



For
unto us
a Child is Born
unto us
a **Son** is given
and the government
shall be upon his shoulder
and his name
Shall be called
Wonderful Counsellor

THE MIGHTY GOD

The everlasting father

THE PRINCE OF PEACE

ISAIAH 9:6



*Merry
Christmas*

Ascension Lutheran Church
Christmas Day ~ December 25, 2023

CHRISTMAS DAY 2023

Welcome to all who are attending our service today. We are glad you are with us! To all guests and visitors, we especially extend our hands of friendship. May God bless the worship time for each one of you. Please come again!

NURSERY AVAILABLE We have an unstaffed nursery for your convenience and privacy. The nursery has audio and video so you may hear and see the worship service while attending to your child. **Holy Communion** is celebrated at the 8:30 service on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, and at the 11:00 service on the 2nd and

+ PREPARATION +

Theme: “Your Light Has Come”

As We Gather: One of the most stirring beginnings of a Christmas hymn is the line “Break forth, O beauteous heav’nly light” (*LSB* 378), which has become well known from the setting by Johann Sebastian Bach in his *Christmas Oratorio*. The poetic text was included in a hymn collection called *Himmlischer Lieder* (Heavenly Songs) written by German Lutheran Pastor Johann Rist in 1641. In his extended poem, author Rist invites all of creation, including the stars and moon and even the animals at the manger, to participate in welcoming the infant Jesus, who is the Savior, Christ the Lord. Certainly it is more than appropriate that the “beauteous heav’nly light” would break forth and “usher in the morning,” joining in to welcome its Creator, now on earth as the babe in the manger. Today we join with all of creation, including the angels and shepherds and those gathered in this place for worship, to welcome Jesus, who will defeat Satan, be our confidence and joy, and make peace between God and His people. May our joyful praise break forth!

Prelude

Phyllis Ernsberger, violin

Welcome

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

- 1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the 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 the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel! **(refrain)**
- 3 Hail, the heav’n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris’n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth. **(refrain)**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–88, alt., Text: Public domain

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Opening Scripture

Is. 60:1; 9:2; 2 Cor. 4:6

P Arise, shine, for your light has come,

C and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

P The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
C **those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.**

P For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness,"
C **has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**

Confession and Absolution

P Let us come before our loving Father, confident of His forgiveness for Jesus' sake.

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

P Let us confess our sins to God, our heavenly Father.
C **Almighty God, heavenly Father, we have sinned and plead guilty before You. We are by nature sinful people. Time and again, we have lived as if You did not matter and as if we mattered most. We have not honored the name of the Lord Jesus, the newborn King whose birth we celebrate this day, as we should. We have not walked in the brightness of Your light. Our thoughts and desires have been stained by sin. We are sorry for the ways we have fallen short of Your glory, and we ask for Your grace.**

P God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith. 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.**

Salutation

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin, and that Your life-giving light would shine forth through us; this we ask through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Sharing The Peace of the Lord

P The peace of the Lord be with you all.

C And also with you.

+ THE WORD +

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 52:7-10 (ESV)

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”

⁸The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see
the return of the LORD to Zion.

⁹Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted His people;
He has redeemed Jerusalem.

¹⁰The LORD has bared His holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle

Hebrews 1:1-6 (ESV)

¹Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. ³He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs. ⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say,
“You are My Son, today I have begotten You”?

Or again,

“I will be to Him a Father,
and He shall be to Me a Son”?

⁶And again, when He brings the Firstborn into the world, He says, “Let all God’s angels worship Him.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel

John 1:1-14 (ESV)

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

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 were made through 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 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the Light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the Light, but came to bear witness about the Light. ⁹ The true Light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. ¹² But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, 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 have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Once in Royal David’s City

1 Once in royal David’s city
 Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby
 In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

2 He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

4 And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle
Is our Lord in heav'n above;
And He leads His children on
To the place where He is gone.

5 Not in that poor, lowly stable
With the oxen standing by
Shall we see Him, but in heaven,
Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars His children, crowned,
All in white, His praise will sound!

