

# St. James Lutheran Church

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*Our Mission: "We worship together, grow in faith,  
share our faith and serve with the love of God"*

## **Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent & Christmas Eve Service "Unto Us a Child is Born"**

***Welcome, Announcements & Opportunities for Serving***

**"Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship, for they will  
walk in the light of your presence, LORD...You are their glorious strength.  
It pleases you to make us strong." (Ps 89:15,17)**

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

Let us stand, as you are able, and prepare our hearts for worship

**Call to Worship: ELW #271 "I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve"**



*Jeg er så glad hver ju - le - kveld, ti da blev Je - sus født;*  
1 I am so glad each Christ-mas Eve, the night of Je - sus' birth!  
2 The lit - tle child in Beth - le - hem, he was a king in - deed!  
3 He dwells a - gain in heav - en's realm, the Son of God to - day;  
4 I am so glad each Christ-mas Eve! His prais - es then I sing;  
5 And so I love each Christ-mas Eve, and I love Je - sus too;



*da lys - te stjer - nen som en sol, og eng - ler sang så sødt.*  
Then like the sun the star shone forth, and an - gels sang on earth.  
For he came down from heav'n a - bove to help a world in need.  
and still he loves his lit - tle ones and hears them when they pray.  
he o - pens now for ev - 'ry child the pal - ace of the king.  
and that he loves me ev - 'ry day I know so well is true.

**Lighting the 4<sup>th</sup> Candle of Advent & the Lighting of the Christ Candle:**

***Pastor Tonia & Brian Luepke***

**WE SING:**



The can - dle of love tells what we are worth:  
The Christ can - dle's light that shines for us here.

God loves us so much God came to - the earth!  
Tells out the good news that God has - come near!

An an - gel brought news of a child who would be;  
God came, a poor ba - by, in one time and place,

The one who would save us and set us all free.  
to show all cre - a - tion the wealth of God's grace.

**GATHERING**

***Confession & Forgiveness***

*God of life, you promise good news of great joy for all people and call us to be messengers of your peace. We confess too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security. We nurture conflict and build barriers. We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation. Have mercy on us. Where we are self-centered, open our hearts. Where we are reluctant, give us courage. Where we are cynical, restore our trust. Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you. Amen.*

***Assurance of God's Love***

***Gathering 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.

***Prayer of the Day****All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

**Special Music: "Were You There on That Christmas Night?" St. James Choir**

**WORD**

**Hear the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Isaiah 9:2,6-7**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever.

Word of Wisdom, Word of God. **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

**Read Psalm 97 responsively by whole verse**

<sup>1</sup>The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad. <sup>2</sup>Clouds and darkness surround the LORD, righteousness and justice are the foundations of God's throne. <sup>3</sup>Fire goes before the LORD, burning up enemies on every side. <sup>4</sup>Lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles. <sup>5</sup>The mountains melt like wax before the Lord of all the earth. <sup>6</sup>The heavens declare your righteousness, O LORD, and all the peoples see your glory. <sup>7</sup>Confounded be all who worship carved images and delight in false gods! Bow down before the LORD, all you gods. <sup>8</sup>Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments, O LORD. <sup>9</sup>For you are the LORD, most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. <sup>10</sup>You who love the LORD, hate evil! God guards the lives of the saints and rescues them from the hand of the wicked. <sup>11</sup>Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the honest of heart. <sup>12</sup>Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, and give thanks to God's holy name.

**Hear the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: Titus 3:4-7**

<sup>4</sup>When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. <sup>6</sup>This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup>so, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Word of Wisdom, Word of God. **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

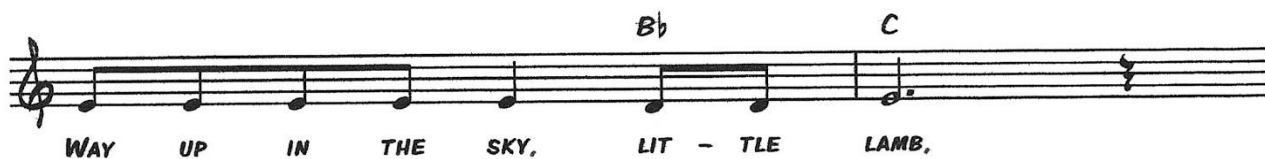
**Hymn: "Do You Hear What I Hear"**



1. SAID THE NIGHT - WIND TO THE LIT - TLE LAMB,  
2.3.4. SEE ADDITIONAL LYRICS



DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE? \_\_\_\_\_



WAY UP IN THE SKY, LIT - TLE LAMB,



DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE? \_\_\_\_\_ A

STAR, A STAR, DANCING IN THE NIGHT, WITH A  
 F G To CODA E Am G F G7  
 TAIL AS BIG AS A KITE, WITH A TAIL AS BIG AS A  
 C Bb 1.2. C  
 KITE. 2.3. SAID THE

See addl. Verses below...

