

**NATIVITY OF OUR LORD  
CHRISTMAS EVE  
December 24, 2022  
8:00 p.m.**

**IN THE NAME OF JESUS, WELCOME TO ST. PAUL'S!**

<i>Out of the Wintry Gloom</i>	Jubilation Choir	R. Shephard
<i>Noël IX sur les flûtes</i>	Organ	L.C. Daquin
<i>The Holly and the Ivy</i>	Jubilation Choir	arr. R. Shephard
<i>Three French Carols</i>	Trumpet / Organ	arr. L. Smith
<i>O Magnum Mysterium</i>	Jubilation Choir	T. L. de Victoria
<i>Sussex Carol</i>	Violin / Organ	arr. D. Burton

Violin: Shaw-Hwa Yang

Trumpet: Amelia Jansen

Choirmaster and Organist: Kantor Aaron Jansen



- 1 Creator of the stars of night,  
Thy people's everlasting Light:  
O Christ, Redeemer, save us all  
And hear Thy servants when they call.
- 2 **Thou, grieving that the ancient curse  
Should doom to death a universe,  
Hast found the healing, full of grace,  
To cure and save our ruined race.**
- 3 Thou cam'st the Bridegroom of the bride,  
As drew the world to eventide,  
The spotless Victim all divine  
Proceeding from a virgin shrine.
- 4 **At whose dread name, majestic now,  
All knees must bend, all hearts must bow;  
All things celestial Thee shall own,  
And things terrestrial, Lord alone. Amen.**

*INVOCATION*

In the name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

*INTROIT*

from Psalm 97

The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice;

**let the many coastlands be glad!**

His lightnings light up the world;

**the earth sees and trembles.**

For you, O LORD, are most high over all the earth;

**you are exalted far above all gods.**

Light is sown for the righteous,

**and joy for the upright in heart.**

Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous,

**and give thanks to his holy name!**

PRAYER

Let us pray. O God, because you once caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light,

**Grant that we who have known the mystery of that Light here on earth may come to the full measure of its joys in heaven; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

PROCESSIONAL HYMN #379

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

*(As the cross is brought forward, the Congregation turns to face the front)*

**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***

**2 Highest, most holy,  
Light of Light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;  
Son of the Father  
Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain***

***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***

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Dearly beloved of God, we come together on this night to hear of the great miracle whereby God became flesh and dwelt among us. Because He did this in order to free us from our sin, let us first consider our transgressions and confess these before God and one another.

*(Silent reflection and confession)*

God of our Salvation:

**we have sinned in our relationships with you and with one another. We have hurt others through our words and actions and have failed to respond to your life-giving Spirit. Have mercy on us for the sake of Jesus. Forgive us by grace, renew us in love and lead us with joy, that we may bear your peace to all the world. Amen.**

To all who receive Him, who believe in His name, He gives the right to become children of God. Upon this, your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a minister of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

*HYMN OF PRAISE #377 (Stand)*

*On Christmas Night All Christians Sing*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>1 On Christmas night all Christians sing<br/>To hear the news the angels bring,<br/>On Christmas night all Christians sing<br/>To hear the news the angels bring,<br/>    News of great joy, news of great<br/>mirth,<br/>    News of our merciful King's birth.</b></p> <p><b>2 Then why should men on earth be so sad,<br/>Since our Redeemer made us glad,<br/>Then why should men on earth be so sad,<br/>Since our Redeemer made us glad,<br/>    When from our sin He set us free,<br/>    All for to gain our liberty?</b></p> | <p><b>3 When sin departs before His grace,<br/>Then life and health come in its place,<br/>When sin departs before His grace,<br/>Then life and health come in its place;<br/>    Angels and men with joy may sing,<br/>    All for to see the newborn King.</b></p> <p><b>4 All out of darkness we have light,<br/>Which made the angels sing this night,<br/>All out of darkness we have light,<br/>Which made the angels sing this night:<br/>    "Glory to God and peace to men<br/>    Now and forevermore. Amen."</b></p> |
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*OLD TESTAMENT READING (Be seated)*

