

First Sunday of Christmas  
December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023  
9:30 a.m.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Henrik Sonntag, Pastor  
120 N. Easton Road  
Glenside, PA  
215-884-3005

# GATHERING

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## THE PRELUDE

*O Little Town of Bethlehem (Forrest Green)*

Anne Krentz Organ

Benjamin Sonntag, piano; Henrik Sonntag, clarinet

*Please stand as you are able.*

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.** God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.*

Most merciful God, **we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all you sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen. OR**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

# OPENING HYMN

No. 269 Once in Royal David's City

*Irby*

## Once in Royal David's City



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,  
2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and Lord of all,  
3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;  
4 Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, with the ox - en stand - ing by,



where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:  
and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;  
for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav' n a - bove;  
we shall see him; but in heav - en, set at God's right hand on high;



Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.  
with the poor and meek and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.  
and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.  
there his chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo - ry crowned.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818–1895  
Music: IRBY, Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805–1876

## GREETING

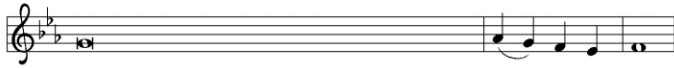
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



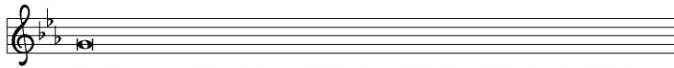
Lord, have mer - cy.



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



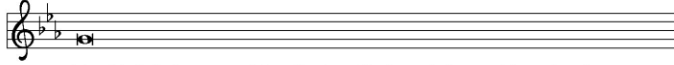
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



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



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

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

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

## THE WORD

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### THE FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:10—62:3

<sup>0</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

<sup>62:1</sup>For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,  
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,  
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,  
and her salvation like a burning torch.

<sup>2</sup>The nations shall see your vindication,  
and all the kings your glory;  
and you shall be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

<sup>3</sup>You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,  
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

# THE PSALM

Psalm 148

*The antiphon is introduced by the choir, then is sung by all. The assembly sings the verses in **bold print**.*



Psalm 148:13

Psalm refrain reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year B* © 2008 Augsburg Fortress.  
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- <sup>1</sup>Hallelujah! Praise the LORD | from the heavens;  
praise God | in the heights.
- <sup>2</sup>**Praise the LORD, | all you angels;**  
**sing praise, all you | hosts of heaven.**
- <sup>3</sup>Praise the LORD, | sun and moon;  
sing praise, all you | shining stars.
- <sup>4</sup>**Praise the LORD, heav- | en of heavens,**  
**and you waters a- | bove the heavens.**
- <sup>5</sup>Let them praise the name | of the LORD,  
who commanded, and they | were created,
- <sup>6</sup>**who made them stand fast forev- | er and ever,**  
**giving them a law that shall not | pass away. R**
- <sup>7</sup>Praise the LORD | from the earth,  
you sea monsters | and all deeps;
- <sup>8</sup>**fire and hail, | snow and fog,**  
**tempestuous wind, do- | ing God's will;**
- <sup>9</sup>mountains | and all hills,  
fruit trees | and all cedars;
- <sup>10</sup>**wild beasts | and all cattle,**  
**creeping things and | flying birds;**
- <sup>11</sup>sovereigns of the earth | and all peoples,  
princes and all rulers | of the world;
- <sup>12</sup>**young | men and maidens,**  
**old and | young together. R**
- <sup>13</sup>Let them praise the name | of the LORD,  
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over | earth and

heaven.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all | faithful servants,  
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. | Hallelujah! R

## THE SECOND READING

Galatians 4:4-7

<sup>4</sup>When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. <sup>6</sup>And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” <sup>7</sup>So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

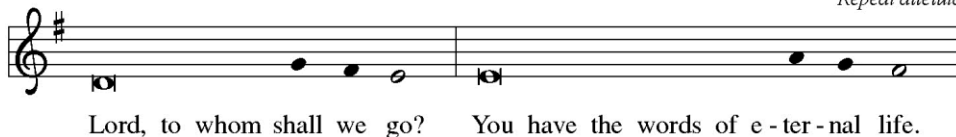
*Please stand as you are able.*

## THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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*Repeat alleluia*





# THE HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 2:22-40

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>22</sup>When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), <sup>24</sup>and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

<sup>25</sup>Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. <sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. <sup>27</sup>Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, <sup>28</sup>Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

<sup>29</sup>“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
according to your word;

<sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation,

<sup>31</sup>which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel.”

<sup>33</sup>And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup>Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed <sup>35</sup>so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

<sup>36</sup>There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup>then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup>At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup>When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup>The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Please be seated.*

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

Pastor Henrik Sonntag

*Silence for reflection follows the sermon.*

*Please stand as you are able.*

HYMN OF THE DAY

No. 300 The First Noel

*The First Nowell*

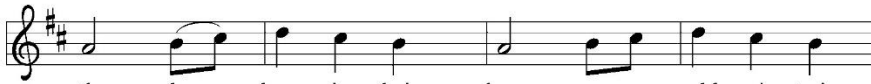
# The First Noel



1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to  
 2 They look - ed up and saw . . . a star shin - ing  
 3 And by the light of that . . . same star three . .  
 4 This star drew near to the . . . north - west, o'er . .  
 5 Then en - tered in those wise . . . men three, full . .



