

A Mission Congregation of the ELCA  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358

The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus  
December 24, 2021  
4:00 and 10:00 PM Services



Scan with your Smartphone and link to our web page, our Facebook page, and our YouTube Channel.



- **PRELUDE** **Roxanne Groff**
- **SPECIAL MUSIC** **Lexie Angles (4 pm & 10 pm Services)**
- **WELCOME**

**\* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism...*

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

*Pause for silence and reflection.*

L: Forgiving God,

**C: These past two years have been extremely challenging. We have not always risen to the occasion as we might. Sometimes we hid when we should have reached out. Sometimes we lashed out when we should have calmed down. Forgive us for all that we have done and failed to do, and restore us by your grace, for the sake of Jesus Christ, the baby king.**

L: God does not remember our sin. God forgives us and makes us new daily. Receive God's merciful forgiveness, and celebrate all that God has given to us: restoration, redemption, and new life. In Jesus' name we pray.

**C: Amen.**

**\* GATHERING SONG "O, Come All Ye Faithful"**

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:**

**Refrain: O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

- 2 **The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,  
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;  
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!**

**Refrain: O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

- 3 **Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God in the highest:**

**Refrain: O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

**\* APOSTOLIC GREETING**

**P:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C:** And also with you.

**\* PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P:** Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C:** Amen.

**• WORD OF GOD**

**P:** The Gospel according to Saint Luke the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter...

**C:** "Glory to You, O Lord" (*Spoken*)

**• READING OF THE GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]**

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>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.

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>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: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

[<sup>15</sup>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." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were

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amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

- P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C: “Praise to You, O Christ” (*Spoken*)
- **MESSAGE**

**Pr Mel**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the newborn King,  
Our Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

What’s your favorite Christmas carol? If you took a poll o on Christmas Eve, you’d probably get a variety of answers. “Silent Night, Holy Night,” “Joy to the World,” “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” “The First Noel” and “Once in Royal David’s City” are certainly in this conversation. There’s a good chance that one of the top five will be the song my granddaughter, Lexie played for us on her violin. That was Charles Wesley’s, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.” In fact, it’s number five with a bullet on Classic FM’s list of top Christmas songs. It also happened to be my favorite Christmas Carol. I admit I do change the words slightly. I sing “Hark, Harold the Angel Sings” because my dad, rest his soul is with the angels and his name was Harold... But I recently found out I’m not the first one to change the wording of this famous hymn.

In 1739, Westley published *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, which contained this famous hymn we know as “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.” This wasn’t the original title. In Charles Wesley’s original, the hymn begins with, “Hark ! How all

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the welkin rings.” Huh? What’s a “welkin”? It’s an old English word that refers to the sky, the firmament or the “vault of heaven” that contains the stars and all the heavens. In an ancient cosmology, the welkin was like a set of crystal spheres that would ring (as in “the music of the spheres,” which we also sing about in another hymn, “This is My Father’s World”). The first line of this carol went like this: “Hark! How all the welkin rings, glory to the King of Kings.”

The message is that the whole cosmos was ringing with the news of the birth of the world’s true and long-awaited king. That’s quite different than the version we sing now, which is actually the result of an unauthorized edit to Charles Wesley’s original work by his friend George Whitefield. Whitefield changed the line to read: “Hark! The herald angels sing, glory to the newborn king.” The change made Charles Wesley furious, not only because it was done without permission, but because it made the hymn a little less biblically powerful. Wesley noted that the angels in verse 13 don’t “sing,” they “say.” And the glory given by the angels is to “God in the highest heaven” (v. 14). Yes, the “newborn king” is God in the flesh and worthy of praise, but Wesley wanted to express the message of the angels as a sign that the whole cosmos, both heaven and earth, gave glory to God at Jesus’ birth, which is really the thrust of the biblical narrative.

The birth of Jesus is a sign of heaven and earth coming together, which brings peace and reconciliation between God and humanity. It’s an announcement

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that the story of God’s rescue plan for the world — a story that began in Genesis when God revealed a plan to bless the broken world to another shepherd named Abraham — was becoming a reality. Abraham would shepherd a family that became a nation, whose mission had been to be a light to the other nations, bringing them back to God.

When we look at the whole story of Scripture, we see that Israel, delivered by God from slavery and settled in a promised land, struggled with that mission. In fact, the Hebrew word “Israel” means “striving or wrestling with God”. Israel sinned by following after other gods and a series of corrupt kings, which led to their exile away from the land God had promised them. Some of the exiles returned from Babylon, but for the next 500 years, many of the people still believed that Israel was in exile, still under foreign domination. At the time of Jesus’ birth the latest ruling Empire was Rome.

