

CHRISTMAS EVE
THE *NATIVITY* OF OUR *LORD*
Candlelight Communion Service



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL, MENASHA, WI

CHRISTMAS EVE – CAROLS, CANDLELIGHT, COMMUNION

What is the connection between Christmas, carols, candlelight and Communion?

In the first place, people in Bible times regarded the dusk following sunset to be the beginning of the new day. Liturgical thinking, following the Bible practice, begins a holiday the evening before. All the more in the case of Christmas, where it is clear that the Christ was born at night and the announcement made by the angels was in darkness.

Carols are associated with Christmas and they indeed have originated with the medieval Christmas celebration. Carols, strictly speaking, are songs that celebrate Christmas events sung to a tune in dance meter. It is believed that carols were originally sung by folk dancers who held hands and danced in a circle. It has been claimed that the first carol was the “Gloria in Excelsis” sung by the angels as they danced in a circle in heaven on the first Christmas Eve. In French “carol” is used interchangeably with “noel.” Unlike hymns (songs of praise to God), carols are not “church music;” but those with sound doctrinal content serve as a joyful addition to Christmas worship.

Candlelight is associated with this service because in earlier centuries it was the only time Holy Communion was celebrated at night. The custom for many centuries was to worship in the day when there was light enough to see. But this special exception was made for the midnight celebration of Jesus’ birth. The words from St. John’s Gospel were recalled: “This was the true Light which was coming into the world which enlightens every man.”

Communion was seen as the only fitting way to celebrate the birth of our Lord for many centuries. In fact, “Christmas” comes from the term Christ’s Mass, the “mass” being the service of Holy Communion celebrated in honor of Christ’s birth. Those who think of Holy Communion as primarily a memorial of Jesus’ death might not see the connection between Jesus’ birth and the Sacrament. However, Christmas is the celebration of God becoming man in Jesus Christ. He Who became flesh to redeem us body and soul gives His body with the bread. The two lit candles on every Communion altar point to this truth, that in Holy Communion Christ’s human nature makes it possible for us to receive His body and blood, and His Divine nature makes it possible for us to receive it at every Christian altar wherever the Sacrament is celebrated according to His institution. The Christmas myth that St. Nicholas brings gifts to all good children in one night was inspired by the Christian truth that the Savior blesses His people with eternal grace in the Christmas Communion.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD: CHRISTMAS EVE – 11:00 PM

Stand

P Let us go even unto Bethlehem

C To see this thing which the Lord hath made known unto us.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN - *It Came upon the Midnight Clear* - LSB 366, st. 1-3

1 It came up-on the mid-night clear, That glo-rious song of old,
2 Still through the clo-ven skies they come With peace-ful wings un-furled,
3 All you, be-neath your heav-y load, By care and guilt bent low,

From an-gels bend-ing near the earth To touch their harps of gold:
And still their heav'n-ly mu-sic floats O'er all the wea-ry world.
Who toil a-long a drea-ry way With pain-ful steps and slow:

“Peace on the earth, good-will to all, From heav'n's all-gra-cious king.”
A-bove its sad and low-ly plains They bend on hov-'ring wing,
Look up, for gold-en is the hour, Come swift-ly on the wing,

The world in sol-emn still-ness lay To hear the an-gels sing.
And ev-er o'er its ba-bel sounds The bless-ed an-gels sing.
The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the an-gels sing.

INTROIT

Psalm 2:1-2, 4-6; antiphon: Liturgical Text

P When all was still, and it was midnight,
your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne.

C **Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?**

P The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his anointed.

C **He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.**

P Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,

C **“As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill.”**

**ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P When all was still, and it was midnight,
your almighty Word, O Lord, descended from the royal throne.

GLORIA - *Angels We Have Heard on High* - LSB 368

1 An - gels we have heard on high, Sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;

And the moun - tains in re - ply, Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some tid - ings be Which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.

