
 Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God: You
 take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on
 us. You are seat - ed at the right hand of the
 Fa - ther; re - ceive our prayer. For You a - lone are the
 Ho - ly One, You a - lone are the Lord, You a -
 lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,
 in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you

C And also with you

P Let us pray:

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

*Please join in reading aloud the highlighted portion of Scripture
and consider committing this passage to memory in the week ahead.*

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

⁸The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see
the return of the LORD to Zion.

⁹Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted his people;
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰The LORD has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
**and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.**

☐ This is the Word of the Lord.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

Psalmody

Psalm 98

(“Joy to the World” is Isaac Watts' paraphrase of this psalm)

All: *(sung)* **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...**

☐ Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

All: *(sung)* **Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy...**

☐ Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the Lord with harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn, shout for joy before the Lord, the King.

All: *(sung)* **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...**

☐ Let the sea resound and all that is in it, the world and all that live in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; let them sing before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the people with equity.

All: *(sung)* **He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love...**

Epistle

Hebrews 1:1-12

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets,²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say,
"You are my Son; today I have begotten you"?

Or again,

"I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?

⁶And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,

"Let all God's angels worship him."

⁷Of the angels he says,

"He makes his angels winds,
and his servants flames of fire."

⁸But of the Son he says,
"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom.
⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."
¹⁰And,
"In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands;
¹¹they will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like clothing;
¹²like a cloak you will roll them up,
and like clothing they will be changed.
But you are the same, and your years will never end."

☐ This is the Word of the Lord.

☑ **Thanks be to God.**

Anthem for Christmas Day

"Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light"
(Schop/arr. J. S. Bach)

*Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly light,
and usher in the morning.*

*O shepherds, shrink not with affright,
but hear the angel's warning:
this child, now weak in infancy,
our confidence and joy shall be,
the pow'r of Satan breaking,
our peace eternal making.*

*Sound forth the Word of God's great love,
And cease from doubt and grieving,
Believe the message from above,
The blessed Christ receiving.
Proclaim the wondrous heav'nly grace
To sinners all in every place;
All hearts in Him rejoicing,
All tongues His praises voicing.*

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



¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



Sermon

“Word!”

Hymn of the Day

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten” (LSB 384)



1 Of the Fa - ther’s love be - got - ten Ere the worlds be -
 2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, When the vir - gin,
 3 This is He whom seers in old time Chant - ed of with
 4 O ye heights of heav’n, a - dore Him; An - gel hosts, His
 △ 5 Christ, to Thee, with God the Fa - ther, And, O Ho - ly



gan to be, He is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
 full of grace, By the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,
 one ac - cord, Whom the voic - es of the proph - ets
 prais - es sing. Pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore Him
 Ghost, to Thee Hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing



He the source, the end - ing He, Of the things that are, that
 Bore the Sav - ior of our race, And the babe, the world's Re -
 Prom - ised in their faith - ful word. Now He shines, the long - ex -
 And ex - tol our God and King. Let no tongue on earth be
 And un - end - ing prais - es be, Hon - or, glo - ry, and do -



have been, And that fu - ture years shall see
 deem - er, First re - vealed His sa - cred face
 pect - ed; Let cre - a - tion praise its Lord
 si - lent, Ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring
 min - ion, And e - ter - nal vic - to - ry



Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more. A - men.

Text and tune: Public domain

Profession of Faith

Luther's Explanation of the Second Article of the Creed

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from all eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. Who at great cost has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person. Purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death. All this He has done that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

Prayer of the Church

P Let us bring our prayers for the church, all creation, and the needs of the world before God.

Special petitions are announced, followed by a brief silence. Each petition closes with the words,

*"Lord in Your mercy." Please respond by saying, "**Hear our prayer.**"*

The prayers conclude with:

P Rejoicing in your glory revealed to the world, we offer these and all our prayers to you, O God of our salvation, through Christ our light.

C Amen.

Following the prayers, the people may greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying,

"Peace be with you," as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matt. 5:22–24; Eph. 4:1–3).

Announcements

Offertory Prayer

L 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 a blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

Preface



P The Lord be with you.



C And al-so with you.



P Lift up your hearts.



C We lift them to the Lord.



P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Preface for Christmas

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; for in the mystery of the Word made flesh You have given us a new revelation of Your glory that, seeing You in the person of Your Son, we may know and love those things which are not seen. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

Sanctus



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of



pow'r and might: Heav'n and earth are full of Your



glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is He who comes in the name



of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C 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.

The Words of Our Lord

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pax Domini

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

Agnus Dei



C Lamb of God, You take a - way the sin of the world;



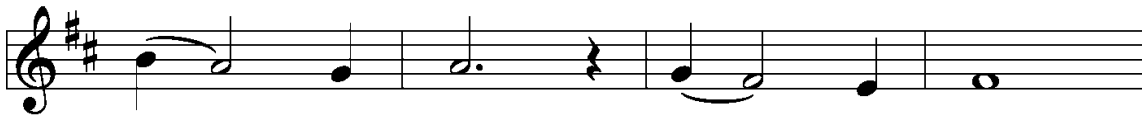
have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a - way the



sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of



God, You take a - way the sin of the world;



grant us peace, grant us peace.

Distribution

Lutheran Christians believe and teach that in the Sacrament of the Altar, Christ's body and blood are given to those who receive the bread and wine. With the bread and wine, the gifts of His body and blood are given to Christ's people for forgiveness of sins, strength for our journey of faith, and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. All who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, and who trust His words that these gifts are given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins, are invited to receive the Eucharist.

Please follow the direction of the ushers to come to the Lord's Table. The bread will be distributed first. **Gluten-free wafers** are available for those who may need these. Please indicate this to the pastor at the distribution. The wine is then received by individual glasses only. Non-alcoholic grape juice is available for those who for medical or recovery purposes must abstain from alcohol.

