

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

FOUNDED 15 JANUARY 1837

THE
NATIVITY
OF OUR **LORD**
CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2023

7:00 PM



615 Grant Street, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, 15219

Ph: 412.471.8125 ✕ Fax: 412.471.9521 ✕ flc@flcpittsburgh.org ✕ www.flcpittsburgh.org



PARDON OUR DUST

Reconstruction of our front sidewalks and courtyard is now underway. The courtyard is closed. Entry to the church is now limited to the bell tower and basement doors. The doors at the bell tower, at Grant Street and Strawberry Way, have very steep steps. Please use these with caution. Our temporary handicapped entrance is located at the basement door at the corner of Strawberry and Garland Ways. All are welcome to use this entrance. This Sunday, our financial secretary Suanne O'Dell, will be staffing this door. If you are parking at the U.S. Steel Tower, please cross Grant at Strawberry Way. We will update you when the courtyard entrances will be available and keep you informed through the Parish News and bulletin as work progresses.

PARKING

Please be aware that the police have been more diligent in enforcing no-parking zones on Sundays, especially when there are sporting or other events downtown. Parking on our side of Grant Street is posted as permitted until 1:00 PM, but they sometimes ticket or even tow vehicles across the street. Though past efforts have failed, we are once again exploring if parking can be permitted there in the future.

We encourage parking in the U.S. Steel Tower Garage, which we have made free on Sundays, though contributions toward our \$2.00 cost are welcome. Please bring your ticket to the staff member on duty, who will attach a sticker to your parking ticket. When exiting the garage, do not go to the pay station; simply insert your validated ticket at the exit gate. There are two entrances to the garage: one is off of the Veterans Bridge/ Bigelow Blvd ramp just before Sixth Ave; the other is on Bigelow Square, just off of Sixth Ave and in front of the DoubleTree Hotel's main entrance.



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH WELCOMES YOU!

We extend a warm welcome to all who are visiting with us today and hope you will return to worship with our community of faith again. If you would like to know more about our ministry in downtown and metropolitan Pittsburgh, please speak to a pastor, any of our members, or visit www.flcpittsburgh.org.

Our liturgy incorporates historic practices of the Western Christian tradition, aspects of which may be unfamiliar to some. We hope this bulletin will serve to welcome our visitors and be an aid to those who seek to participate in our worship of God.

ACCESSIBILITY Accessible entrances to the nave are available using either door from the courtyard. An elevator is available in the Parish House to access other levels of the building. The parking spaces directly in front of the building have been designated for those with handicapped plates or placards for their vehicles.

ASSISTED LISTENING DEVICES are available at the ushers' table in the rear of the nave. Easy-to-use receivers with either an earpiece or a neck loop are available. Antiseptic wipes are available to clean assisted listening equipment before use.

YOUNG CHILDREN

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." The presence of children in worship, even when they are wiggly and noisy, is a gift to the Church and a reminder that our parish is growing. Children's worship boxes, with items to help engage our youngsters in worship, are available in the back of the nave. Please return them to an usher after worship. A family restroom with a changing table is available downstairs.



HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is offered by invitation of the Lord himself. All baptized believers who trust that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, regardless of denomination, are invited to receive the Blessed Sacrament. To receive the Sacrament, come to the altar rail by way of the center aisle. The pastor will place a wafer into your hand. Please indicate to the pastor if you need a gluten-free wafer. The wine may be received by drinking directly from the common cup or with an individual glass filled from a pouring chalice. Please pick up a glass from the tables at the head of the center aisle, and return your empty glass to the tables at the head of the side aisles. If you need to have communion brought to you in your seat, please let an usher know.

If you choose to receive the Sacrament under the form of bread alone for any reason, you may be assured that in so doing, you receive the whole Christ. If you choose not to receive communion, you may request a blessing instead. After receiving communion (or a blessing), you may return to your seat by the side aisles.

✠ ALTAR FLOWERS & LAMPS ✠

THE POINSETTIAS

FLOWERS

A full listing of Christmas poinsettia dedications & special music ministry gifts is printed in a separate booklet, available at the table in the rear of the nave.