Luke explains that when Jesus was born, Rome was in control and Caesar Augustus was the emperor. Augustus considered himself a “son of god” (in his case that “god” was his murdered great uncle and adoptive father, Julius Caesar) and a “prince of peace.” He had coins minted that proclaimed those titles to the world. His divinity, however, was self-proclaimed, and his idea of peace involved eliminating all of Rome’s enemies. In fact, this was the way of every emperor.

When a new emperor came to the throne, it was heralded by messengers around the

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Roman world as “good news,” but it was good news only for those in power, whose peace was maintained at the point of the sword.

For Israel, the real good news would only come when God’s true king, the Messiah, would come on the scene and pave the way for God to save them from these tyrants. And then, an angel came and announced to another group of shepherds that this ancient plan had been fulfilled. “I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people,” proclaimed the angel (v. 10). God’s promised return was happening, but in a way that no one expected. God was not returning as a conquering hero, a glorious cloud-surfing warrior coming back to destroy Israel’s enemies. No, the “sign” given to these shepherds was a leaky, burpy, dirt poor little baby, born in a barn in a nowhere town called Bethlehem. And yet, this is why the whole welkin was ringing — a glimpse of heaven and earth coming together, as God had intended from the beginning. God was coming to dwell with his people to redeem and save them. The long-awaited Messiah, the true king, was the Lord himself, wrapped in the swaddling clothes of a tiny baby, fully human and fully divine.

And so, as Charles Wesley put it, “all the welkin rings” with this news. “Peace on earth and mercy mild,” he writes, echoing the message of the angel host. This is a very different kind of peace than that of the likes of Augustus, or any other earthly power then or now. This is a peace that isn’t just offered to some, but

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to “all whom God favors,” to all of humanity created in his image (v. 14). God’s grace, offered to Israel, is now offered to everyone who chooses to follow this unlikely leader, perfect in his humanity and perfect in the image of God. Broken humanity can be restored because God has come among his people to save them from their sins, to renew creation and restore the peace of God’s good world.

God’s rescue mission was becoming a reality in a manger in Bethlehem. The carol puts it nicely: “God and sinners reconciled.” These lyrics echo the words of the apostle Paul, who saw the arrival of Jesus, his birth, death and resurrection as the means by which God was “reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them” (2 Corinthians 5:19). For Paul, the birth of Jesus heralded the promise of peace promised to the shepherd Abraham long ago and to shepherds in a field outside Bethlehem. Because of Jesus, heaven and earth are at peace with one another. That’s good news enough to make all the welkin ring!

Paul says, it’s such good news that it needs to be shared often. The “ministry of reconciliation” is the Christian mission, proclaiming God’s peace, God’s grace and God’s new creation made possible in Christ to the whole world. “For our sake he made him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21).



That'll preach but, even better, it will sing! "Joyful, *all ye nations* rise. Join the triumph of the skies. With angelic hosts proclaim, 'Christ is born in Bethlehem!'" Here in this beautiful carol, based on the message of the angels, is the essence of the gospel: "Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" In fact, this is the best message we can preach or sing on Christmas Eve: "Be reconciled to God!"

How does that happen? It happens through faith, trusting that, through Jesus, God's rescue plan for the world includes sinners like us. Whatever old life we've struggled with, whatever sin hounds us, wherever peace of heart, mind, body and soul eludes us, the good news is that the peace of Christ can overcome all of them. Here's the takeaway: God has stepped toward us in Jesus. God has made the first move toward reconciliation. You have been saved by the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the man-God Jesus Christ. Now what are you going to do? Will you step toward God? Will you be reconciled to God?

The whole welkin is ringing with praise to God for what God has done by coming in person in Christ. Let's join the song! May God's message of peace and reconciliation be with you all, merry Christmas! Amen!

*Silence for reflection may follow*

• **SPECIAL MUSIC**

**Larry Harter (4 PM Service)**

**\* NICENE CREED**

*The Nicene Creed is said on all festivals and on Sundays in the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. The Apostles' Creed is said at other times. The Creed is omitted here if the service of Holy Baptism or another rite with a creed is used.*

**C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

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❖ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

**\* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

**L:** We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

*A brief silence.*

**L:** On this holy night, we behold your glory made flesh in a tiny baby. Show us the ways in which you favor and lift up the meek and lowly to your mighty purposes, and use us also, despite our outward appearance or weaknesses.  
Precious Lord,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