Refrain

Glo - - - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - - -

- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

SALUTATION

- P** The Lord be with you.
- C** **And with your spirit.**

COLLECT

P O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7

² The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them. ³ Thou shalt multiply the nation, Thou shalt increase their gladness; They will be glad in Thy presence As with the gladness of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil. ⁴ For Thou shalt break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian. ⁵ For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult, And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire. ⁶ For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

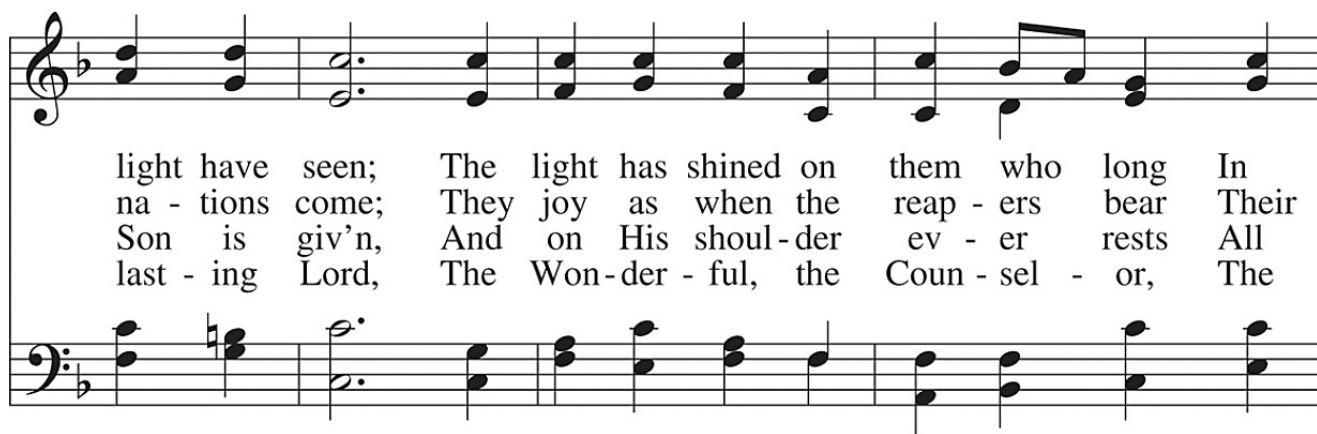
C Thanks be to God!



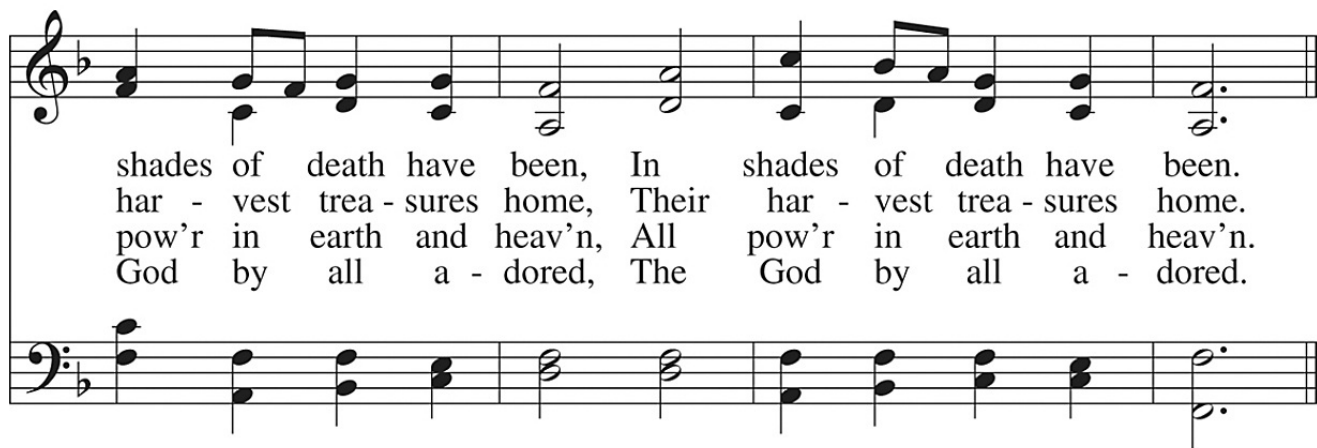
RESPONSORY HYMN - *The People That in Darkness Sat* - LSB 412, st. 1-4