SANCTUARY

VOTIVE

LAMPS

December 19-31

is given in celebration of the birth of Oliver Hoffman by Christine Hoffman.

is given in memory of Joseph H. Sharer, Jr.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2023—7:00 PM

Thank you for silencing your electronic devices.

The people prepare for worship by praying the following prayer:

✠ Almighty God, you have given your only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him and to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the same Spirit be honor and glory, now and forever.

Read Psalm 96, p. 261

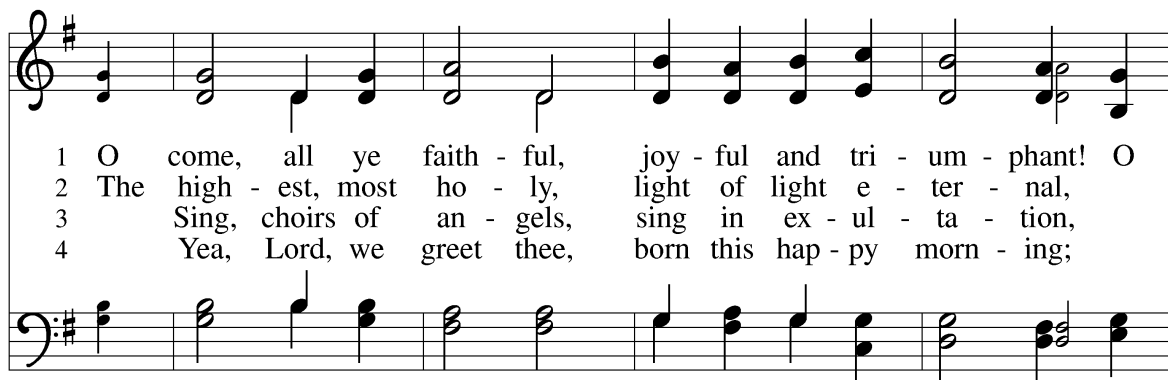
THE PRELUDE

Selected Carols for Organ, Handbells, & Strings

The people stand as the bells peal.

THE CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION

L Today, 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, the 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 of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea. Today is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
 2 The 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



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2
Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John Francis Wade

THE APOSTOLIC GREETING

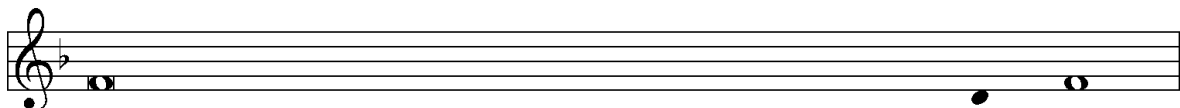
P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

KYRIE



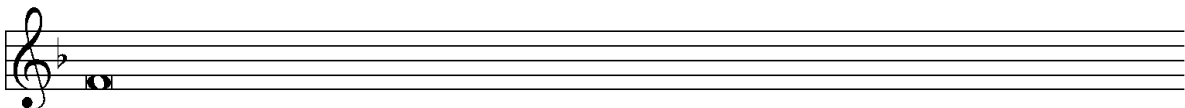
A In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **C** Lord, have mer - cy.



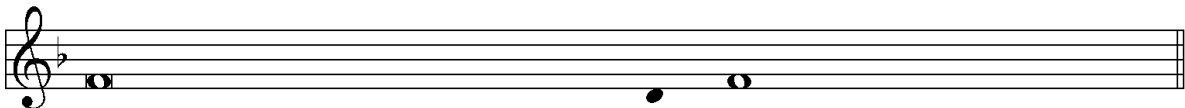
A For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



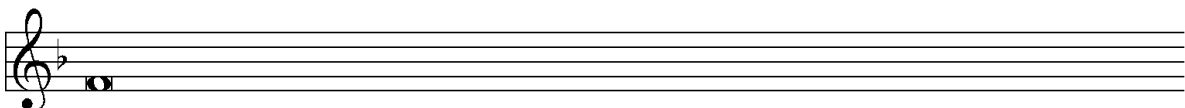
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.