**Vs 2** ..... little lamb to the shepherd boy, Do you hear what I hear?  
 Ringing thru the sky, shepherd boy, Do you hear what I hear?  
 A song, a song, high above the tree with a voice as big as the sea.  
 With a voice as big as the sea.

**Vs 3** Said the shepherd boy to the mighty King, Do you know what I know?  
 In your palace warm, mighty King, Do you know what I know?  
 A child, a child shivers in the cold, let us bring Him silver & gold.  
 Let us bring Him silver & gold.

**Vs 4** Said the King to the people ev'rywhere. Listen to what I say!  
 Pray for peace, people ev'rywhere. Listen to what I say!  
 The child, the child, sleeping in the night, He will bring us goodness &

CODA  
 E Am G F C Dm G7  
 LIGHT, HE WILL BRING US GOODNESS AND  
 C Bb C Bb C  
 LIGHT.

### Children's Sermon

Please stand, as you are able, to welcome the Gospel

#### **The Gospel according to Luke:**

We SAY the response after the announcement: "Glory to you, O Lord"

## **Luke 2:1-20 Reading with the Candle Nativity being presented by Brian Luepke**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" 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." So, they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

### **The Gospel of the Lord:**

We **SAY** the response after the conclusion: **"Praise to you, O Christ"**

### **Sermon: "Unto Us"**

### **Special Music: "Mary Did You Know?"**

**by Tessa Shelton accompanied by her mother, KayDel.**

### **Nicene Creed ELW #104**

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 People**

After each petition: *P: Lord, in Your mercy,* **C: hear our prayer**

After last petition: **All: AMEN.**

**Passing of the Peace** .....and we say: **and also with you.**

### **MEAL**

....we thank you for your faithfulness to St. James in sharing your tithes and offerings and allowing us to do God's work with our hands.

**At this time, we will present our tithes and offering.**

**Sing: 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:

**Refrain:** O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

- 2 The highest, most holy, light of light eternal, born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;  
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing! **Refrain:**

- 3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God in the highest: **Refrain:**

- 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: **Refrain:**

**Please stand, as our gifts and the gifts of the table are brought forward  
as we sing: ELW #289 "Angels We Have Heard on High" vs 1**

- Vs. 1 Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.

**Refrain:** Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

### **Offering Prayer**

*God of abundance,* **receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.**

**Table Setting Hymn: ELW #289 "Angels We Have Heard on High" \*refrain only**

**Refrain:** Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

### **Great Thanksgiving ELW #153**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise**

...we join their unending hymn:

**(C) sings: Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might; Heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

### **Words of Institution**

#### **The Lord's Prayer ELW #154**

Mystery of our Faith. **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

### **Invitation to Communion**

*In this meal of bread and wine, we believe Christ is truly present forgiving sin, reconciling us to God and one another, and giving new life. Christ is host. Christ is the one who invites us to the table even while it is properly understood as the meal of the baptized.*

*All are welcome at the Lord's Table.*

As communion is distributed, you are invited to sing the following hymns:

**ELW #270 "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"**

Vs. 1 Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."  
Joyful, all you nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;  
with angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

**Refrain Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

Vs 2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored. Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Hail, incarnate deity!  
Pleased as man with us to swell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!

**Refrain Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

Vs. 3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,  
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth.

**Refrain Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

**ELW #277 "Away in a Manger"**

- 1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;  
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
- 2 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.
- 3 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 fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

**ELW #279 "O Little Town of Bethlehem"**

- 1 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.
- 2 For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
- 3 How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.  
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
- 4 O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

**ELW #282 "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"**

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all-gracious king."  
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

**ELW #296 "What Child is This"**

- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthem sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!



**ELW #300 "The First Noel"**

1 The first Noel the angel 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.

**Refrain:** Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

2 They looked up and saw a star shining in the east beyond them far;  
and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night. **Refrain:**

3 And by the light of that same star three wise men came from country far;  
to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went. **Refrain:**

4 This star drew near to the northwest, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;  
and there it did both stop and stay right over the place where Jesus lay. **Refrain:**

5 Then entered in those wise men three, full rev'rently upon their knee,  
And offered there in his presence their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. **Refrain:**

**Prayer after Communion.....** and we say: **Amen.**

## SENDING

**Blessing.....** and we say: **Amen.**

### **Sending Hymn: ELW #281 "Silent Night"**

**\*\* While you are twisting the flame of your candle to "lite", please hum through Silent Night once before starting to sing the verses.**

- 1 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.
- 2 Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight; glories stream from heaven afar,  
heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia! Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!
- 3 Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light radiant beams from your holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

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

*Music Published by Permission, CCLI #11445215 Worship Service recorded by Permission, CSPL #168651*

**Reminder:** Please leave your candles in the basket as you leave the sanctuary

**Merry  
Christmas**



**WELCOME 2024**