Once in Royal David's City, Text: Cecil F. Alexander, 1818–95, alt., Text: Public domain

Sermon
“LIGHTING UP CHRISTMAS”

Pr Jim Sprengle
John 1:1-14

Nicene Creed

**☩ 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 \dagger of the world to come. Amen.

Tithes and Offerings

*(Our offerings are made as an act of worship, given in loving
response to all that God has graciously given us, both materially and
spiritually.)*

Jesus, Jesus, Rest Your Head

Traditional American

Carlyn Staudt, soloist

Prayer of the Church

P Gathered as God's people and as heirs of an eternal inheritance,
let us pray for the whole Church and for all people according to
their needs, confidently bringing our prayer in the name of Jesus
Christ, who is our light and our salvation.

Adoration, praise, and thanksgiving be to You, O Lord God
Almighty, that when darkness covered the earth, and total
darkness the people, You provided a Savior, able to help, and
strong to deliver.

C **Praise to You, O God!**

P Adoration, praise, and thanksgiving be to You, that You gave Your eternal Son to become incarnate, that through Him light and pardon, power and peace, life and eternal salvation, might come to the fallen and lost children of humanity.

C **Praise to You, O God!**

P Adoration, praise, and thanksgiving be unto You, that by the holy nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ we, who by sin were driven out of the earthly paradise, are begotten again to a new Kingdom and to an endless paradise in heaven.

C **Praise to You, O God!**

P Grant we ask You, O Lord, that the good tidings of great joy in which we rejoice this day may everywhere be known. Bless the Church throughout the world that it may faithfully prosper in all things. Guide the rulers of nations that pathways of peace may be found. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer!**

P Grant the needs of all people be met according to Your good and gracious will. Grant that the ill and those burdened by many cares find respite from their challenges. Grant that those who sorrow this day look up to Your throne and find abundant consolation in Him who came to ransom us from every fear and every foe. Send the joy of Your salvation into all penitent and burdened souls, that they may rejoice and give glory to God that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer!**

P Help, defend, and keep us all, through Him who was born at Bethlehem, so that when He comes in glorious majesty to complete our redemption we may have our perfect fulfillment and joy in His eternal kingdom; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose blessed name we make all of our prayers.

C **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

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.

Closing Responses

P Today we celebrate Christ's birth in Bethlehem.

C Today we celebrate Christ's birth in each of us.

P For Christ is born in Bethlehem to save the whole world.

C And Christ is born in our hearts to save us each from sin.

P Christ is born in Bethlehem to fulfill the words of the prophets of old.

C And Christ is born in our hearts so that we may speak the words of Good News to future generations.

P Christ is born in Bethlehem to bring joy to the world.

C And Christ is born in our hearts to restore to us the joy of His salvation.

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

Good Christian Men, Rejoice

Good Christian men, rejoice

With heart and soul and voice!

Give ye heed to what we say:

Jesus Christ is born today!

Ox and ass before Him bow,

And He is in the manger now.

Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Good Christian men, rejoice
With heart and soul and voice!
Now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath opened heaven's door
And man is blessed forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Good Christian men, rejoice
With heart and soul and voice!
Now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
To gain His everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Dismissal

P Go in peace and serve the Lord!

C **Thanks be to God!**

Acknowledgments

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Ascension Lutheran Church

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Church: 503-665-8821 · Web Site: www.alcportland.org

Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday 9am to 3pm

Our Mission Statement:

~Go and Share Jesus Christ~

Our Vision Statement:

“Take part...Join Jesus on His mission.”

The members of Ascension Lutheran Church are committed to being God’s witnesses in Gresham, and in all of Portland and the Northwest, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8):

With the universal Christian Church, we believe, teach and respond to the love of the Triune God— the Father, Creator of all that exists; the Son Jesus Christ, Who left His home in Heaven to become flesh and blood, to suffer and die for the sins of all peoples of the world, and Who rose from the grave, victorious over sin, death and the devil, that we too might live with Him in Heaven; and the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts in Christ Jesus through God’s Word and Sacrament. The three Persons of the Holy Trinity are one God, co-equal and co-eternal. The core teachings of our faith from the Lutheran perspective can be summarized in three short phrases: Grace alone, Scripture alone, Faith alone.

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