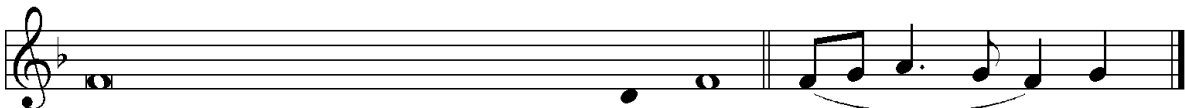


A For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.

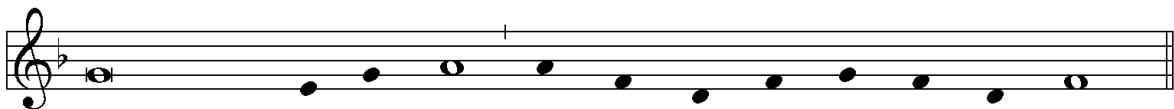
C Lord, have mer - cy.



A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra-cious Lord. **C** A - men

THE CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Gloria in Excelsis



A Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his peo - ple on earth.



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,

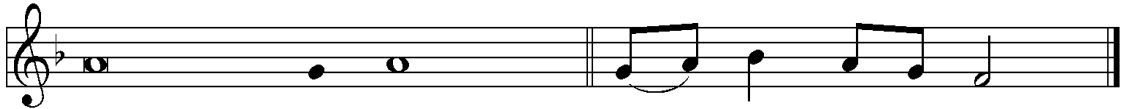


you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY



P The Lord be with you.

C And al - so with you.

P Let us pray in the peace of Christmas Eve,
that our joy in the birth of Christ will last forever.

A brief time is provided for reflection

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's 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.

C **Amen** *(Sung on one tone.)*

The people are seated.

THE FIRST LESSON—Isaiah 62:6-12

L A reading from Isaiah.

⁶Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have posted sentinels; all day and all night they shall never be silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest, ⁷and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it renowned throughout the earth. ⁸The LORD has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm: I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink the wine for which you have labored; ⁹but those who garner it shall eat it and praise the LORD, and those who gather it shall drink it in my holy courts. ¹⁰Go through, go through the gates, prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway, clear it of stones, lift up an ensign over the peoples. ¹¹The LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to daughter Zion, "See, your salvation comes; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him." ¹²They shall be called, "The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD"; and you shall be called, "Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken."

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Sung by the Choir

¹ The LORD is king; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad. ²Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne. ³A fire goes before him and burns up his enemies on every side. ⁴His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees it and is afraid. ⁵The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. ⁶The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory. ⁷Confounded be all who worship carved images and delight in false gods! Bow down before him, all you gods. ⁸Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments, O LORD. ⁹For you are the LORD, most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. ¹⁰The LORD loves those who hate evil; he preserves the lives of his saints and delivers them from the hand of the wicked. ¹¹Light has sprung up for the righteous, and joyful gladness for those who are truehearted. ¹²Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name.

THE SECOND LESSON—Titus 3:4-7

L A reading from Titus.

⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he 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. ⁶This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

The people stand.

THE HYMN AT THE GRADUAL

Hymn to the Christ Child

GONGAWARE

St. 1—Choir • 2—All

The text of the carol below was written by The Rev. Dr. George Gongaware, eleventh Senior Pastor of First Lutheran Church (1907-1913). The music was composed by his wife, Elizabeth Bateman Gongaware. The use of this carol has become a Christmas Eve tradition.



Choir 1 Ho - ly Christ Child! Man - ger born On that far - off
All 2 Heav-'nly Christ Child! Son of God Cra - dled where the



Christ-mas morn. An - gels sing - ing, Hea - ven ring - ing,
beasts had trod. Shep - herds tend - ing, Good News send - ing,



Ho - ly Christ Child, Man - ger born.
Heav - 'nly Christ Child, Son of God.

