

Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church



In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

Thursday, December 24th, 2020

Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church—E.L.C.A.
Christmas Eve Worship
Thursday, December 24th, 2020

Ministers:

Intern Pastor Jaime Decker

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Prelude Music

Welcome/Announcements

Gathering

Call to Worship

L: This year, we dreamed of world peace. **C: We dreamed of deep breaths and restful sleep.**

L: We dreamed of love that lasts and suffering that passes.

C: We dreamed of doors open wide and a cure to disease.

L: We dreamed, because to dream is to believe. **C: For to dream is to hope; to dream is to see.**

L: So make room in your being to dream yet again, **C: Of a world without fear, and a God that draws near.**

L: For it is almost Christmas. **C: Love is almost here.**

L: May we dream to see, and hope to believe. Let us worship Holy God.

Candle Lighting Liturgy | The Christ Candle

A: In the beginning, God dreamed of a beautiful world.

B: In Egypt, the Israelites dreamed of freedom.

A: In the wilderness, the people dreamed of safety.

B: In Jerusalem, the people dreamed of a Messiah.

A: In Bethlehem, the shepherds and Wise Men dreamed of a new beginning.

B: Then, several years later, Jesus walked this earth and dreams came true.

A: The sick were healed. The poor had food.

B: The forgotten and ignored were seen.

A: The children were welcomed.

B: Everyone was invited to the table, and the world has never been the same.

A: So tonight, we are those who dream.

B: Tonight, we dream the same dreams of our ancestors before us.

A: Tonight, we dream of justice and mercy, of love and kindness, of peace and hope.

B: Tonight we dream of a God that draws near to us out of unfailing love.

A: May this candle be a reminder that there will be a day when every dream will be fulfilled.

And until then, we will be those who dream.

B: Let us worship Holy God. (*Light Christ Candle*)

Opening Hymn

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ELW #283 (Verse 1)

O Come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant! O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; come and behold him, born the king of angels: O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Prayer of Confession

L: Ever-present God, (*Silence is Kept for Reflection*) From time to time we dream radical dreams.

C: We dream of freedom for the imprisoned, Food for the hungry, and equality for all.

L: We dream bold, radical dreams, until the world tells us that these dreams are impossible.

C: And when that happens, we are tempted to tuck our dreams into coat pockets and let them collect dust on the shelves of our hearts. Forgive us for giving up so easily.

L: Forgive us for giving up so easily, for on this night we remember and celebrate a radical dream—
That you dwelled among us.

C: Give us the courage to dust old dreams off the shelf With the confidence that with you, the impossible is possible.

L: With you, a light always shines in the darkness.

C: With you, even an unwed teenage couple and a band of shepherds Can bring joy to the world.

L: Thanks be to God for a dream like that.

C: Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

L: Holy God, If we listen closely, we can almost hear the angels sing. If we listen closely, we can almost hear the bleats of sheep following shepherds, And the hooves of confused barn animals. If we listen closely, we can almost hear the innkeeper say, “No room.” If we listen closely, we can almost hear the star whisper, “Follow me.” If we listen closely, God, we can almost hear you.

(*Pause for a moment of silence.*)

C: So as we turn to your Word, Holy Writer, don't let us miss a thing— The smell of the hay, the cool of the air, the way Mary cherished this wild dream in her heart. We want to hear it all; we don't want to miss a thing. So today we pray—can you help us listen closely? Amen.

Word

First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined. ³ You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴ For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶ For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

R: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Hymn

O Little Town Of Bethlehem

ELW #279 (Verse 1)

O Little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thee deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by; yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Second Reading

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

R: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Hymn

Away In A Manger

ELW #277 (Verse 1)

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

Third Reading

Luke 2:8-14

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

R: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Hymn

Angels We Have Heard On High

ELW #289 (Verse 1)

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains, and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains. Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Fourth Reading

Luke 2:15-20

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they went with

haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

R: The Word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God**

Hymn

Go Tell It On The Mountain

ELW#290 (Verse 1)

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere; go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is Born!
While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night, behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere; go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is Born!

Message

Special Music: Sierra McKeever

Affirmation of Faith

L: We believe in hope.

C: **We believe that to hope is to dream with our eyes wide open.**

L: We believe in peace.

C: **We believe that peace is not found by accident. Prepare the way.**

L: We believe in joy.

C: **We believe that joy is angel choruses and gifts from the Magi, as well as soul food, big tables, open doors, candle light, fireside, singing in the shower, and the body of Christ gathered as one.**

L: We believe in love.

C: **We believe that God loves us so much that God could not stay away. So God showed up as a child. We believe that that love is real, and we know that it changes us.**

L: Therefore, we believe in the power of dreams,

C: **And we believe that nightmares, which are all too real here and now, will have no place in God's promised day.**

L: Until then, we believe in passing the light, In showing up, in doing the work, In listening for angel choruses, and in learning from the youngest among us.

C: **We believe. Help our unbelief. Amen.**

Prayer of the People

We come to you tonight with dreams tucked into our pockets, admitting that at times it feels risky to dream. At times it feels risky to ask for too much, to believe in that which we cannot see. So instead we make wishes on stars and search for luck in clover fields. Instead of sinking into you, we try to control the narrative. However, somewhere rumbling deep in our heart, there is a dream of a better world, trapped like a caged bird. Open our eyes to you in our midst. Give us the confidence of Mary to sing into the mystery. Dust your dream for us off the shelves of our hearts until once more, we are those who dream. Amen.

*Peace

Offering (Offering Plates are Located in the Back of the Sanctuary, Please place offering there)

* Offering Prayer

C: **God with us: You came as a baby to a manger. You slept on straw and greeted shepherds. You come again in bread and wine. Remind us how good you are at blessing ordinary things. And then, through these gifts, help us to bless the lives of others in the strength of your holy name. Amen.**

Meal

Holy Communion

*Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

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

*Invitation to Communion

P: Joy to the world! The Lord is come. Let every heart receive your Savior.

Post Communion Blessing

Post Communion Prayer

C: We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us from your very self with the body and blood of Christ. Through this mystery, send us forth to proclaim your promise to a world in need, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

(Dim Lights)

Fifth Reading

John 1:1-9

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 overcome 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.

R: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

Hymn

Silent Night, Holy Night!

ELW #281

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight; glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing, alleluia! Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

Sending

*Benediction

L: Almighty God, who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary, proclaimed joy through the angels, sent the shepherds with good news, and led the magi by a star, bless you this day ☩ through the Word made flesh. Amen.

(Turn up Lights)

Hymn

Joy To The World

ELW #267 (Verse 1)

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let every heart prepare him room and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus. **C: Thanks be to God.**

*Postlude

Bulletin Donated By: The Nelson's, MERRY CHRISTMAS!

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