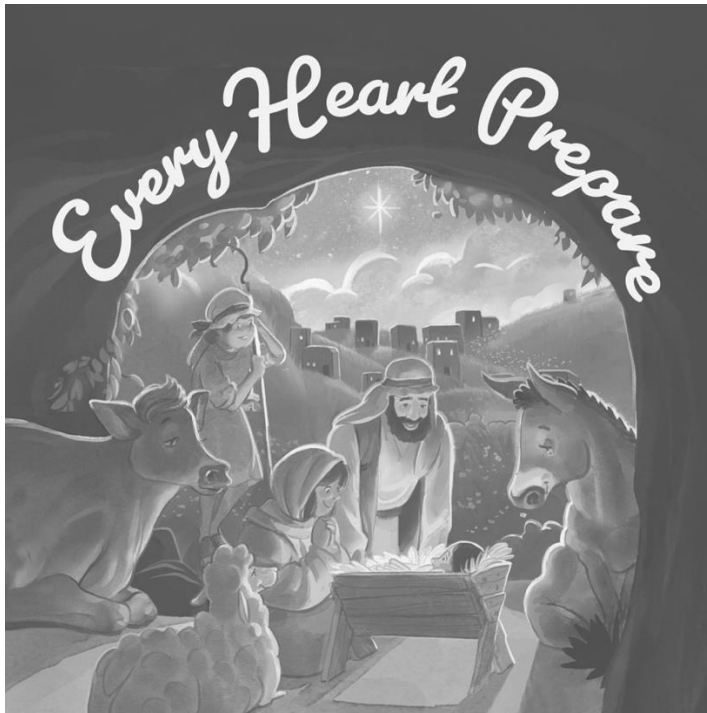


CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE



DECEMBER 24, 2025

ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (LCMS)
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AS WE GATHER—CRÈCHE

“Prepare!” is often the watchword of the season as the world gets ready for another celebration of Christmas. An integral part of any preparation is decoration.

Tonight, we focus on the crèche—those miniature models of the nativity scene that abound each December. Unlike lights and evergreens, the symbols that aided our meditation these last two weeks, the crèche is distinctly Christian. In it, we behold Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the Magi, the angels, the stable animals, and, at the center, baby Jesus. Some places introduce the characters in chronological order; others put them all out at once. Either way, the crèche represents a crucial, historical event: God taking on human form and human nature so that He could take our place and redeem us from all sin. We behold it with fresh eyes this evening.

PRELUDE

“O HOLY NIGHT”

“ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH”

HYMN

“ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID’S CITY”

376

(V.1 CHILDREN’S TRIO, V.2 WOMEN/GIRLS, V.3 MEN/BOYS, V. 4-5 ALL)



Trio: 1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y Stood a
W/G: 2 He came down to earth from heav - en, Who is
M/B: 3 For He is our child - hood's pat - tern, Day by
All: 4 And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His
All: 5 Not in that poor, low - ly sta - ble With the



low - ly cat - tle shed, Where a moth - er laid her
God and Lord of all, And His shel - ter was a
day like us He grew; He was lit - tle, weak, and
own re - deem - ing love; For that child so dear and
ox - en stand - ing by Shall we see Him, but in



ba - by In a man - ger for His bed: Mar - y
sta - ble, And His cra - dle was a stall; With the
help - less, Tears and smiles like us He knew; And He
gen - tle Is our Lord in heav'n a - bove; And He
heav - en, Set at God's right hand on high. Then like



was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
poor and mean and low - ly Lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
feels for all our sad-ness, And He shares in all our glad-ness.
leads His chil-dren on To the place where He is gone.
stars His chil-dren, crowned, All in white, His praise will sound!

✠ CONFESSON AND ABSOLUTION ✠

The sign of the cross ✠ may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

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

C Amen.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

P If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

P Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

C Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake 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.

C Amen.

✠ SERVICE OF THE WORD ✠

INTROIT

PSALM 89:1-8; ANTIPHON: V. 8

O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O LORD,
with your faithfulness all around you?

**I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I
will make known your faithfulness to all generations.**

For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever;
in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness."

**You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:**

I will establish your offspring forever,
and build your throne for all generations."

**Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD,
your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!**

For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD?

Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD,
**a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones,
and awesome above all who are around him?**

O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O LORD,
with your faithfulness all around you?