1 The peo - ple that in dark - ness sat A glo - rious
 2 To hail Thee, Sun of Righ - teous - ness, The gath - 'ring
 3 To us a Child of hope is born, To us a
 4 His name shall be the Prince of Peace, The Ev - er -



light have seen; The light has shined on them who long In
 na - tions come; They joy as when the reap - ers bear Their
 Son is giv'n, And on His shoul - der ev - er rests All
 last - ing Lord, The Won - der - ful, the Coun - sel - or, The



shades of death have been, In shades of death have been.
 har - vest trea - sures home, Their har - vest trea - sures home.
 pow'r in earth and heav'n, All pow'r in earth and heav'n.
 God by all a - dored, The God by all a - dored.

SECOND LESSON

Titus 2:11-14

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

P This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God!

RESPONSORY HYMN - *Joy to the World* - LSB 387, st. 1 & 3

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her
3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor thorns in - fest the

King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him
ground; He comes to make His bless - ings

room And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture
flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is

sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
found, Far as, far as the curse is found.

Stand

FIRST GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-7

¹ Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. ² This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, ⁵ in order to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. ⁶ And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Sit



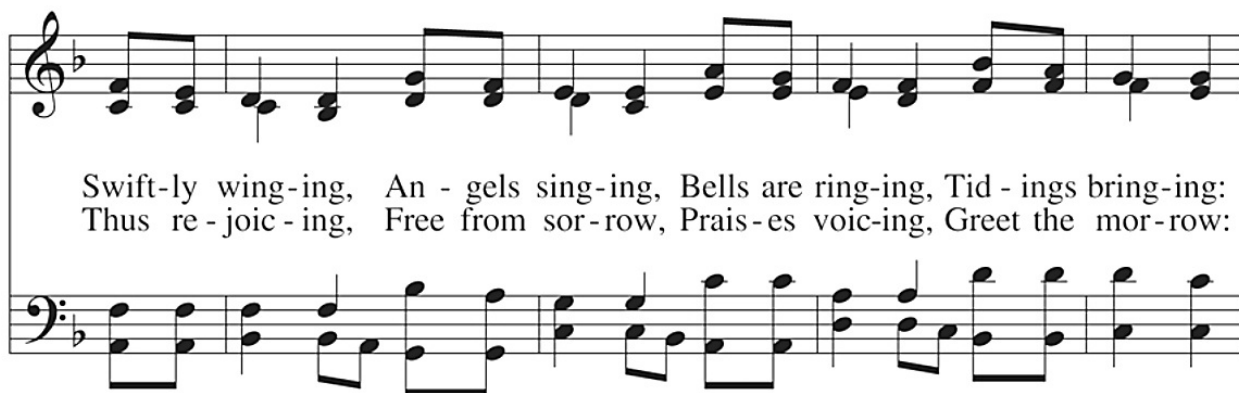
RESPONSORY HYMN - *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* - LSB 393



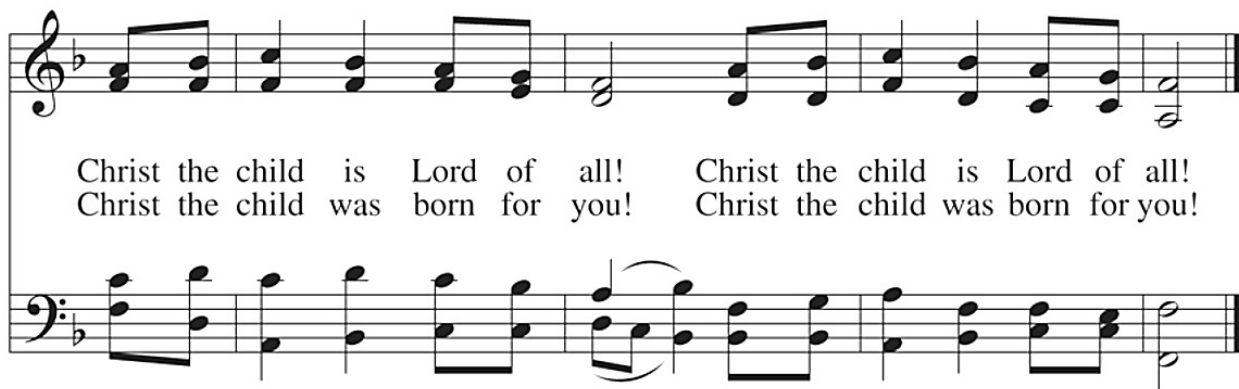
1 In - fant ho - ly, In - fant low - ly, For His bed a cat - tle stall;
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, Shep - herds keep - ing Vig - il till the morn - ing new



