

December 28, 2025

First Sunday of Christmas



Christ's Lutheran Church

700 East Pennsylvania Avenue
Oreland, Pennsylvania

*Christ's Evangelical Lutheran Church
connects individuals to God, each other, and the community.*

Welcome to Worship at Christ's Lutheran Church!

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the "holy innocents" of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Prelude **Two French Carols** **arr. Brent Adams**

Welcome and Announcements

Please stand in body or spirit as you are able.

Confession and Forgiveness

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 Song

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice ELW # 288



- 1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 2 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 3 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

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.

Dialogue

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light,
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son of the Father.

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

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.

Please be seated.

THE WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading

John 1:1-14

A reading from John, chapter 1.

In the beginning was the one who is called the Word.

The Word was with God and was truly God.

² From the very beginning the Word was with God.

³ And with this Word, God created all things.

Nothing was made without the Word.

Everything that was created ⁴received its life from him, and his life gave light to everyone.

⁵ The light keeps shining in the dark, and darkness has never put it out.

⁶ God sent a man named John,

⁷ who came to tell about the light

and to lead all people to have faith.

⁸ John wasn't this light. He came only to tell about the light.

⁹ The true light that shines on everyone was coming into the world.

¹⁰ The Word was in the world, but no one knew him, though God had made the world with his Word.

¹¹ He came into his own world, but his own nation did not welcome him.

¹² Yet some people accepted him and put their faith in him.

So he gave them the right to be the children of God.

¹³ They were not God's children by nature or because of any human desires.

God himself was the one who made them his children.

¹⁴ The Word became a human being and lived here with us.

We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.

From Him the complete gifts of undeserved grace and truth have come down to us.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Of the Father's Love Begotten
Verses 1, 2, 5

ELW # 295



1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten ere the worlds be -
2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, when the vir - gin,
3 This is he whom seers in old time chant - ed of with
4 Let the heights of heav'n a - dore him; an - gel hosts, his
5 Christ, to thee, with God the Fa - ther, and, O Ho - ly



gan to be, he is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
full of grace, by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,
one ac - cord, whom the voic - es of the proph - ets
prais - es sing; pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore him
Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing



he the source, the end - ing he, of the things that are, that
bore the Sav - ior of our race, and the babe, the world's re -
prom - ised in their faith - ful word; now he shines, the long - ex -
and ex - tol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be
and un - wea - ried prais - es be: hon - or, glo - ry, and do -



have been, and that fu - ture years shall see,
deem - er, first re - vealed his sa - cred face,
pect - ed; let cre - a - tion praise its Lord
si - lent, ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring
min - ion, and e - ter - nal vic - to - ry



ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ev - er - more and ev - er - more!
A - men.

Text: Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348-413; tr. composite
Music: DIVINUM MYSTERIUM, plainsong mode V, 13th cent.

A reading from John, chapter 1.

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is truly God and is closest to the Father, has shown us what God is like.

The religious authorities in Jerusalem sent priests and temple helpers to ask John who he was. He told them plainly, "I am not the Messiah."²¹ Then when they asked him if he were Elijah, he said, "No, I am not!" And when they asked if he were the Prophet,^[a] he also said "No!"

²² Finally, they said, "Who are you then? We have to give an answer to the ones who sent us. Tell us who you are!"

²³ John answered in the words of the prophet Isaiah, "I am only someone shouting in the desert, 'Get the road ready for the Lord!' "

²⁴ Some Pharisees had also been sent to John. ²⁵ They asked him, "Why are you baptizing people, if you are not the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet?"

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Away in a Manger

ELW # 277



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord
 2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -



Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked
 Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus; look
 ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in



down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
 down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is night.
 your ten - der care and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

Music: AWAY IN A MANGER, James R. Murray, 1841–1905

A reading from Matthew, chapter 2.

When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem ² and said, “Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

³ When King Herod heard about this, he was worried, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. ⁴ Herod brought together the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses and asked them, “Where will the Messiah be born?”

⁵ They told him, “He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote,

⁶ ‘Bethlehem in the land of Judea,
you are very important among the towns of Judea.
From your town will come a leader,
who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel.’ ”

⁷ Herod secretly called in the wise men and asked them when they had first seen the star. ⁸ He told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I also want to go and worship him.”

⁹ The wise men listened to what the king said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ They were thrilled and excited to see the star.

¹¹ When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him. ¹² Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

We Three Kings of Orient Are

WOV # 646



1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are; bear - ing
 2 Born a king on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I
 3 Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I; in - cense
 4 Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a
 5 Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise, King and



gifts we tra - verse a - far, field and foun - tain,
 bring to crown him a - gain; king for - ev - er,
 owns a de - i - ty nigh; prayer and prais - ing,
 life of gath - er - ing gloom; sor - rowing, sigh - ing,
 God and Sac - ri - fice; heav'n sings al - le -



moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.
 ceas - ing nev - er, o - ver us all to reign.
 glad - ly rais - ing, wor - ship - ing God Most High.
 bleed - ing, dy - ing, sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
 lu - ia: al - le - lu - ia the earth re - plies.

Refrain



Oh, star of won - der, star of night, star with roy - al beau - ty bright;



west - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light!

Text: John Henry Hopkins Jr., 1820–1891, alt.

Music: THREE KINGS OF ORIENT, John Henry Hopkins Jr., 1820–1891

A reading from Matthew, chapter 2.

¹³ After the wise men had gone, an angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Hurry and take the child and his mother to Egypt! Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is looking for the child and wants to kill him."

