



PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

4672 N Cedar Ave. Fresno, CA 93726

Rev. Michael N. Vernava

Rev. Khai N. Lee

The Nativity Of Our Lord: Christmas Eve

December 24, 2023

The Mission of Peace Lutheran Church is to honor our Lord Jesus Christ through worship and ministering to all God's people equipping them for service to God and to each other.

CREATIVE WORSHIP CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

PRELUDE

Organist

CALL TO WORSHIP

Peace Handbell Choir

"Christmas Exaltation" – Michael Akers

OPENING HYMN "O Come, All Ye Faithful" LSB 379

- 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*

Refrain

*O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!*

- 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*

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

4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

Text: tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–80, alt.; John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786 Text: Public domain

INVOCATION

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

C **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *John 1:14; Psalm 96:3; Psalm 98:1*

P And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

C **and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

P Declare His glory among the nations,

C **His marvelous works among all the peoples!**

P Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done marvelous things!

C **His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P Joined in worship on this sacred night, let us make confession to our heavenly Father, confident of His forgiveness for Jesus' sake.

P Almighty Father,

C **we confess that we are sinners by nature and by thought, word, and deed. We have not always given You the best of what we have and are, and have not fully made room for You in our lives. With repentant hearts, we turn to You for mercy, seeking Your grace. In Your loving kindness forgive, restore, and lead us so that we may be renewed and live to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

P With joy I announce God's Good News to You. Our gracious God in His mercy has given His Son to be born, to live, and then to die for you and to rise again in glory. For His sake God forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Be at peace and rejoice in the Lord.

C **Amen.**

PSALM

110:1-4

P The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."

C **The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!**

P Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.

C **The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."**

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

KYRIE

L In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

L For the peace from above and for our salvation.
Let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

L For the peace of the whole world, for the well being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

L For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

L Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C Amen.

COLLECT

P Let us pray.

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 7:10–14

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹“Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Hmong Ladies Choir

“Thov peb Tus Tswv Emanuees”

EPISTLE

1 John 4:7–16

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶So we have come to know

and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 1:18–25

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.

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

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

MESSAGE HYMN *“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”* LSB 380

- 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*

Refrain

*Hark! The herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”*

- 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_incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel! *Refrain*
- 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*

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–88, alt. Text: Public domain

MESSAGE

“How to Have Christmas All Year Long!”
St. Luke 2:1-20

APOSTLES' CREED

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and
the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life ✠ everlasting. Amen.

OFFERTORY *"What Child is This"* LSB 370

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!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-98 Text: Public domain

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Mary, Did You Know" – Gabe Agao, Tenor

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

*The lighting of the candles and dimming of the church
lights are at this time. Please keep the lit candle upright as
only the unlit candle should be tilted to be lit.*

HYMN "Silent Night" LSB 363

*The soloist will sing the German verse first; everyone is then
invited to also sing the first verse in German, with guitar
accompaniment (as it was originally played in 1818 in Austria).
Then we will sing all three English verses.*

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht,
Alles schläft; einsam wacht
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

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,
Heav'nly 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 Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

CLOSING PRAYER

P O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good
counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants,
that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts
may be set to obey Your commandments and also that
we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may
live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your
Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

BENEDICTION

P The LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make His
face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD
look upon you with favor and give you peace.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN "Joy to the World" LSB 387

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.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748 Text: Public domain

POSTLUDE

Organist

THOSE SERVING WITH MUSIC TONIGHT

Organist/Guitarist: David Slonski

Music Director: Jane Parsons

Trombone: Andrew Vernava

Trumpets: Stephen Vernava & Rob Means

Clarinet: Carol Means

Vocal Soloist: Gabe Agao

Handbell Choir: Kerry Williams, Kori Hanson,
Nancy Jane Mazi, Elaine Gerhardt, Jan Turpin,
Margaret Hight, Jane Parsons, Laura Shaghoian

Hmong Ladies Choir (Director: Kaying Lee)