*Isaiah 9:2-7*

The people who walked in darkness  
    have seen a great light;  
    those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
    on them has light shined.  
You have multiplied the nation;  
    you have increased its joy;  
    they rejoice before you  
    as with joy at the harvest,  
    as they are glad when they divide the spoil.  
For the yoke of his burden,  
    and the staff for his shoulder,  
    the rod of his oppressor,

you have broken as on the day of Midian.  
For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be burned as fuel for the fire.  
For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*ANTHEM      JUBILATION CHOIR*

*Before the Marvel of This Night*  
Text: J.J. Vajda Tune/Setting: C. Schalk

Before the marvel of this night, adoring, fold your wings and bow,  
Then tear the sky apart with light,  
and with your news the world endow.  
Proclaim the birth of Christ and peace,  
that fear and death and sorrow cease:  
Sing peace, sing peace,  
sing gift of peace, sing peace, sing gift of peace!

Awake the sleeping world with song, this is the day the Lord has made.  
Assemble here, celestial throng, in royal splendor come arrayed.  
Give earth a glimpse of heav'nly bliss,  
a teasing taste of what they miss:  
Sing bliss, sing bliss,  
sing endless bliss, sing bliss, sing endless bliss!

The love that we have always known,  
our constant joy and endless light,  
Now to the loveless world be shown, now break upon its deathly night.  
Into one song compress the love that rules our universe above:  
Sing love, sing love, sing God is love, sing love, sing God is love!

*NEW TESTAMENT READING*

1 Corinthians 4:1-6

Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

This is the Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*GOSPEL HYMN #366 (Stand)*

*It came Upon the Midnight Clear*

**1 It came upon the midnight clear,  
That glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth  
To touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, goodwill to all,  
From heav'n's all-gracious king."  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
To hear the angels sing.**

**2 Still through the cloven skies they come  
With peaceful wings unfurled,  
And still their heav'nly music floats  
O'er all the weary world.  
Above its sad and lowly plains  
They bend on hov'ring wing,  
And ever o'er its babel sounds  
The blessed angels sing.**

**3 All you, beneath your heavy load,  
By care and guilt bent low,  
Who toil along a dreary way  
With painful steps and slow:  
Look up, for golden is the hour,  
Come swiftly on the wing,  
The Prince was born to bring you peace;  
Of Him the angels sing.**

**4 For lo, the days have come to pass  
By prophets seen of old,  
When down into the circling years  
Came Christ as was foretold.  
His word of peace shall to the earth  
God's ancient promise bring,  
And all who take this gift will hear  
The song the angels sing.**

*CHRISTMAS GOSPEL*

Luke 2:1-20

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and lineage of David; to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they had heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in

her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. (KJV)

This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to You, O Christ.**

*SERMON (Be seated)*

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

“The glory of the Lord shone round about them.” That’s what the shepherds experienced.

We don’t know exactly how that glory was perceived. There was the angel, of course. But it sounds like there was definitely also light. The glory “shone” around them. “Shone” is a light word.

On Christmas Eve this year I’d like us to think about how Christ brings light. Our Advent theme focused on a number of great gifts Christ brings – including blessing, renewal, guidance and power. Tonight we think about him bringing light.

One of the great light painters of all time was an artist named Michelangelo da Merisi, whom we know as Caravaggio – the name of his hometown in Italy. Toward the end of his life, Caravaggio painted a work titled Nativity with St. Francis and St. Lawrence. Francis and Lawrence are anachronistic figures in the painting since they were clearly not alive at the time of Christ’s birth. They are included because the piece was painted as an altarpiece for the Prayer Chapel of St. Lawrence, which was near the Basilica of St. Francis in Palermo, Italy.

Caravaggio costumed the Nativity figures in the period dress of the 1600s. Were that done to-day they might be dressed in jeans and T-shirts. The realism of the painting is stark. He depicts Mary as a weary young woman, slouching, disheveled and exhausted from travel and giving birth. The Christ Child rests on a pile of hay at her feet. It’s not your typical nativity painting.

