

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Founded 1856

1343 Penniman Avenue

Plymouth, MI 48170

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod



Christmas Eve 2023

Carol Festival Service

CHRISTMAS EVE CAROL FESTIVAL 2023

Congregation: Processional Hymn #55

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

1 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.

Refrain:

Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

2 God from true God, and Light from Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, to earth he comes,
Only begotten Son of God the Father. ***Refrain***

3 Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above.
Glory to God, all Glory in the highest. ***Refrain***

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n,
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing. ***Refrain***

Text: John F. Wade, c. 1711–86; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–80, alt.; Arrangement by David V. Willcocks reprinted and podcast by permission of Oxford University Press and One License #A-722670. All rights reserved.

Call to Worship: (sung by the choir)

Alleluia! Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. Alleluia!

A Prayer for Christmas Eve

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that as we have known on earth the wonder of that light, we may also behold him in all glory in the life to come; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

The Choir Sings: "On Christmas Night"

On Christmas night all Christians sing
To hear the news the angels bring.
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should we on earth be so sad,
Since our Redeemer made us glad
When from our sin he set us free, All for to gain our liberty.
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.

When sin departs before his grace,
Then life and health come in its place.
All heaven and earth with joy may sing
All for to see the newborn King.

From out of darkness we have light
Which made the angels sing this night.
“Glory to God, good will, and peace
Now and forevermore, Amen.”

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The Gospel According to St. Luke, Chapter 2 (King James Version)

¹ And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.
² (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)
³ And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.
⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)
⁵ To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

The Choir sings: “O Little Town”

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–93, abr. Public Domain; arranged by John Coates, Jr. ©1977 Shawnee Press, Inc. All rights reserved

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 men on earth.

3. 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 Emmanuel!

⁶ And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Congregation: Hymn #68 "Away in a Manger"

1 Away in a manger, no crib for a 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 side until 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 take us to heaven to live with you there.

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⁸ And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Congregation: Hymn #54 “Where Shepherds Lately Knelt”

1 Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel’s word,
I come in half-belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred;
But there is room and welcome there for me,
But there is room and welcome there for me.

2 In that unlikely place I find him as they said:
Sweet newborn Babe, how frail! and in a manger bed,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me.

3 How should I not have known Isaiah would be there,
His prophecies fulfilled? With pounding heart I stare:
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me,
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.

4 Can I, will I forget how Love was born, and burned
Its way into my heart unasked, unforced, unearned,
To die, to live, and not alone for me,
To die, to live, and not alone for me?

Tune: Carl F. Schalk (1929 – 2021) Text: Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1919–2008. © 1987 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Reprinted and podcast with permission under One License #A-722670. All rights reserved.

⁹ And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Congregation: Hymn #61 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–88, abr., alt. Tune: Felix Mendelssohn.

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 th’ angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Refrain: Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

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 Godhead see, Hail th’ incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!

Refrain

3 Hail, the heav’nly 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 us from the earth, Born to give us second birth.

Refrain

¹⁰ And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,
which is Christ the Lord.

¹² And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe
wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the
heavenly host praising God, and saying,

¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will
toward men.

Congregation: Hymn #63 “Angels We Have Heard on High”

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.*

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav’nly song? ***Refrain***

3 Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. ***Refrain***

Text: *Nouveau recueil de cantiques*, 1855; tr. *The Crown of Jesus*, Part 2, London,
1862, alt.

¹⁵ And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

¹⁶ And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Congregation: Hymn #60 “Silent Night”

Text: Franz Joseph Mohr 1792–1848) abr.; tr. John F. Young (1820–1885). Tune: Franz X. Gruber (1787-1863)

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 thy holy face

With the dawn of redeeming grace,

Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

¹⁷ And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

¹⁸ And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

²¹ And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Congregation: Hymn #24 “The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”

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1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
“All hail,” said he to meek and lowly Mary,
“Most highly favored maiden.” Gloria!

2 “I come from heav’n to tell the Lord’s decree:
A blessed virgin mother you shall be.
Your Son shall be Immanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favored maiden.” Gloria!

3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
“To me be as it pleases God,” she said.
“My soul shall praise and magnify his holy name.”
Most highly favored maiden, Gloria!

4 Of her Immanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say,
“Most highly favored maiden.” Gloria!

The Christmas Gospel from John 1:1-18

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

¹² But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

¹⁶ And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

¹⁷ For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Senior Choir: “Word of God, Come Down on Earth”

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Word of God, come down to earth,
living rain from heaven descending:
Touch our hearts and bring to birth
faith and hope and love unending.
Word almighty, we revere you;
Word made flesh, we long to hear you.

Word eternal, throned on high,
Word that brought to life creation,
Word that came from heaven to die,
crucified for our salvation.
Saving Word, the world restoring,
speak to us, your love outpouring.
Word that caused blind eyes to see,
speak and heal our mortal blindness.

Deaf we are: our healer be;
Loose our tongues to tell your kindness.
Be our Word in pity spoken,
Heal the world, by sin now broken.
Word that speaks God's tender love,
One with God beyond all telling,
Word that sends us from above,
God the Spirit, with us dwelling.
Word of truth, to all truth lead us;
Word of life, with one Bread feed us.

Prayer of the Church for Christmas Eve

M: Oh gracious and almighty Father, we praise you that you kept your ancient promises by sending your everlasting Son in human flesh.

C: **On this holy night, receive our thanks and devotion, our songs and prayers.**

M: You sent Jesus as a lowly child to demonstrate your concern for all, the weak and lonely, the troubled and frightened, the timid and helpless. No one is overlooked by

your ever-seeking eyes. No one is excluded from your upholding arms. No one is denied the comfort and help of your outstretched hand.

C: Bless us with a childlike faith in the divine assurance that you love and care for us always.

M: You sent Jesus as the Savior of the world to deliver all from the curse of sin, the power of death, and the torment of hell. He took our place. He was born under the law to set us free. He became the innocent lamb of sacrifice. He came to die and rise again in order that we might live eternally. Firmly implant this good news in our hearts, and fill us with an eager desire to spread the Word concerning what we have heard tonight.

C: May all who hear the message, in every nation under heaven, be amazed and believe what is told them about the child.

M: You sent Jesus as the Light of the world to drive out all darkness that would rob us of the full life that you intend for us. May the “joy that will be for all people” be our joy. May the “peace on earth to all on whom his favor rests” be our peace. May the treasure that Mary pondered in her heart be our treasure.

C: For today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to us. He is Christ, the Lord. Amen.

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The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,**

thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from (+) evil.
For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to
you.
The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.

C: Amen.

Congregation: Recessional Hymn #62 "Joy to the World"

Text: Isaac Watts (1674–1748); Tune: George Frederic Handel (1685-1759)

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 sins and sorrows 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.

Officiant: Pastor Paul Schaefer
Organist: Julie Webber
Choir: Senior Choir



We hope you will join us for the late Christmas Eve Divine Service at 11 p.m tonight and for the Christmas Day Divine Service at 10:00 a.m. Blessings on your celebrations!



St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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