THE HOLY GOSPEL—Saint Luke 2:1-20

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



Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

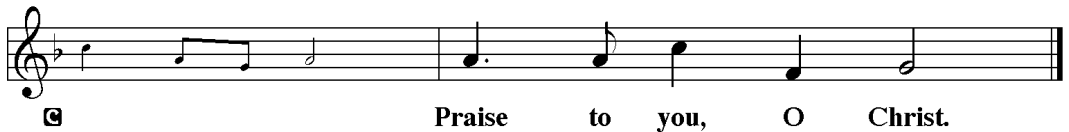
⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

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

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

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

L The Gospel of the Lord.



THE HYMN AT THE GRADUAL

Hymn to the Christ Child

GONGAWARE

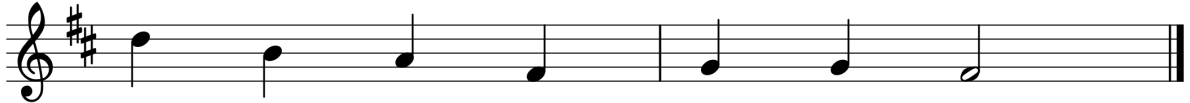
St. 3 & 4—All



3 Love - ly Christ Child! Ma - ry's Son, Heart and voice Thy
4 Bless - ed Christ Child! Child - ren's friend, On our wor - ship



love hath won. Hum - ble liv - ing grac - es giv - ing,
now at - tend. Pray - ing low - ly Child most ho - ly,



Love - ly Christ Child, Ma - ry's Son.
Bless - ed Christ Child, Child - ren's friend.

The people are seated.

THE SERMON

The Rev. Jennifer Peters McCurry

Following the Sermon, the people stand for the Hymn of the Day.

THE HYMN OF THE DAY

What Child is This?

LBW 40



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.





Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an-gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!



Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898
Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

THE NICENE CREED

**C 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;**

The people kneel or bow.

**by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,
and was made man.**

The people stand.

**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.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He 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**

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

A With joy and gladness we celebrate the birth of our Savior.
In confidence and trust let us kneel to bring our prayers before him.

The people kneel. A brief time is provided for reflection.

A ...Lord, in your mercy,
C Hear our prayer.

P Rejoicing in your birth and trusting in your mercy, O Christ
our Lord, we commend to you all for whom we pray.

C Amen

The people stand.

THE EXCHANGE OF PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C And also with you.

*The people offer one another the sign of peace, saying, "Peace be with you."
The people are seated as the gifts are prepared.*

THE OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

MUSIC AT THE OFFERING

A Gallery Carol

arr. Marlowe Johnson

The Christmas offering has been designated for Catapult Greater Pittsburgh, which serves individuals and families at or below poverty level, helping to provide economic justice opportunities for individuals seeking generational stability. Catapult strives to ensure that systematically disenfranchised communities can meaningfully achieve economic justice and that community members can lead dignified and equitable lives.

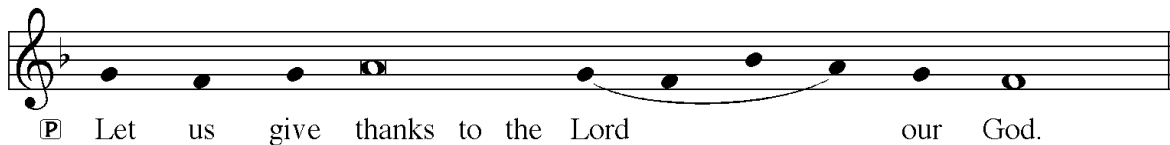
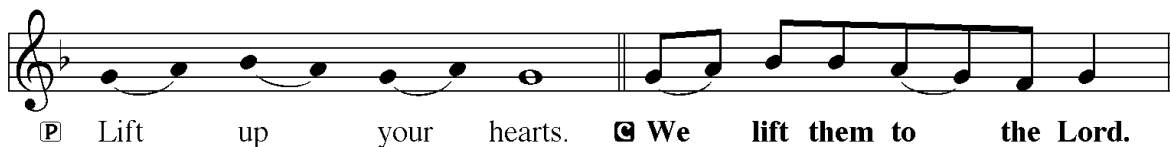
Please use the "Christmas" envelope in your box or make your check payable to "First Lutheran Church" and mark "Christmas" on the memo line.