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where  
 in . . . the east . . . be - yond . . . them far; and to the  
 wise . . . men came . . . from coun - try far; to seek for a  
 Beth - le - hem . . . it took . . . its rest; and there it  
 rev - 'rent - ly . . . up - on . . . their knee, and of - fered



they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's  
 earth it gave . . . great light, and . . . so it con -  
 king was their . . . in - tent, and to fol - low the  
 did both stop . . . and stay right . . . o - ver the  
 there in his . . . pres - ence their . . . gold, . . . and

## Refrain



night that was so deep.  
 tin-ued both day and night.  
 star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -  
 place where Je - sus lay.  
 myrrh, and frank - in - cense.



el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Please kneel or sit for the prayers:* This week's response is: Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

*A brief silence.*

You inspire faith in our hearts and call us to rejoice with our whole selves at the salvation you bring. Make our churches places of belonging for all people in the fullness of their being. Raise up the gifts and the witness of people who are neurodivergent, living with disability, or bearing invisible illness. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your praise is sung throughout creation in all times and seasons. As the new year turns, ground us in your changeless and sustaining love. Keep us attentive to the rhythms of the cosmos and inspire us to live in harmony with all the earth. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give hope and stamina to leaders who work tirelessly for the sake of the most vulnerable. We pray especially for organizations working on behalf of

children to provide basic needs, to protect from abuse and neglect, to address trauma, and to rescue from trafficking. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Sustain all people who, like Simeon and Anna, have been waiting for salvation and wholeness, especially Richard Kosempel, Tom Lackman, Carol Mallen-Hall, and all those on our prayer list. We pray especially for anyone living with cancer or chronic illness, all people who are in physical rehabilitation or addiction recovery, and those experiencing complications from long COVID. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let this community of faith be a joyful and welcome place for all ages and generations. Teach us to honor the wisdom of children, the inquisitiveness of youth, the thoughtfulness of adults, and the knowledge of elders. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for all the beloved who lived with expectation and departed this life in peace. Sustain us in joy until we join them around your throne. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

**Amen.**

*Please stand as you are able*

## THE PEACE

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

*All greet each other with Christ's gesture of peace saying "Peace be with you."*

*Please be seated*

# MEAL

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## OFFERING

*What Child is This (Greensleeves)*

Thomas Keesecker

Benjamin Sonntag, piano

*Please stand as you are able.*

## OFFERTORY No. 692 We Are an Offering

We lift our voic-es, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you: we are an

of-fer-ing. Lord, use our voic-es, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our

lives, they are yours: we are an of-fer-ing. All that we have, all that we are,

all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you.

We lift our voic-es, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you:

we are an of-fer-ing, we are an of-fer-ing.

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

Concludes with ... **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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The Lord be with you. **And** al - so 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.

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a melody line with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 'The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.', 'Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.', 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.', and 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.' The word 'And' is bolded in the first line, and 'It is right' is bolded in the fourth line. The music consists of quarter and eighth notes with slurs.

THE SANCTUS

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Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of  
 pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -  
 san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the  
 name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

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*Please be seated.*

### THE COMMUNION

"Lamb of God"

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Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have  
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -  
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

No. 296 What Child is This

*Greensleeves*

## What Child Is This



- 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.

*Please stand as you are able.*

## THE COMMUNION BLESSING

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

## THE POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE

Now Lord, You Let Your Servant Go in Peace

Now, Lord, 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.

Now, Lord, you let your ser - vant go in peace.

## THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Concludes with **Amen**.

## SENDING

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THE BLESSING

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THE SENDING HYMN

No. 282 It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

*Carol*

## It Came upon the Midnight Clear



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 And you, be-neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,  
4 For lo! The days are has-t'ning on, by proph-ets seen of old,



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 the climb-ing way with pain-ful steps and slow:  
when with the ev-er-cir-cling years shall come the time fore-told,



“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 now, for glad and gold-en hours come swift-ly on the wing;  
when peace shall o-ver all the earth its an-cient splen-dors fling,



The world in sol-ern still-ness lay to hear the an-gels sing.  
and ev-er o'er its ba-bel sounds the bless-ed an-gels sing.  
oh, rest be-side the wea-ry road and hear the an-gels sing!  
and all the world give back the song which now the an-gels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810–1876  
Music: CAROL, Richard S. Willis, 1819–1900

*Please be seated for the announcements.*

## PARISH NOTICES AND JOYS

**SENDING:** Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## THE POSTLUDE

*Now Sing We, Now Rejoice*

J.S. Bach

Benjamin Sonntag, organist