**L:** On this holy night, all creation awaits the fulfillment of your peace on earth—a true and lasting peace which binds up all who have had their hearts broken by war, suffering, and injustice. Break into our world with your uncommon grace.  
Precious Lord,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

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L: On this holy night, angels hushed the stunned herdsmen with words of assurance, telling them not to be afraid. So, let us lay aside our fear and disbelief at what you are asking us to do, and trust that your promises are coming to fruition through us. Precious Lord,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: On this holy night, a mother comforted her newborn child. Comfort us as a parent would, when we cry out in pain, want, or grief. Heal your servants and hold them close, especially... Precious Lord,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: On this holy night, faithful caretakers brought your son into the world. Add us also to the long line of saints who heard your word and followed, risking the loss of safety, comfort, and reputation. Precious Lord,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

*Here other petitions may be offered.*

L: On this holy night, we let go of our hearts' concerns and place them all into your loving and capable hands. Bless us, Lord, and keep us in your grace.

**C: Amen.**

#### **\* SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

#### **\* OFFERING PRAYER**

*While the congregation is still standing say:*

P: Instead of passing the offering plate, we ask you to please place your offering in the Offering Plates conveniently located on your way out of worship. For those worshipping with us from their vehicles, there is a ceramic flowerpot located near the back door of the church, and for all of you worshipping with us on FaceBook or other Social Media you can make your offering directly on our Website at [www.pitsburgtlc.org](http://www.pitsburgtlc.org).

P: So, let us pray for the offerings we receive this day... Mother God, you have given Jesus as a gift for the world. We return to you some of what you have given, so that the whole world may know God's grace, mercy, and love. Receive these gifts and use them to your glory. In Jesus' name we pray.

**C: Amen.**

#### **• ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

### \* DIALOGUE

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

### \* THE PREFACE

P: It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory; that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

### \* THE SANCTUS

**C: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might: Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

### \* EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world. In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

**C: Amen**

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**\* THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: We are united together by this heavenly food, which is the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. So, let us pray as Jesus taught...

**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.**

**\* INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: God's love fills us every time we gather to share in the meal of grace. God's light shines through us when we participate in this celebration of God's love. Come to the table that has been prepared for you.

**• COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION**

*During the distribution the minister says these words to each communicant:*

P: At this time you may open the communion bread and partake of the body of Christ, given for you.

Now please open the wine and you may now partake of the Blood of Christ, shed for you.

*The communicant may say: Amen.*

**\* POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

P: May this Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, strengthen, keep, and unite us.

**C: Amen.**

**\* POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

P: Let us pray... Emmanuel, God with us, you grace us with life and breath and give us bread for the journey. Send us out in service to this world that you love, telling the amazing news of your coming to be Savior and Lord of all.

**C: Amen**

**\* LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES**

*The Acolyte will distribute the flame from the Christ Candle down the center aisle and the congregation will pass the flame from the center aisle outward. Unlit candles lean to lighted candles so as not to drip hot wax. The overhead lights are dimmed as the candles are lighted. When all candles are lit and the only light in the sanctuary, the congregation will sing Silent Night.*

### *Lighted Candles Hymn*

### **“Silent Night”**

- 1 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.
- 2 Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;  
glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!
- 3 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.

*The candles are extinguished and the lights are restored in the sanctuary.*

#### **\* BLESSING**

P: Grace from God's own heart, peace from the ✠ Child in the manger, and  
strength from the Spirit of life be blessings for you today and forever.

**C: Amen**

#### **\* SENDING SONG**

#### **“Go Tell It On the Mountain”**

##### **Refrain:**

Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and everywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!

1. While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.

##### **Refrain:**

Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and everywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!

2. The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.

##### **Refrain:**

Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and everywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!

3. Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;  
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

##### **Refrain:**

Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and everywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!

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\* = Please stand if able  
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**\* DISMISSAL**

**P:** Until the next time we gather together as God's people to offer our worship and praise, depart in Christ's Love.

**C:** **Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!**

**\* Postlude**

**Roxanne Groff**

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**Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff**

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Lector – 4 pm	Larry Harter
Lector – 10 pm	Jennifer Arling
Musician	Roxanne Groff
Acolyte – 4pm	
Acolyte – 10 pm	Claire Hein
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodians	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser

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**THIS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26<sup>th</sup>** – We will have an “Open Mic” morning! Any individual or group wishing to share vocal or instrumental Christmas songs will be welcome to the mic! Please tell Pastor Mel if you would like to provide something that morning. We will also sing some of your favorite Christmas hymns.

**AND on December 26<sup>th</sup>**, you are invited to wear your “**Ugly Christmas Sweater**”.



### Trinity Contact Info

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