



THE CHILD GREW AND
BECAME STRONG,
FILLED WITH
WISDOM;
AND THE FAVOR OF GOD
WAS UPON HIM.
Luke 2:40

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

4672 N Cedar Ave. Fresno, CA 93726

Rev. Michael N. Vernava

Rev. Khai N. Lee

First Sunday after Christmas

December 31, 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

As We Gather: Calling A Faithful Pastor

O Gracious Father, You led Your holy apostles to ordain ministers for the proclamation of Your Word and the Faithful administration of the Sacraments of Christ. Grant to this congregation the guidance of the Holy Spirit to choose a suitable pastor according to Your will for the blessing of Your Church in this place; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRELUDE

Organist

CALL TO WORSHIP

Peace Handbell Choir

"Joy to the World" – arr. by Martha Lynn Thompson

OPENING 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

INVOCATION

- P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES

Psalm 89:1, 52; 71:19, 23

- P I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever;
- C **with my mouth I will make known Your faithfulness to all generations.**
- P Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens.
- C **You who have done great things, O God, who is like You?**
- P My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to You;
- C **my soul also, which You have redeemed.**

- P Blessed be the LORD forever!
- C **Amen and Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- P People redeemed by the Lord, let us now make confession of our sins to God, our heavenly Father.
- C **Merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We repent of having sinned in thought, in word, and in deed. So often we have left undone those things which we ought to have done and have done those things which we ought not to have done. We sincerely repent of our sins and humbly ask for the grace and forgiveness that we know to be ours in Jesus, our Savior. By the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, lead us, heavenly Father, to change what is sinful in our lives so that each day we grow in righteousness and godly living to the glory of Your holy name.**
- P God has promised pardon, life, and salvation because of the atoning sacrifice of His beloved Son, who has replaced slavery to sin with a priceless inheritance of freedom and joy. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. As you believe, so may it be.
- C Amen.

PSALM

111

- P Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.
- C **Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.**

- P Full of splendor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures forever.
- C He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;
the LORD is gracious and merciful.**
- P He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.
- C He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the inheritance of the nations.**
- P The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy;
- C they are established forever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.**
- P He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded
his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name!
- C The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all those who practice it have a good understanding.
His praise endures forever!**

**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, our Maker and Redeemer, You wonderfully
created us and in the incarnation of Your Son yet more
wondrously restored our human nature. Grant that we
may ever be alive in Him who made Himself to be like
us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns
with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 61:10—62:3

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;

my soul shall exult in my God,

for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;

he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,

as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful
headdress,

and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,

and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout

up,

so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to sprout up before all the nations.

¹For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,

and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet,

until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,
and her salvation as a burning torch.

²The nations shall see your righteousness,
and all the kings your glory,
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE

Galatians 4:4–7

⁴When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 2:22–40

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

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

²²When the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, [Mary and Joseph] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) ²⁴and to offer a sacrifice

according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ²⁷And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, ²⁸he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

²⁹“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,

according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation

³¹that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed ³⁵(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

³⁶And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, ³⁷and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

MESSAGE HYMN

“Songs of Thankfulness and Praise” LSB 394

- 1 Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to Thee we raise,
Manifested by the star
To the sages from afar,
Branch of royal David’s stem
In Thy birth at Bethlehem:
Anthems be to Thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.
- 2 Manifest at Jordan’s stream,
Prophet, Priest, and King supreme;
And at Cana wedding guest
In Thy Godhead manifest;
Manifest in pow’r divine,
Changing water into wine;
Anthems be to Thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.
- 3 Manifest in making whole
Palsied limbs and fainting soul;
Manifest in valiant fight,
Quelling all the devil’s might;

Manifest in gracious will,
Ever bringing good from ill;
Anthems be to Thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

- 4 Sun and moon shall darkened be,
Stars shall fall, the heav’ns shall flee;
Christ will then like lightning shine,
All will see His glorious sign;
All will then the trumpet hear,
All will see the Judge appear;
Thou by all wilt be confessed,
God in man made manifest.
- 5 Grant us grace to see Thee, Lord,
Present in Thy holy Word—
Grace to imitate Thee now
And be pure, as pure art Thou;
That we might become like Thee
At Thy great epiphany
And may praise Thee, ever blest,
God in man made manifest.

Text: Christopher Wordsworth, 1807–85, alt. Text: Public domain

MESSAGE

Pastor Gregory Young

“Giving Thanks to God” Psalm 96

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 *"Create in Me"* LSB 956

- 1 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence;
and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;
and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.

Text: Psalm 51:10–12 Text: Public domain

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Following the prayers, the people may greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying, "Peace be with you," as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matt. 5:22–24; Eph. 4:1–3).

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.

HYMN

"From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" LSB 358 (v. 8-11, 15)

- 8 Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,
Through whom the sinful world is blest!
You came to share my misery
That You might share Your joy with me.
- 9 Ah, Lord, though You created all,
How weak You are, so poor and small,
That You should choose to lay Your head
Where lowly cattle lately fed!
- 10 Were earth a thousand times as fair
And set with gold and jewels rare,
It would be far too poor and small
A cradle for the Lord of all.
- 11 Instead of soft and silken stuff
You have but hay and straw so rough
On which as King, so rich and great,
To be enthroned in royal state.

15 Glory to God in highest heav'n,
Who unto us His Son has giv'n!
While angels sing with pious mirth
A glad new year to all the earth.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt. Text: Public domain

CLOSING PRAYER

P Visit our dwellings, O Lord, and drive from them all the
snares of the enemy; let Your holy angels dwell with us
to preserve us in peace; and let Your blessing be on us
always; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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 *“Now Sing We, Now Rejoice” LSB 386*

1 Now sing we, now rejoice,
Now raise to heav'n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth
Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth
The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art!
Thou my Savior art!

2 Come from on high to me;
I cannot rise to Thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit,
O pure and holy Child;
Through Thy grace and merit,

Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto Thee!
Draw me unto Thee!

3 Now through His Son doth shine
The Father's grace divine.

Death was reigning o'er us
Through sin and vanity
Till He opened for us
A bright eternity.
May we praise Him there!
May we praise Him there!

4 Oh, where shall joy be found?
Where but on heav'nly ground?
Where the angels singing
With all His saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing
In heav'nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there!
Oh, that we were there!

Text: Latin and German, 14th cent.; tr. Arthur T. Russell, 1806–74, alt. Text: Public domain

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POSTLUDE

Organist