What really haunts us, though, is the darkness that permeates the scene. It’s heavy, dramatic and a little foreboding. Again, not very typical.



And yet, is this depiction really so strange? We sometimes forget that the announcement of Jesus' birth first came to shepherds who were "keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8).

The night may have been dark, but God pierced that darkness with incredible light. As we noted, contrasting the night sky over those Judean hills was not only an "angel of the Lord" but also the bright "glory of the Lord" shining round about them (Luke 2:9).

And even more, against that dark night sky came a wondrous message: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

Night and day, darkness and light! That's what's going on in the Nativity.

In Caravaggio's painting, the darkness of night can't be missed. It's strong and pervading.

And yet, out of the darkness, a clear and almost unnatural light falls on its figures. Caravaggio would become known for this technique where light is imported on the figures he wants us to see. To the extreme, this often-copied style was called Tenebrism, from the Latin *Tenebrae* – a word meaning darkness. We're familiar with that word because of its use on Good Friday.

The use of darkness and light makes this painting extremely poignant at Christmas. Its style reflects important readings of both prophecy and explanation that are connected to the Christmas story. For example, in our Old Testament reading we heard Isaiah say: "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isaiah 9:2). And tomorrow, at our Christmas Day service, we will hear St. John explain that "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

There is more, however. This painting itself was born in darkness. Caravaggio, by all accounts, was a scoundrel and a criminal. He drank hard and lived hard. He was often angry and explosive. During a fight he killed a man and was on the run for much of his adult life. He died at age 37. It's a troubled young man who painted the shadows and darkness.

But remember, he did this so that one could better see the light.

And there's one more element of darkness in the painting's story too. Today, the painting is gone. It was stolen, in 1969, cut from its frame and never recovered. Rumor says that it has been destroyed and lost forever. A replica was eventually placed in the chapel at Palermo, back in 2015.

So in several ways Caravaggio's Nativity is the story of light penetrating the darkness. And this is certainly fitting – for that was indeed the story of the first Christmas night.

Lest we forget, this is our story as well. Tonight we should hear Jesus say – as he did during the days of his ministry and recorded by St. John – “I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness” (John 12:46).

Remaining in darkness leads to sadness and loneliness. Ultimately it leads to death. The pleasures of the darkness are fleeting. Its cover is an illusion, and its promises are empty.

Knowing this, if there is someone here tonight whose darkness has overcome them – someone who lurks about in hiding like a Caravaggio, haunted and pursued by guilt... for you this night there is light – the light of forgiveness, given by the one who was born to take your sin's punishment in your place. For you the light of Christ has come.

And if there is someone here tonight whose darkness is loneliness and isolation, someone for whom their friendships are not enough, someone who can be in a room of people and still feel utterly alone... then for you this night there is the living presence of one who knew forsaken-ness in the darkness of the cross. For you the light of Christ has come.

If there is someone here tonight whose darkness is conflict, someone who has been at odds with others, or one particular other, for far too long and is tired of the battle... then for you tonight there can be peace and reconciliation. For you the light of Christ has come.

If there is someone here whose darkness is confusion, someone who cannot find their way in the dark, someone who is like a sheep without a shepherd, lost in the night... then for you this night there is a light to guide you if you will trust it. For you the light of Christ has come.

And if there is someone here tonight whose darkness is despair, someone for whom the dark-ness is seemingly everywhere... then for you this night there is hope in the One who said, “In the world you will have tribulation; but take heart, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

That darkness of despair can be very, very troubling... so much so that death may even seem like a welcome friend. Poet Dylan Thomas counseled those with such thoughts, saying: “Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

In other words, there still is light to live by and purpose for our days. Don't let those despairing thoughts overcome you. Keep the light of faith alive.

For any who have those deep dark thoughts of despair, for you, especially, the light of Christ has come.

This night, above all other nights, is a night to curse the darkness. And this is especially true if we have been living in the dark too long. We can get used to the darkness, even to the point of accepting it and embracing it. The poet Emily Dickinson said it this way:

“We grow accustomed to the Dark— When Light is put away— As when the Neighbor holds the Lamp To witness her Goodbye.