The people stand.

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

- A** Let us pray.
Eternal God, with Mary we treasure the gift of your Son, and in our hearts we ponder the mystery of his birth. Grant that our lives, represented in these offerings, may declare the wonders of your love in Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C** Amen

SURSUM CORDA



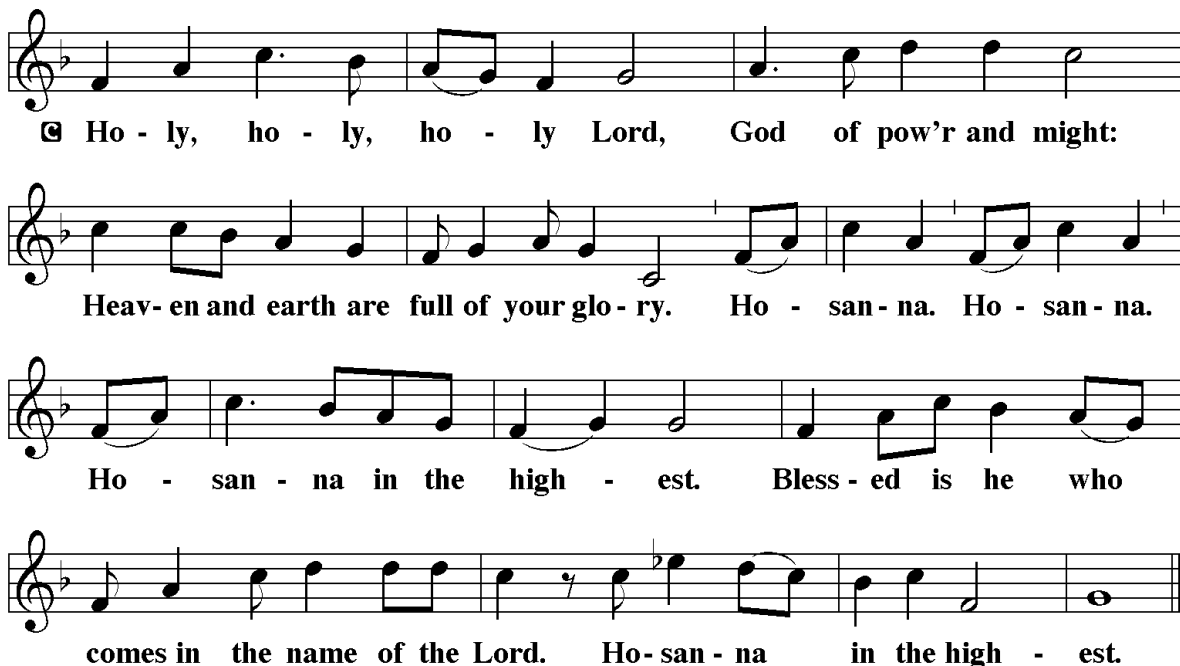
THE PREFACE

P It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord.

In the wonder and mystery of the word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory; that, beholding God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.

And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:
Heav-en and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.
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.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P Holy God, creator of all and source of life:
at the birth of time your Word brought light into the world.
In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary,
to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread,
and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave
thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you

and for all people for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death, until he comes.

C Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and
resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in
him and he will share with us the great and promised feast.

C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P By your Holy Spirit bless us, and bless this bread and cup, that embraced and
nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your
Son, and may receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

C Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

P Join our prayers with those of your children of every time and place
and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest
until he comes as victorious Lord of all.



Through him, with him, in him, in the u - ni - ty of the



Ho - ly Spir - it, all hon - or and glo - ry is yours, al -



might - y Fa - ther, now and for - ev - er. A - men

THE LORD'S PRAYER

- P Let us pray with confidence to the Father
in the words our Savior gave us.
- 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 FRACTION

- P When we eat this bread, we share the body of Christ.
When we drink this cup, we share the blood of Christ.
- C Reveal yourself to us, O Lord, in the breaking of bread,
as once you revealed yourself to your disciples.**
- P The gifts of God for the people of God.
Taste and see that the Lord is good.