KYRIE

P. 204



C Lord, have mer - cy; Christ, have mer-cy; Lord, have mer - cy.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

P. 204



- C** 1 To God on high be glo - ry And peace to all the earth;
 2 To You, O sole - be - got - ten, The Fa - ther's Son, we pray;
 3 For You a - lone are ho - ly; You on - ly are the Lord.



Good-will from God in heav - en Pro - claimed at Je-sus' birth!
 O Lamb of God, our Sav - ior, You take our sins a - way.
 For - ev - er and for - ev - er, Be wor-shipped and a - dored;



We praise and bless You, Fa - ther; Your ho - ly name, we sing—
 Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus; Re - ceive our heart - felt cry,
 You with the Ho - ly Spir - it A - lone are Lord Most High,



Our thanks for Your great glo - ry, Lord God, our heav'n-ly King.
 Where You in pow'r are seat-ed At God's right hand on high—
 In God the Fa - ther's glo - ry. "A - men!" our glad re - ply.

Text: Stephen P. Starke

SALUTATION & COLLECT OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

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.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN’S TRIO

“HALLELUJAH, GLORY, HALLELUJAH”

EPISTLE

1 JOHN 1:1-4

¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— ²the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— ³that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA & VERSE

MATTHEW 1:21

C Alleluia. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL

JOHN 1:1-5, 9-18

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

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In

him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") ¹⁶ For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God; God the only Son, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

NICENE CREED

**I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.**

And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

"O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM"

361



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!
2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, And, gath - ered all a - bove
3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly The won - drous gift is giv'n!
4 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.
O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–93, Tune: Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908, Text and tune: Public domain

SERMON

“THE CRÈCHE”

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P Lord, in Your mercy, **C** hear our prayer.

OFFERING AND OFFERING PRAYER

✠ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT ✠

The Sacrament is celebrated at this congregation in the confession and glad confidence that our Lord, as He says, gives not only bread and wine, but His true body and blood to eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, to repentant, reconciled believers in Christ. Our Lord Jesus invites to His table those who trust His words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as He forgives and loves us (Matt. 26:26-28; 1Cor. 11:23-29; Matt.6:15).

We practice closed communion. Why? (1 Cor. 10:16-17). Because our Lord says those who eat and drink His body and blood unworthily do so to their great harm. If not yet instructed, in doubt, or holding a confession differing from that of the LCMS, you are lovingly asked not to commune at this time. Pastor is happy to make an appointment to discuss adult catechesis or questions you have regarding the Sacrament of the Altar.

Examination Questions: Please prepare by asking yourself — Am I sorry for my sins? Do I believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior from sin? Do I believe that I am receiving the body and blood of Christ along with the bread and wine? Will I try, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to live a more God-pleasing life?

Prayers for “Before communing” and “Thanksgiving after receiving the Sacrament” are printed on the front cover of the hymnal.

PREFACE

TUNE: "ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH" 368



1. **P** May the good Lord be with you. Lift your hearts to God in praise.
2. **P** In the Word of God made flesh Great and won-drous mys - ter - y



C May the Lord be with you too. To the Lord our hearts we raise.

C Now we see with vi - sion fresh God's a - bun- dant ma - jest - y.



Glo - - - - - ri - a



In ex-cel-sis De - o! Glo - - - - -



- - - - - ri - a In ex-cel-sis De - o!

P 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; for in the mystery of the Word made flesh You have given us a new revelation of Your glory that, seeing You in the person of Your Son, we may know and love those things which are not seen. 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

TUNE: "HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING", 380

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord! God of hosts, by all a - dored!

Heav'n and earth can-not con- tain All the glo - ry of Your name!

Hail, ho - san - na, God most high! Blest is He who now draws nigh

In the name of God the King! Al - le - lu - ia glad we sing:

Refrain

Hail, ho- san- na! Prais-es due Be for ev - er, Lord, to You!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

- P** Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. In the beginning You created all things by Your Word; and in the fullness of time Your Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Let Your Word made flesh dwell richly among us that, faithfully eating His body and drinking His blood, we may receive the fullness of Your grace and truth in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

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 WORDS OF OUR LORD

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PAX DOMINI

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

AGNUS DEI

TUNE: "FROM HEAV'N ABOVE TO EARTH I COME", 358



C O Lamb of God, You take a - way The sin of
All; now hear us pray, And grant us from our
sin re - lease: Have mer - cy on us! Grant us peace!

DISTRIBUTION

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"WHAT CHILD IS THIS"

SOLO

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING"

380



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King;
 2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
 3 Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righ-teous-ness!



Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
 Late in time be - hold Him come, Off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.
 Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with heal - ing in His wings.



Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, Join the tri - umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see, Hail the in - car - nate De - i - ty!
 Mild He lays His glo - ry by, Born that man no more may die,



With the an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Je - sus, our Im - man - u - el!
 Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them sec - ond birth.



Refrain
 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King!"



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 All you, be - neath your heav - y load, By care and guilt bent low,
 4 For lo, the days have come to pass 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 a drea - ry way With pain - ful steps and slow:
 When down in - to the cir - cling years Came Christ as was 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 up, for gold - en is the hour, Come swift - ly on the wing,
 His word of peace shall to the earth God's an - cient prom - ise bring,



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.
 The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the an - gels sing.
 And all who take this gift will hear The song the an - gels sing.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN “FROM HEAVEN ABOVE TO EARTH I COME” 358



1 “From heav’n a - bove to earth I come To bear good
 2 “To you this night is born a child Of Mar - y,
 5 “These are the signs that you shall mark: The swad-dling
 6 How glad we’ll be to find it so! Then with the



news to ev - ’ry home; Glad tid - ings of great
 cho - sen vir - gin mild; This lit - tle child of
 clothes and man - ger dark. There you will find the
 shep - herds let us go To see what God for



joy I bring, Where - of I now will say and sing:
 low - ly birth Shall be the joy of all the earth.
 in - fant laid By whom the heav’ns and earth were made.”
 us has done In send - ing us His own dear Son.

7 Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes, And see what in the manger lies.
 Who is this child, so young and fair? It is the Christ Child lying there.

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!

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.

13 Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,
 A quiet chamber set apart For You to dwell within my heart.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

A Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

CANDLE LIGHTING

HYMN

"SILENT NIGHT"

363



1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



all is bright Round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
at the sight; Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
love's pure light Ra - diant beams from Thy ho - ly face



Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, Sleep in heav - en - ly
Heav'n - ly hosts sing, Al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy



peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.



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



The lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head.
 But lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes.
 Close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.



The stars in the sky ——— looked down where He lay,
 I love Thee, Lord Je - sus! Look down from the sky,
 Bless all the dear chil - dren in Thy ten - der care,



The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
 And stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
 And take us to heav - en to live with Thee there.

BENEDICTION

TUNE: "ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH" 368



P May the good Lord bless and keep, Cause His face on you to shine,



Look on you with fa - vor deep, Grant-ing you His peace di - vine.



Refrain

G Glo - - - - - ri - a



In ex-cel-sis De - o! Glo - - - - -



- - - - - ri - a In ex-cel-sis De - o!



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their songs em -
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow Nor thorns in - fest the
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the na - tions



King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him
 ploy, While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 ground; He comes to make His bless - ings
 prove The glo - ries of His righ - teous -



room And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture
 plains Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing
 flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is
 ness And won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His



sing, And heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, Far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, And won - ders, won - ders of His love.

Acknowledgments

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POSTLUDE

"ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT"

**WE CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO RETURN TOMORROW MORNING AT 9:00 A.M. FOR
CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE WITH HOLY COMMUNION.**

**THANK YOU TO OUR CONGREGATION FOR ALL YOUR HELP THROUGHOUT THIS YEAR!
MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

UPCOMING WORSHIP

12/25 CHRISTMAS DAY, 9:00 A.M. DIVINE SERVICE

12/28 8:00 & 10:30 A.M. DIVINE SERVICE

1/6 THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD, 7:00 P.M. DIVINE SERVICE

**THANK YOU TO OUR MUSICIANS FOR PROVIDING SPECIAL MUSIC FOR
OUR CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:**

VOCALISTS: JOSH HECKSEL, NAOMI, MIRIAM AND ANNA BARLAU

**HANDBELL RINGERS: ELLIE SCHULTEIS, AMANDA BARLAU, CAROL WOLTER, EVELYN DIAL,
JANE HOLASEK, LEAH BETTCHER**

INSTRUMENTALISTS:

VIOLIN: ELLIE SCHULTEIS

FLUTE: JANE HOLASEK, AMANDA BARLAU, TRACY PETERSON, EVELYN DIAL

ALTO SAXOPHONE: ELI LAMOTT, AVA LAMOTT

BARITONE SAXOPHONE: KEATON MATHEWS

TRUMPET: ADAM POSSELT

TROMBONE: BROCK MATHEWS, LEVI LEE