A Moment—We uncertain step For newness of the night— Then—fit our Vision to the Dark— And meet the Road—erect ...”

This poem reminds us that though we're all threatened by the dark at first our eyes can adjust to it, and we can “fit our Vision to the Dark” – becoming at home there. In that darkness we can live for a time, standing tall even, and seeing enough to get by.

But we're also missing things. We're missing people, missing truth, missing goodness and beauty and life.

The birth of Jesus Christ, that great invasion of light, does not creep up on us like a gradual sunrise with gentle hints along the way. Rather, it explodes in the night sky of the first Christmas with the glory of God. And this explosion calls us to respond.

If you're paying attention at all, you know that this is a night to hear the good news: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

It will not do to say that you've heard the story before. Receive it as news – news that changed history; news that changes your history. This is a night for a chorus of hoorays and hallelujahs; love, laughter and prayer. This is a night for the children of light to walk as children of light.

To conclude, let's take one last look at Caravaggio's Nativity. This time we'll note its perspective. From what point of view are we looking at the scene? Why, we're right there in the foreground, lowly on our knees, next to the shepherd, worshiping the Christ Child – the Light of the world.

There is room for you there in that scene. And in that scene, there is light! Brilliant light.

May God's light shine upon you always. And may you always have the faith to embrace it. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

*HYMN OF THE DAY #378 (Stand)*

*Break Forth, O Beauteous Heav'nly Light*

- 1 Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly light,  
And usher in the morning.  
Ye shepherds, shrink not with affright,  
The day of grace is dawning.  
This Child, though weak in infancy,  
Our confidence and joy shall be,  
The pow'r of Satan breaking,  
Our peace with God now making.**
- 2 O dearest Child, whom I adore,  
Whose grace surpasses measure,  
My Brother, whom I cherish more  
Than earth with all its treasure:  
Haste from Thy manger to depart,  
O come and dwell within my heart;  
With joy will I receive Thee,  
A cradle there will give Thee.**
- 3 All blessing, thanks, and praise to Thee,  
Lord Jesus Christ, be given:  
Thou hast my Brother deigned to be,  
Thou Lord of earth and heaven.  
Help me throughout this day of grace  
To praise Thy love and seek Thy face;  
And when I stand before Thee  
Forever to adore Thee.**

## NICENE CREED

**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.**

## OFFERING

*Offerings support the church's mission work – both here and through our many partners. Offerings may be placed in the box at the sanctuary entrance or sent to the church through our website or the mail. Fellowship Cards help us welcome new people and track participation. Please fill one out and place it in the offering box following the service.*

## PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Almighty God, by the incarnation of Your eternal Son You revealed that You are love. Give us true faith in Christ and His promises, that we would live in the light of your love, be confident of your forgiveness, and filled with joy that overflows in thanksgiving. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, in love you sent Your Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Strengthen us to love and forgive one another. And as You have mercy upon all who are poor and troubled, so perfect Your love in us that we would gladly be Your instruments of help in time of need. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, by His birth in human flesh Your Son took His place in the family of Mary and Joseph. Bless the families of our church, and families everywhere, that husbands and

wives would live faithfully, children would be nurtured in the grace of Baptism, and all would live peacefully in the truth of Your Word. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, Your Son born in Bethlehem is Son of David and Lord of David to whom every knee shall bow. Look upon those You have placed in temporal or spiritual authority, and grant that they would serve and govern in wisdom and justice. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy Lord, in the birth of Your Son You have visited and redeemed Your people. Continue to visit those who are lonely, sick, recovering or near death. We pray especially for those on our prayer list, and for those we name in our hearts at this time... Let Your presence be a comfort to them and aide them in perseverance until the time You grant your healing and relief, deliverance and peace. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who feeds us in both body and soul, give true faith in Your promises to all who will receive Your Son's body and blood this night. Sustain Your people in humble repentance and move them to godly living. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We thank You, dear Lord, for the saints who received Your blessing of righteousness in Christ and now stand in the most holy place before Your throne. Preserve us by Your grace in the holiness of Christ, that we, too, may dwell in Your light and life for eternity; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**



### COMMUNION LITURGY

*PREFACE (Stand)*

p. 177

The Lord be with you.