The people are seated.

THE COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL

To receive the Sacrament, come to the altar rail by way of the center aisle. The pastor will place a wafer into your hand. Please indicate to the pastor if you need a gluten-free wafer. The wine may be received by drinking directly from the common cup or with an individual glass filled from a pouring chalice. Please pick up a glass from the tables at the head of the center aisle, and return your empty glass to the tables at the head of the side aisles. If you need to have communion brought to you in your seat, please let an usher know.

If you choose to receive the Sacrament under the form of bread alone for any reason, you may be assured that in so doing, you receive the whole Christ. If you choose not to receive communion, you may request a blessing instead. After receiving communion (or a blessing), you may return to your seat by the side aisles.

MUSIC AT THE DISTRIBUTION

ANTHEM

The First Nowell / Pachelbel's Canon

arr. Michael Clawson

*We welcome all alumni of Bel Canto to join us
in the choir loft for the singing of this anthem.*

HYMN

Away in a Manger

LBW 67

St. 1—Choir • 2 & 3—All



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord
2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the poor ba - by wakes, but lit - tle Lord
3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -



Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the sky looked
Je - sus no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus; look
ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in



down where he lay; the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
your ten - der care and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

Text: North American, anonymous, 19th cent.
Music: AWAY IN A MANGER, North American, anonymous, 19th cent.

ANTHEM

Glory to God

Michael Bedford

VOLUNTARY

Carols for Strings

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

The people stand as the readings begin. The acolytes will bring the light to the people.

The light is spread by tipping the unlighted candle to the lighted one.

As the candles are being lit, the candle-lighting lessons are read:

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn. (Isaiah 60:1-3)

Jesus said, "I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness." (John 12:46)

Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light." (John 12:35-36)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. (John 1:1-9)

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.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

THE POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

- P** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
C Amen

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE

Nunc Dimittis



☩ Lord, now you let your ser- vant go in peace; your word has been ful- filled.



My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre- pared in the



sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: A light to re- veal you to the



na - tions and the glo - ry of your peo- ple Is - ra - el.



Glo- ry to the Fa- ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho- ly Spir - it,



as it was in the be- gin - ning, is now, and will be for- ev- er. A - men

THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

- A Let us pray.
Father of Love, your holy Child, whose birth we celebrate, made us your children. By the power of this Sacrament, strengthen us to live as he taught; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.
- C **Amen**

THE SOLEMN BLESSING *(Sung)*

- A Let us bow our heads and pray for God's blessing.

Silence.

- P May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of his holiness.

- C **Amen** *(Sung on one tone.)*

- P May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you the heralds of the Gospel.

- C **Amen**

- P May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor.

- C **Amen**

- P And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, ✠ the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you, and remain with you always.

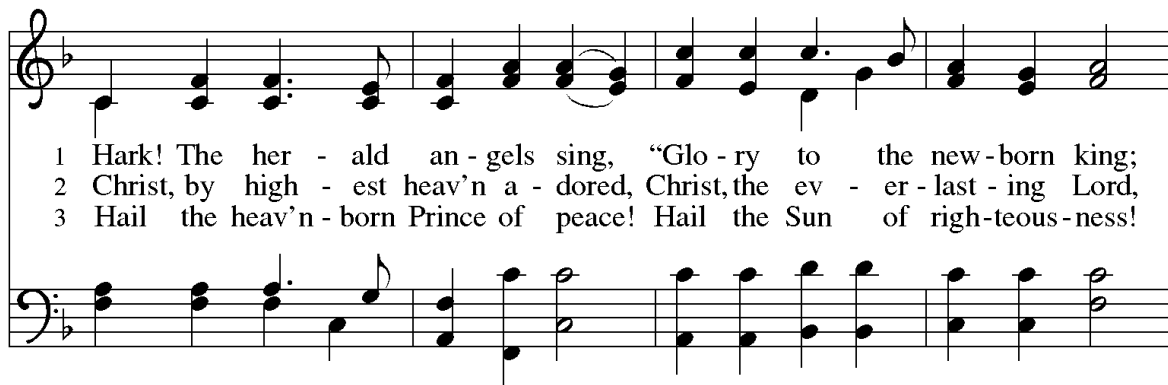
- C **Amen**

The people extinguish their candles.