¹⁴ That night, Joseph got up and took his wife and the child to Egypt, ¹⁵ where they stayed until Herod died. So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, "I called my son out of Egypt."

¹⁶ When Herod found out that the wise men from the east had tricked him, he was very angry. He gave orders for his men to kill all the boys who lived in or near Bethlehem and were two years old and younger. This was based on what he had learned from the wise men.

¹⁷ So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet Jeremiah had said,

¹⁸ "In Ramah a voice was heard crying and weeping loudly. Rachel was mourning for her children, and she refused to be comforted, because they were dead."

¹⁹ After King Herod died, an angel from the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph while he was still in Egypt. ²⁰ The angel said, "Get up and take the child and his mother back to Israel. The people who wanted to kill him are now dead."

²¹ Joseph got up and left with them for Israel. ²² But when he heard that Herod's son Archelaus was now ruler of Judea, he was afraid to go there. Then in a dream he was told to go to Galilee, ²³ and they went to live there in the town of Nazareth. So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, "He will be called a Nazarene."

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Once in Royal David's City

ELW # 269



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

Fifth Reading

Matthew 3:13-17

A reading from Matthew, chapter 3.

¹³ Jesus left Galilee and went to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John kept objecting and said, "I ought to be baptized by you. Why have you come to me?"

¹⁵ Jesus answered, "For now this is how it should be, because we must do all God wants us to do." Then John agreed.

¹⁶ So Jesus was baptized. And as soon as he came out of the water, the sky opened, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down on him like a dove. ¹⁷ Then a voice from heaven said, "This is my own dear Son, and I am pleased with him."

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ELW # 279



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908

A reading from John, chapter 2.

Three days later Mary, the mother of Jesus, was at a wedding feast in the village of Cana in Galilee. ² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited and were there.

³ When the wine was all gone, Mary said to Jesus, "They don't have any more wine."

⁴ Jesus replied, "Mother, my time hasn't yet come!^[a] You must not tell me what to do."

⁵ Mary then said to the servants, "Do whatever Jesus tells you to do."

⁶ At the feast there were six stone water jars that were used by the people for washing themselves in the way that their religion said they must. Each jar held about 100 liters. ⁷ Jesus told the servants to fill them to the top with water. Then after the jars had been filled, ⁸ he said, "Now take some water and give it to the man in charge of the feast."

The servants did as Jesus told them, ⁹ and the man in charge drank some of the water that had now turned into wine. He did not know where the wine had come from, but the servants did. He called the bridegroom over ¹⁰ and said, "The best wine is always served first. Then after the guests have had plenty, the other wine is served. But you have kept the best until last!"

¹¹ This was Jesus' first miracle,^[b] and he did it in the village of Cana in Galilee. There Jesus showed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

ELW # 282



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 - emn 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 stand in body or spirit.

Apostles' Creed

Let us name and proclaim the God who saves us, using the words of the 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.**

Please kneel or sit as you are able for the prayers.

Prayers of Intercession

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place you people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand. We pray especially for Rachael, Pam, Roseann, Joanne, Ken, Marlene, Marge, Eleanor, John, Sam, Charles, Grace, Fred, Jay, Bob, Paul, the Engle family, the Rose family, the Nelson family and the Villeux family. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones. Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Passing of the Peace

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

*You are invited to share God's peace with those around you
and to greet those who are worshipping online.*

Please stand.

Offertory

Pastorale (Forest Green)

Richard Purvis

Offertory Hymn

What Child is This

Verse 3

ELW # 296



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.

Offering 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.

The Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

Blessing

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

Amen.

The Sending Song

Go Tell it on the Mountain

ELW # 290

Refrain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

Refrain



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.
Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

Dismissal

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.

The congregation is invited to sit and enjoy the postlude.

Postlude

O Come, All Ye Faithful

arr. Brent Adams

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Your Prayers Are Invited

We hope you will add the following people to your personal prayers. Those who are listed longer than 6 weeks can be found on the long term prayer list through the link in the weekly e-news or the monthly Link newsletters. To add a name to the prayer list or provide an update, please contact the office.

Bob

John A. (friend of Mike Messer)

Paul Engstrom

Marlene Foody

Grace Griffin (daughter-in-law of Glenn & Robin Griffin)

Jay Griffin (Glenn Griffin's brother)

Ken Hartman (friend of Wes Craig)

Marge Holmes

Fred Orrik (Becca Shelor's grandfather)

Charles Piantieri (husband of Diane Piantieri)

Rachael Rinders (friend of the Kaegler Family)

Eleanor Rothenheber

Pam Schilling (friend of the Kelly Family)

Sam Weiss (friend of Ross & Sue Frantz)

Joanne Wendte (sister-in-law of Lynnmarie Harkins)

**The flowers on the altar today are dedicated
to the Glory of God by Sally Werntz!**

Serving This Morning

Assisting Minister

Supply Organist

Guest Musician

Soundboard

Livestream

Counter(s)

Closer

Assisting Minister next week

Paul Zieger

Patricia L. Hallman

Dan Melnick

Diane Polis

Rick Daniels, Don Hallman, John Melnick, Paul Zieger

Lori Stevens

TBD

TBD

This Week at CLC!

Sunday	10:30 am	Worship at CLC and online
Monday	9:30 am	Monday Morning Men
Tuesday	7:00 pm	Pub Theology (Tannery Run)
Thursday	NEW YEAR'S DAY	CHURCH OFFICES CLOSED
Friday	8:00 pm	AA (PH)