

First Sunday of Christmas

December 28, 2025; 9 a.m.



St John's
Lutheran Church

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

Welcome and Announcements

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

*(Presider will invite the assembly to request ELW Christmas carol suggestions;
presider will choose and select verses)*

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.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray. O Lord God, **you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.**
Amen.

Reading: Isaiah 63:7-9 *(please sit)*

⁷ I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,
the praiseworthy acts of the Lord,
because of all that the Lord has done for us
and the great favor to the house of Israel
that he has shown them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people,
children who will not act deceitfully,"
and he became their savior
⁹ in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel
but his presence that saved them;
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Reading: Hebrews 2:10-18

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

¹³ And again,

"I will put my trust in him."

And again,

"Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

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: Matthew 2:13-23

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the 2nd Chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³ Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,
wailing and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to

Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazarene.”

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

Sermon *(please sit)*

Pastor Christine Emerson

Hymn of the Day *(please stand)*

ELW #296; *What Child is This* vs. 1-3

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)

Linda Ranney

Offertory *(please stand)*

(Ushers bring collection forward for acolytes to receive)

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

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

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four lines of music, each with a corresponding line of lyrics. The first line is for the Presider, and the second is for the Congregation. This pattern continues for the third and fourth lines. 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. It is', and 'right to give God thanks and praise.'

Presider: *Congregation:*

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

Presider: *Congregation:*

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Presider: *Congregation:*

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

*(Presider will invite the assembly to request ELW Christmas carol suggestions;
presider will choose and select verses)*

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

*(Presider will invite the assembly to request ELW Christmas carol suggestions;
presider will choose and select verses)*

(Acolytes extinguish the candles)

Sending

Glory to God in the highest!
And peace to God's people on earth!
Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Linda Ranney

Altar Flowers

Serving at Worship Today

Presider	Pastor Christine Emerson
Assistant	Cora Klawiter
Lector	Randy Lundblad
Acolytes	Hadley Wolfe, Cassidy Frank
Ushers	Norb Kirk, Larry Krause
Greeters	Brian Wagner, Mike Torud
Communion Servers	Kathy Freitag, Cheryl Mattison, Louise Alt, Diana Hogenson

Media & Streaming	Scott Olsen
Screen Operator	Brett Issacson
Musicians	Linda Ranney, piano/organ

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