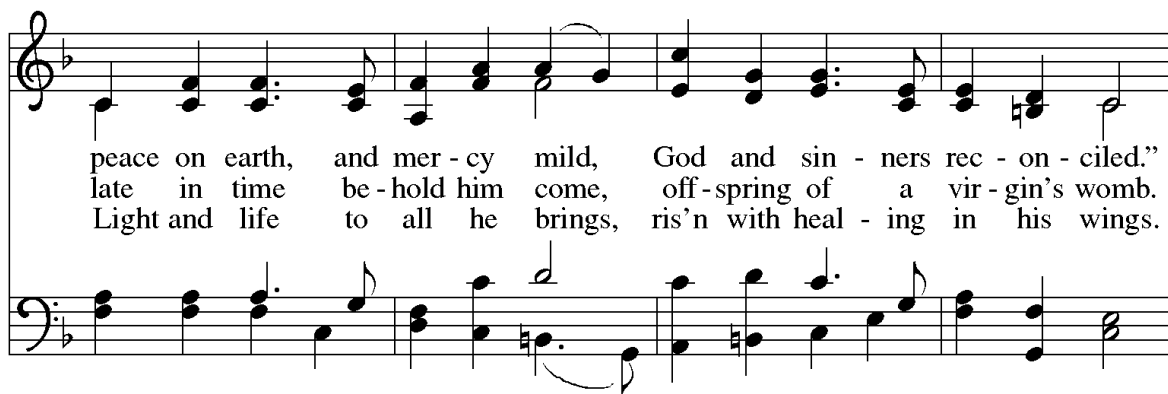
Please place the candles and their holders in the baskets located at the entrances to the nave as you depart.

The people may turn in place to follow the cross and bow as we are sent forth to serve.

Printed on the following pages to avoid an awkward page turn.



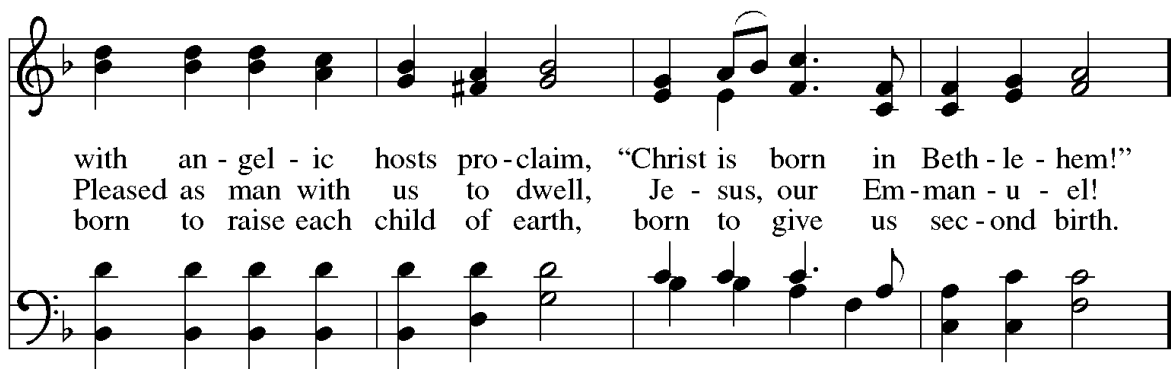
1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king;
2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness!



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.

Refrain



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

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831-1915

THE DISMISSAL

A The Mass is ended. Go in the peace of the Christ Child.
 C **Thanks be to God.**

THE POSTLUDE

Quand Jesus Naquit à Noël

Claude Balbastre



We take great delight in welcoming everyone to this celebration of our Lord's birth. We hope that those who are visiting with us today will return to worship with us again soon.

Continue your observance of the Nativity of Our Lord with us tomorrow morning for the Christ Mass at 10:00 AM.