Ox - en low - ing, Lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.
Saw the glo - ry, Heard the sto - ry, Tid - ings of a Gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, An - gels sing - ing, Bells are ring - ing, Tid - ings bring - ing:
Thus re - joic - ing, Free from sor - row, Prais - es voic - ing, Greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

Stand

SECOND GOSPEL

Luke 2:8-14

⁸ And in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² “And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Sit



RESPONSORY HYMN - *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* - LSB 380

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 ye na - tions, rise, Join the tri - umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God - head see, Hail the in - car - nate De - i - ty!
 Mild He lays His glo - ry by, Born that man no more may die,

With the an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Je - sus, our Im - man - u - el!
 Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them sec - ond birth.

Refrain

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

Stand

THIRD GOSPEL

Luke 2:15-20

¹⁵ And it came about when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they came in haste and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. ¹⁷ And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

Sit



RESPONSORY HYMN - *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child* - LSB 374

1 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child Low - ly in a man - ger;
 2 An - gels sang a - bout His birth, Wise Men sought and found Him;
 3 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child Low - ly in a man - ger;

There He lay, the Un - de - filed, To the world a strang - er.
 Heav - en's star shone bright - ly forth Glo - ry all a - round Him.
 He is still the Un - de - filed But no more a strang - er.

Such a babe in such a place, Can He be the Sav - ior?
 Shep - herds saw the won - drous sight, Heard the an - gels sing - ing;
 Son of God of hum - ble birth, Beau - ti - ful the sto - ry;

Ask the saved of all the race Who have found His fa - vor.
 All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ring - ing.
 Praise His name in all the earth; Hail the King of glo - ry!

CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

RESPONSORY 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.

Stand

NICENE CREED

C I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the
dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life **✝** of the world to come. Amen

Sit

OFFERINGS PRESENTED TO THE CHRIST CHILD

Stand

PRAYERS

P With joy in response to the good news that a Savior is born, let us pray and praise God and join the heavenly song of angels saying, “Glory be to God on high.”

P Merciful and loving God, in the birth of Your Son You gave peace on earth. Grant that Your holy Christian Church may rejoice in the gladness of our redemption and treasure all these things in our hearts, that we may join the heavenly song of angels saying,

C **Glory be to God on high.**

P Give boldness to all pastors of Your Church to proclaim the good news of great joy to all people, that all may join the heavenly song of angels saying,

C **Glory be to God on high.**

P O God, You gave Your Son to be born for us in lowly circumstances. Remember, we pray, those who have little joy: the homeless, hungry, and oppressed. Give hope to the lonely and shut-in of our parish. Grant peace and healing to the sick and suffering and those in the hospital. Guide the journeys of those who travel. Comfort those who mourn. Create a new and contrite heart in the erring, and faith in those who have not heard the good news. May Your love to us flow through our lives and be a blessing to others so that with us they may join the heavenly song of angels saying,

C **Glory be to God on high.**

P Lord God, make a manger in the hearts of all who come to Your altar this day, that they may have a share in the life of Him who came to share our humanity and join the heavenly song of angels saying,

C **Glory be to God on high.**

P In the birth of Your Son, O God, You have clothed us with eternal life. We remember with thanksgiving all those who have died in the faith. Unite our voices with theirs that we may join the heavenly song of angels saying,

C **Glory be to God on high.**

P These prayers and praises we humbly offer to Your throne of grace along with the heavenly song of angels; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

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.

Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

[Hebrews 10:22]

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 124:8

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Psalm 32:5

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

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I 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 SACRAMENT

P The Lord be with you. *2 Timothy 4:22*
C And with your spirit.

P Lift up your hearts. *[Colossians 3:1]*
C We lift them up unto the Lord.

P Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God. *[Psalm 136]*
C It is good and right so to do.

The Proper Preface appropriate to the day or season is spoken:

P It is truly good, right and salutary . . . evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS *Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9*

C Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might:
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.
Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

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. *Matthew 6:9-13*

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

*Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24
Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25*

- 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."
- P** 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."
- P** The peace of the Lord be with you always. *John 20:19*
- C** Amen.

AGNUS DEI ~ *Lamb of God*

John 1:29

- C** Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

Sit



1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing From ten - der stem hath
 2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, The rose I have in
 3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der With sweet - ness fills the
 4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, Who felt our hu - man

sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing As proph - ets long have
 mind; With Mar - y we be - hold it, The vir - gin moth - er
 air, Dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor The dark - ness ev - 'ry -
 woe; O Sav - ior, King of glo - ry, Who dost our weak - ness

sung, It came, a flow - 'ret bright, A - mid the
 kind. To show God's love a - right, She bore to
 where. True man, yet ver - y God, From sin and
 know: Bring us at length we pray To the bright

cold of win - ter, When half - spent was the night.
 us a Sav - ior, When half - spent was the night.
 death He saves us And light - ens ev - 'ry load.
 courts of heav - en, And to the end - less day.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

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!

Angels from the Realms of Glory

1 An - gels from the realms of glo - ry, Wing your flight o'er
 2 Shep - herds in the field a - bid - ing, Watch - ing o'er your
 3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, Bright - er vi - sions
 4 Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, Watch - ing long in
 Δ 5 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther,

all the earth; Ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry,
 flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing,
 beam a - far; Seek the great De - sire of na - tions,
 hope and fear, Sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing,
 Spir - it, Son, Ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing

Now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth.
 Yon - der shines the In - fant Light.
 Ye have seen His na - tal star. Come and wor - ship,
 In His tem - ple shall ap - pear.
 To the e - ter - nal Three in One.

Refrain

come and wor - ship; Wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

Stand

NUNC DIMITTIS

C Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,

C And His mercy endures forever.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

P Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

SALUTATION and BENEDICAMUS

P The Lord be with you.

C And with your spirit.

A Bless we the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

SERVICE OF LIGHT WITH THE LAST GOSPEL

888

O Gladsome Light, O Grace

1 O glad-some Light, O Grace Of God the Fa-ther's face,
 2 As day-light turns to night, We see the fad-ing light,
 3 To Thee of right be-longs All praise of ho-ly songs,

E-ter-nal splen-dor wear-ing: Ce-les-tial, ho-ly, blest,
 Our eve-ning hymn out-pour-ing, Fa-ther of might un-known,
 O Son of God, Life-giv-er; Thee, there-fore, O Most High,

Our Sav-ior Je-sus Christ, Joy-ful in Thine ap-pear-ing!
 Thee, His in-car-nate Son, And Ho-ly Ghost a-dor-ing.
 The world doth glo-ri-fy And shall ex-alt for-ev-er.

During the hymn the Pastor lights a candle from the Advent wreath. Ushers light their candles from his, then go to the aisles. Each worshiper lights from the candle next to his. To avoid wax on the floor, lighted candles should not be dipped or tilted.