**And also 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 him thanks and praise.**

*PROPER PREFACE*

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

*SANCTUS*

p. 177

**Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r 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.**

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING*

*THE WORDS OF OUR LORD*

*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.**

*AGNUS DEI*

p. 180

**Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.**

*DISTRIBUTION (Be seated)*

*The Communion Assistant will come forward to receive first, then those from the pulpit side – by order of pew, front to back. Communicants will come up the center aisle and return via the side aisle. When all from the pulpit side have communed, the baptismal font side will commune in the same manner. Distancing must be maintained between all communicants. We ask that the wine be consumed away from the tray table. Empty cups should be dropped into the baskets.*

*COMMUNION HYMN #370*

*What Child is This*

**1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,  
On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
While shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,  
The babe, the son of Mary!**

**2 Why lies He in such mean estate  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,  
The cross be borne for me, for you;  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
The babe, the son of Mary!**

**3 So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
Come, peasant, king, to own Him.  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.  
Raise, raise the song on high,  
The virgin sings her lullaby;  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,  
The babe, the son of Mary!**



1 Infant holy,  
Infant lowly,  
For His bed a cattle stall;  
Oxen lowing,  
Little knowing  
Christ the child is Lord of all.  
Swiftly winging,  
Angels singing,  
Bells are ringing,  
Tidings bringing:  
Christ the child is Lord of all!  
Christ the child is Lord of all!

2 Flocks were sleeping,  
Shepherds keeping  
Vigil till the morning new  
Saw the glory,  
Heard the story,  
Tidings of a Gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing,  
Free from sorrow,  
Praises voicing,  
Greet the morrow:  
Christ the child was born for you!  
Christ the child was born for you!

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With the\_angelic host proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!" *Refrain*

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold Him come,  
Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,  
Hail the\_incarate Deity!  
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Immanuel! *Refrain*

*Refrain*

Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!"

3 Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings,  
Ris'n with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by,  
Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth.  
*Refrain*

*BLESSING*

*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER (Stand)*

O God, as you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*SHARING THE CANDLELIGHT*

*(The congregation's candles are lighted from the Christ Candle. In passing the flame, **DO NOT TIP A LIGHTED CANDLE**. The candles remain burning until after the benediction.)*

*HYMN #363 (Sing in the language of your choice)*

*"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 Thy holy face**

**With the dawn of redeeming grace,**

**Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,**

**Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.**

*BLESSING (Extinguish candles following the Blessing)*

**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 men 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 sins and sorrows 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.

*DISMISSAL*

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*POSTLUDE with TRUMPET*

*God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*  
Setting: L. Smith

**THOSE SERVING IN OUR MIDST:**

Greeter: Lynn Jacquez

Reader: Lynn Jacquez

Communion Assistant: Jill Hecht

## Worship Notes

Thank you for worshiping with us at St. Paul's! In worship Christ is present among His gathered people and the Holy Spirit is poured out through Word and Sacrament.

If you have a need or concern that you would like us to lift up in prayer, you may fill out a yellow **Prayer Request Card** and give it to the greeter or pastor. **Restrooms** can be found both downstairs and near the parking lot entrance. Parents can take their children to the **Cry Room** as needed, but we love to have them with us in worship. Before you leave, we ask that you fill out a **Fellowship Card** and place it in the offering box at the sanctuary entrance.

In **the Lord's Supper**, Jesus gives us his true body and blood. This meal forgives our sins and strengthens our faith. The Supper is for baptized Christians who have been taught the faith, examined themselves and share with us in confession. If you are not communing, you may still come forward for a blessing (bow your head or cross your arms). If you're not sure whether you should commune, please speak first to one of our pastors.

We pray that God's love and care be evident to you in our gathering, and that He gladden your heart and give peace to you this day!

## Acknowledgements

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## ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

7426 IDYLWOOD ROAD, FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA 22043

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