Children who do not receive the Sacrament are invited to come forward and receive a blessing. Please cross arms over chest so the pastor and lay assistant are able to distinguish children who do commune from those who do not yet receive the Sacrament.

For additional self-preparation to receive the Sacrament, please see "Christian Questions with Their Answers" beginning on page 1351 in the pew Bible.

Distribution Hymns

"Now Sing We, Now Rejoice"

(LSB 386)



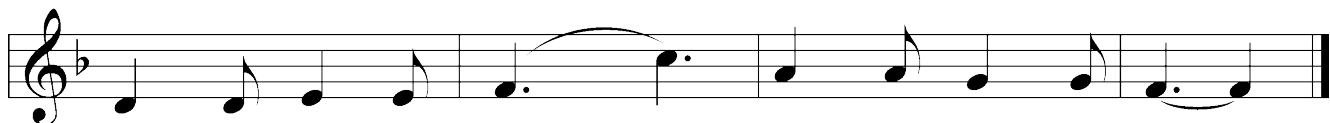
1 Now sing we, now re - joice, Now raise to heav'n our voice;
 2 Come from on high to me; I can - not rise to Thee.
 3 Now through His Son doth shine The Fa - ther's grace di - vine.
 4 Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'n - ly ground?



He from whom joy stream - eth Poor in a man - ger lies;
 Cheer my wea - ried spir - it, O pure and ho - ly Child;
 Death was reign - ing o'er us Through sin and van - i - ty
 Where the an - gels sing - ing With all His saints u - nite,



Not so bright - ly beam - eth The sun in yon - der skies.
 Through Thy grace and mer - it, Blest Je - sus, Lord most mild,
 Till He o - pened for us A bright e - ter - ni - ty.
 Sweet - est prais - es bring - ing In heav'n - ly joy and light.



Thou my Sav - ior art! Thou my Sav - ior art!
 Draw me un - to Thee! Draw me un - to Thee!
 May we praise Him there! May we praise Him there!
 Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

Text: Latin and German, 14th cent.; tr. Arthur T. Russell, 1806–74, alt. Tune: German, 14th cent. Text and tune: Public domain

"A Great and Mighty Wonder"

(LSB 383)



1 A great and might - y won - der, A full and ho - ly cure:
2 The Word be - comes in - car - nate And yet re - mains on high,
3 While thus they sing your Mon - arch, Those bright an - gel - ic bands,
4 Since all He comes to ran - som, By all be He a - dored,
5 All i - dols then shall per - ish And Sa - tan's ly - ing cease,

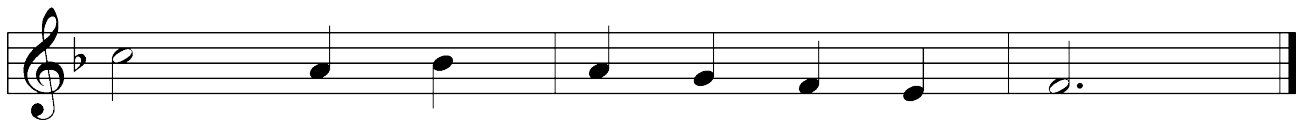


The vir - gin bears the in - fant With vir - gin hon - or pure!
And cher - u - bim sing an - thems To shep - herds from the sky.
Re - jice, O vales and moun - tains, And o - ceans, clap your hands.
The in - fant born in Beth - l'em, The Sav - ior and the Lord.
And Christ shall raise His scep - ter, De - cree - ing end - less peace.

Refrain



Pro - claim the Sav - ior's birth: "To God on high be



glo - ry And peace to all the earth!"

Text: Germanus, c. 634–c. 734; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–66, alt. Tune: Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengeseng, 1599, Köln
Text and tune: Public domain

Dismissal

P The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C Amen.

Post-Communion Canticle

C Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev-'ry-one what He has done. Let ev-'ry-one who seeks the Lord rejoice and proud-ly bear His name. He re-calls His prom-ises and leads His peo-ple forth in joy with shouts of thanks-giv-ing. Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

Public domain

Post-Communion Collect

L Let us pray:

Great and saving God, you have gathered your scattered people around gifts of bread and wine, the body and blood of our Savior Christ. As we, like the shepherds, return on our way, may we proclaim all we have heard and seen, praising you in word and loving deed for the gift of Jesus, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

Benediction

P May Christ, born into time to bring endless peace, guide your days and years in righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.

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.

C Amen.

Sending

L Go in peace. Share the good news that Christ is born.

C Thanks be to God.

Recessional Hymn

"Go Tell It on the Mountain" (LSB 388)

Refrain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, O-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



Go tell it on the moun - tain That Je - sus Christ is born!



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing O'er si - lent flocks by night,
2 The shep-herds feared and trem - bled When lo, a - bove the earth
3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger The hum-ble Christ was born;

Refrain



Be - hold, through - out the heav - ens There shone a ho - ly light.
Rang out the an - gel cho - rus That hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
And God sent us sal - va - tion That bless - ed Christ - mas morn.

Tune and text: Public domain

Postlude

"A Christmas Postlude" (Charles Callahan)



Our Ministry of Worship

Officiant/Preacher	Pastor Meehan
Lay Assistant	Steve Tracy
Organist/Pianist	David Leahey, Director of Music
Acolyte	Samuel Rempe
Crucifer	Grace Rempe
Ushers	St. John's Usher Team
Altar Care	Cathy Long
AV Operator	St. John's AV Team



**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:**

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.

To **Give** to
St. John's Lutheran Church
scan this QR Code



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



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Alexandria, VA 22310



A member congregation of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

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Director of Music	David Leahey
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