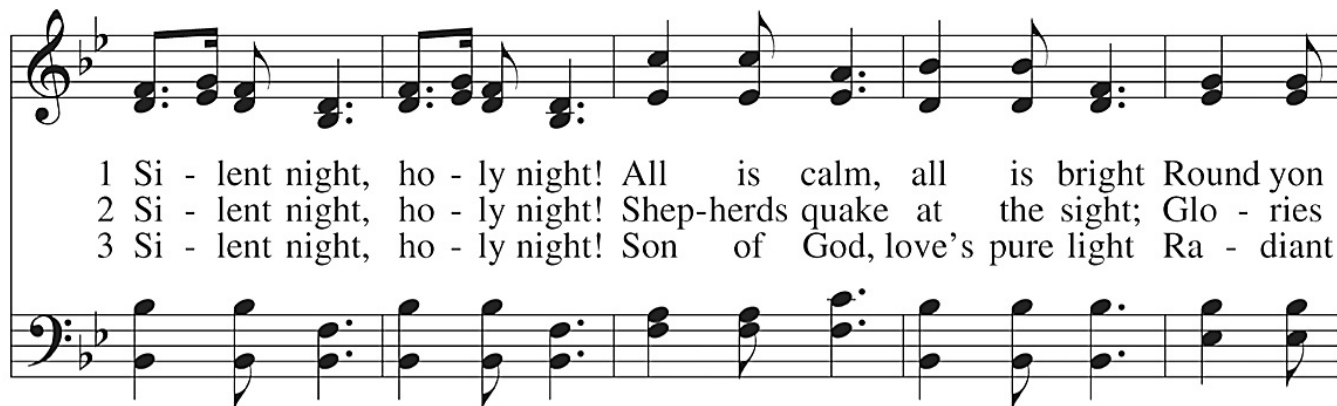
P The Lord be with you.
C **And with your spirit.**

P The beginning of the Holy Gospel according to St. John.
(All meditate on the mystery of the Word made flesh.)

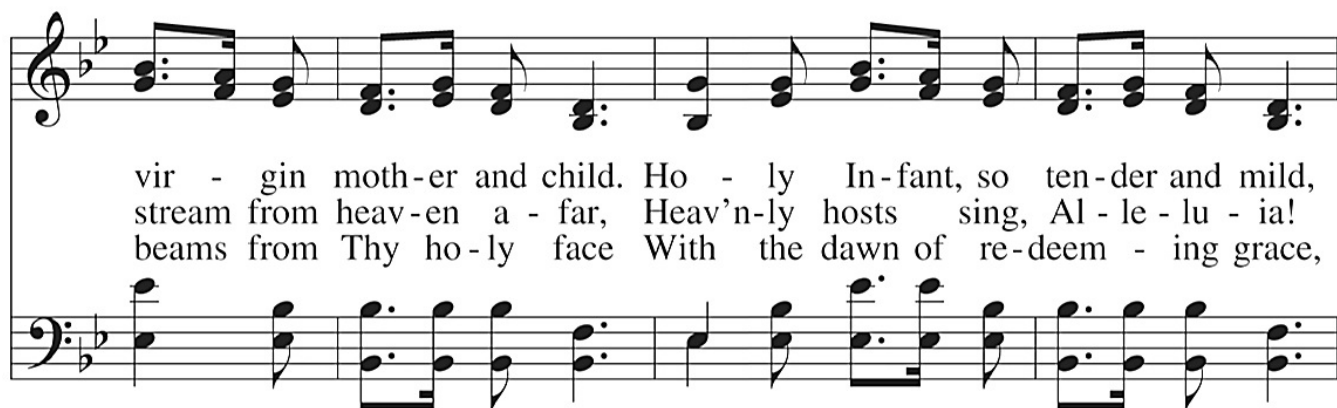
¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ⁶ There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. ⁹ There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who 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 became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God!**





1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright Round yon
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep-herds quake at the sight; Glo - ries
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light Ra - diant



vir - gin moth-er and child. Ho - ly In-fant, so ten-der and mild,
 stream from heav-en a - far, Heav'n-ly hosts sing, Al - lu - ia!
 beams from Thy ho-ly face With the dawn of re-deem - ing grace,



Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.

When the lights come back on please extinguish your candle and drop it in the box at the door on your way out. God grant you a very blessed celebration of our Savior's birth!

✠ *Soli Deo Gloria* ✠

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Three and hymns, from Lutheran Service Book

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