

2nd Sunday of Christmas

January 4, 2026; 9 a.m.



St John's
Lutheran Church

(An usher rings the church bell at 8:55 a.m.)

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Eric Nielsen

Prelude

(Acolytes light the candles)

Linda Ranney

Confession and Forgiveness

(All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.)

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty Savior,
Prince of Peace.

Amen.

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness,
let us confess our sin.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

Reconciling God,
**we yearn for your presence to transform
our grief, pain, and despair.
We confess that we have not always prepared
room in our hearts for your love;
we have not always recognized
your presence among us;
we have not always embraced your message of peace.**

**We cry out, weary with the burden of violence,
oppression, and fear.**

**We confess our failure to make room
for those seeking refuge;
our participation in violent systems
that harm your innocent ones;
our reluctance to embody your good news.
Be born in us today
and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation.
Amen.**

God's grace upon grace flows over you.
✠ Christ's presence redeems the whole creation.
Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!
Amen.

Gathering Hymn

ELW #287; Let All Together Praise Our God vs. 1-3

- 1 Let all together praise our God
 before the highest throne;
 today God opens heav'n again
 and sends the only Son,
 and sends the only Son.
- 2 From God's right hand the Son descends,
 is born an infant small,
 and lies in poverty, his bed
 a manger in a stall,
 a manger in a stall.
- 3 O tender Child, you veil in flesh
 the splendor of your might;
 a servant's garb now wraps the one
 who clothed the sky with light,
 who clothed the sky with light.

Apostolic 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.

Kyrie

'Kyrie' from *Now the Feast and Celebration* by Marty Haugen

P: In peace. in peace, . . .

Refrain

Assistant: *Congregation:*

Let us pray to the Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy.

to Verses

P: For the reign of God, and for peace throughout the world, for the unity of all . . . (to refrain)

P: For your people here, who have come to give you praise, for the strength to live your word . . . (to refrain)

Assistant:

Help, save and de - fend us, O God. A - men.

Congregation:

God. A - men.

Canticle of Praise

'Now The Feast' vs. 1, 3 from *Now the Feast and Celebration* by Marty Haugen

Refrain

Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion, all of cre - a - tion
sings for joy to the God of life and love and free-dom;
praise and glo - ry for - ev - er - more!

1 Now is the feast of the Lamb once slain, whose blood has
freed and u - nit-ed us to be one great peo-ple of God. *Refrain*

3 For God has come to dwell with us, to make us peo-ple of
God; to make all things new. *Refrain*

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-14 (*please sit*)

⁷ Thus says the Lord:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
“Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel.”

⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor
together; a great company, they shall return here.

⁹ With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back;
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path where they shall not stumble,
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the Lord, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him
and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock.”

¹¹ For the Lord has ransomed Jacob
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

¹² They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall become like a watered garden,
and they shall never languish again.

¹³ Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
and the young men and the old shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy;
I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow.

¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵ He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹² so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴ this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Time

Gospel Acclamation (*please stand*)

'Alleluia' from *Now the Feast and Celebration* by Marty Haugen

Congregation:

Al-le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we

go? You have the words of e - ter - nal

life. Al - le - lu - ia!

Optional Repeat

Gospel: John 1:1-18

The Holy Gospel according to John, the 1st Chapter.

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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon (*please sit*)

"Welcome Home?" -- Rev. Eric Nielsen

Hymn of the Day (*please stand*)

ELW #294; *In the Bleak Midwinter*

1 In the bleak midwinter,
 frosty wind made moan,

earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow,
snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter,
long ago.

2 Heaven cannot hold him,
 nor earth sustain;
 heav'n and earth shall flee away
 when he comes to reign;
 in the bleak midwinter
 a stable place sufficed
 the Lord God almighty,
 Jesus Christ.

3 What can I give him,
 poor as I am?
 If I were a shepherd
 I would bring a lamb;
 if I were a wise man
 I would do my part;
 yet what I can I give him—
 give my heart.

Apostles' Creed

**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.**

Prayers of the People

Petition: Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

The Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always!
And also with you.

Offering

(Ushers take up the collection)

Welcome to Our World by Chris Rice
Eric Nielsen, baritone

Offertory *(please stand)*

(Ushers bring collection forward for acolytes to receive)

ELW #269; *Once in Royal David's City* vs. 1-2

- 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.