Please note that the church will be closed in observance of the Christmas holiday on Monday-Tuesday, December 25 & 26, and in observance of New Year's Day on Monday-Tuesday, January 1 & 2, 2024.

On Sunday, December 31, we will hold a single liturgy at 10:00 AM.

The staff of First Lutheran Church extend to you their best wishes for a joyous Christmas season, and for a New Year filled with good health and peace.

Blessed Christmas!

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SERVING TONIGHT

7:00 PM

Presiding Minister

Pr. Evans

Preacher

Pr. McCurry

Assisting Minister

June Navid

Communion Assistants

Pr. McCurry
Maggie Wolfram

Lectors

Jim Nealon
Nora Navid

Acolytes

Will Hansmann (C)
Will Schroeder (T)
Andrew Schmidt (T)
Grace Hall (A)
Maryam Hall (BB)

Carrying the Christ Child

Evangeline Hall

Cantor

Sr. Cynthia A. Pock, OLF, AAGO

Vocalists

The Parish Choir
Bel Canto
Cantate

Instrumentalists

Carrie Eardely, *violin*
Sarah Garin, *violin*
Tim Sutton, *cello*
Members of the Gloria Dei Ringers

Head Usher

Kurt Herbst

Ushers

Wes Nelson

Altar Guild

Janet Balas
Amy Bills

THE FIRST ENGLISH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

has served downtown Pittsburgh since its founding in 1837 as the first English-speaking Lutheran Church west of the Alleghenies. Its members come from far and near to participate in its Christian witness in the heart of the city: a witness that is faithful to Holy Scripture and to the historic Lutheran Confessions. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is at the center of its life, providing direction, comfort, and hope. If you are seeking a church home in Pittsburgh, we invite you to become a part of our downtown ministry.

THE CHURCH IS OPEN DAILY FOR PRAYER

STAFF

The Rev. Brian A. Evans, *Senior Pastor*
The Rev. Jennifer Peters McCurry, *Associate Pastor*
The Rev. Daniel E. Hall, MD, *Assisting Episcopal Priest*
Sr. Cynthia A. Pock, n/OLF, AAGO, *Cantor*
Mrs. Suanne O'Dell, *Financial Secretary*
Ms. Christine G. Hoffman, *Admin. Assistant to Pastoral Staff*
Mr. Jeremy Caywood, *Building Manager*
Mr. Nicholas Scott Sharer, *Communications Coordinator*
Mr. Benjamin Sommer, *Organ & Sacred Music Scholar*

PASTORS-IN-RESIDENCE

The Rev. Brian O. Bennett, *Lutheran University Center*
The Rev. Erin E. Evans, *Christ Lutheran Church, Millvale*
The Rev. Canon Natalie G. Hall, *Church of the Redeemer*
The Rev. S. Cyril Hurnyak
The Rev. Leonard J. Larsen
The Rev. Caroline Mendis
The Rev. Christine Rotella, *Abiding Missions*
The Rev. Martin M. Roth
The Rev. Robert W. Strobel

MISSIONARIES

The Rev. Dr. Sarah Hinlicky Wilson
& Dr. Andrew L. Wilson, *Japan*

ORGAN ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Dr. Ann Labounsky Steele

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday Worship

8:30 AM Holy Communion
9:45 AM Sunday Church School
(Classes for all ages during school year)
11:00 AM Holy Communion

Midweek Noonday Worship

12:10 PM Holy Communion, Wednesdays
(Holy Communion for Healing on the first Wednesday of each month)

SUNDAY PARKING

Accessible parking is available on Grant Street in front of the church. Free parking is available in the US Steel Tower garage. Reduced rate parking is available at the Mellon Square and Smithfield/Liberty garages for \$1.00. See an usher or the attendant at the reception desk for validation. Street parking is free on Sundays until 1:00 PM.

If you have a pastoral concern outside of normal office hours, please call our emergency line: **412-471-6507** and the pastoral staff member on duty will return your call as soon as possible.

Visit us online at
flcpittsburgh.org



Assisted listening devices are available. Inquire with an usher.