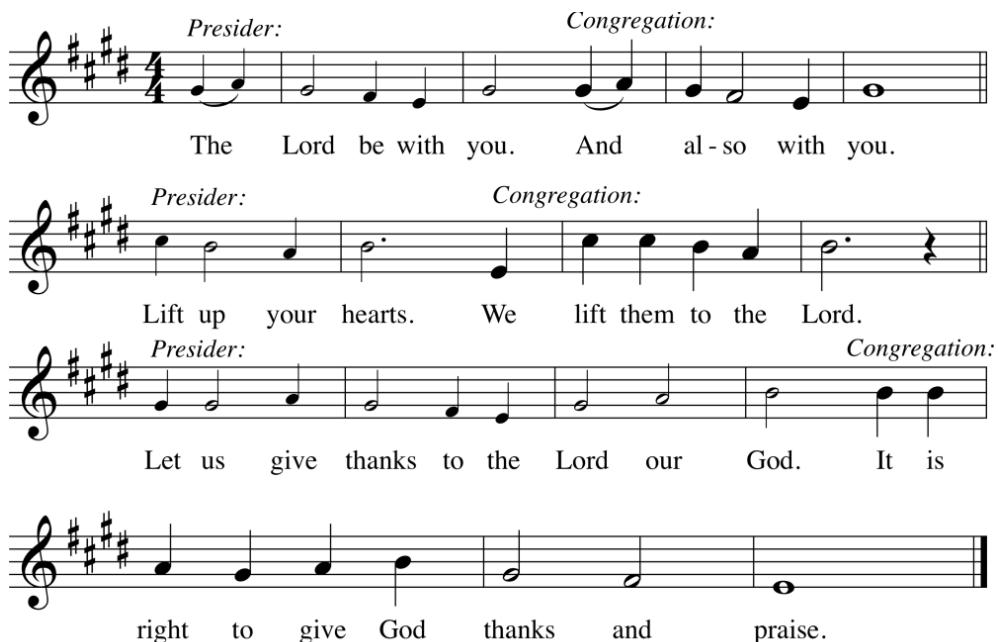
- 2 He came down to earth from heaven
 who is God and Lord of all,
 and his shelter was a stable,
 and his cradle was a stall;
 with the poor and meek and lowly,
 lived on earth our Savior holy.

Offertory Prayer

Let us pray. God of glory,
**great are your wonders among us
and many are the blessings you bestow.**
**Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace,
through Christ our Savior.**
Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

Presider: *Congregation:*



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 God thanks and praise.

Proper Preface

Holy, Holy, Holy

Congregation:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and

might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your

glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est!

Bless - ed is the One who comes in your name. Ho -

san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est!

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.


Invitation to the Table

(Acolytes prepare for communion distribution; ushers come forward to invite assembly by pew. Greeters will guide those wishing to receive at the altar: stop at credence table for a cup, then walk up side steps into the chancel)

Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

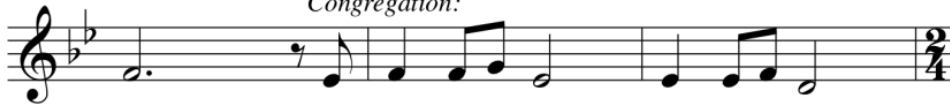
Lamb of God

Congregation: *Congregation or Assistant:*



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
you break the chains of ha - tred and
you are the way of jus - tice and
you are the way of mer - cy and

Congregation:




world: have mer - cy on us, mer - cy on us,
fear:
peace:
love.

Final Stanza
Congregation or Assistant:



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you

Congregation:



take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace,



grant us peace, grant us peace.

Text and Music: Marty Haugen; © 1990, GIA Publications, Inc.

Communion Hymn

ELW #295; *Of the Father's Love Begotten*

- 1 Of the Father's love begotten
 ere the worlds began to be,
 he is Alpha and Omega,
 he the source, the ending he,
 of the things that are, that have been,
 and that future years shall see,
 evermore and evermore.
- 2 Oh, that birth forever blessed,
 when the virgin, full of grace,
 by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
 bore the Savior of our race,
 and the babe, the world's redeemer,
 first revealed his sacred face,
 evermore and evermore.
- 3 This is he whom seers in old time
 chanted of with one accord,
 whom the voices of the prophets
 promised in their faithful word;
 now he shines, the long-expected;
 let creation praise its Lord
 evermore and evermore.
- 4 Let the heights of heav'n adore him;
 angel hosts, his praises sing;
 pow'rs, dominions, bow before him
 and extol our God and King;
 let no tongue on earth be silent,
 ev'ry voice in concert ring
 evermore and evermore.
- 5 Christ, to thee, with God the Father,
 and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,
 hymn and chant and high thanksgiving

and unwearied praises be:
honor, glory, and dominion,
and eternal victory
evermore and evermore! Amen.

Post-Communion Blessing & Prayer *(please stand)*

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

Let us pray. Incarnate God, **you are among us at this table.**
May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts
the mystery of your presence.
Move us to discover the wonders of your love
in the everyday moments of our lives,
through Christ born in us.
Amen.

Benediction

The triune God,
glorious Mystery,
holy Incarnate One,
abiding Comforter,
✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.
Amen.

Sending Hymn

(Acolytes extinguish the candles)

ELW #267; *Joy to the World* vs. 1-4

- 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 sin and sorrow 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.

Sending

Go in Peace. May Christ fill your heart and home.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Linda Ranney

Altar Flowers

In Memory of our mother, Mildred Mai, by Lois Mai and Cora Klawiter

Serving at Worship Today

Presider	Rev. Eric Nielsen
Assistant	Ruth Lundblad
Lector	Cora Klawiter
Acolytes	Reese Boeckmann, Emmerson Rosentrater
Ushers	Gary Kersten, Dramus Peuse
Greeters	Randy Lundblad, Julie Kersten
Communion Servers	Jenna Boeckmann, Randy Lundblad, Kathy Freitag, Julie Kersten

Media & Streaming	Lydia Elko
Screen Operator	Maxx Christopherson
Musicians	Linda Ranney, piano/organ; Mark Lundin, director of music, Eric Nielsen, baritone, Frank Larrabee, instrumentalist

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