

Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025



## The Song of the Angels



ST. PAUL  
LUTHERAN MINISTRIES

## The Song of the Angels

When the Bible was translated into Latin, “Gloria in excelsis Deo” were the first words of the song that the angels sang to the shepherds at Jesus’ birth. We sing those words in English in our liturgy: “Glory be to God on high.” The Song of the Angels is a compact, joyful proclamation of God’s glory, mercy, and salvation, centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The “Gloria” is simply praise to God the Father, acknowledging his glory and peace given to those favored by his grace. It has in mind that Christ, God’s only Son, will take away the sin of the world. In Lutheran theology, the “Gloria” is a response of faith to God’s saving work, rejoicing in justification by grace through faith. It is not just praise but proclamation: Christ has come, and in him, we have peace with God.

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Service Setting: Word & Prayer p. 266

### Hymn

### Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

CW 350

Stand

### Opening Dialogue

I rejoiced with those who said to me,  
**“Let us go to the house of the Lord.”**

How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty!  
**Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.**

The Lord is near to all who call on him,  
**to all who call on him in truth.**

Show us your unfailing love, Lord,  
**and grant us your salvation.**

The glory of the Lord will be revealed,  
**and all people will see it together.**

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.  
**We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

Gracious Lord, as the songs of Christmas fill the air this holiday season, we thank you for music that stirs our hearts with joy and hope. Long before choirs and carols, your Word gave us the first songs of Christmas, each proclaiming the birth of our Savior. As we hear and sing these ancient words again this Advent, tune our hearts to your promises and prepare us to rejoice in the coming of Christ, our newborn King. In his holy name we pray.

**Amen.**

*Be seated*

## **K-4 Anthem (3:30)**

## **What a Glorious Night**

*Ooh. The shepherds came to see the Baby; stood by His mother's side. Here lay the Savior inside a manger. Oh what a glorious night! Oh what a glorious night!*

*Refrain: I hear the angels singing, "Alleluia! Let the earth receive her King." I know that love has come; Sing it out: Jesus Christ is born! Jesus Christ is born! Yeah!*

*The shepherds wonder; they couldn't hide it, told everyone in sight. All were amazed when they heard how. God came down on this glorious night. God came down on this glorious night. (Refrain)*

*Glorious! Glorious! What a Glorious night! Glorious! Glorious! What a Glorious Night. (Refrain 2x)*

*All is calm now, all is quiet; a star shining in the sky. Below in Bethlehem, the King is sleeping. Oh, what a glorious night! Oh, what a glorious night!*

*Words and Music by Casey Brown, Jonathan Smith, Ben McDonald, and David Frey  
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## **Reading**

*Luke 2:8–14*

*The angels tell the shepherds about the birth of the Savior in Bethlehem.*

<sup>8</sup>And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup>An angel of the Lord appeared to 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. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup>Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup>Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

The Word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

## Hymn

## Angels We Have Heard on High

CW 346

## Sermon

Pastor Philip Birner

*Stand*

## Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there 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.**

*Be seated*

## Offering

## Prayer

*Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.*

Gracious Lord, you sent your Son into our world to destroy the power of Satan and restore the human race as your children and heirs. Work in us during this Advent season so that we may rejoice in the coming of our Savior and long for his coming again.

**Make us eager to receive the King who comes to save us.**

Use the preaching of your holy law to rid us of all delusions that we can gain your love with our own efforts. Move us to realize how hopeless we are because of sin and to feel sorrow for what we have done wrong.

**Lead us to be honest about our sinful status in your sight.**

Lift up our hearts to see the King who comes to save. Reveal to us his willingness to take on our human form and stand in our place. Show us the power he extends in his Word and sacraments to make us your children and keep us in faith. Thrill us with his promise to come and take us to our eternal home to live with you forever.

**Open our eyes to see and believe the wonders of the Savior's love.**

As we live with Christ and trust in him, move us to turn away from sin day after day with the strength your Holy Spirit provides. When we fall, forgive us and renew us to love and serve you and all people.

**Empower us and guide us to walk with Christ by faith.**

Protect us from the distractions that come at this time of the year. Even in gift-giving and celebrating, keep our hearts focused on Christ and his forgiving love.

**Give us joy at his coming at Christmas, his coming in the gospel, and his coming again.**

Move us to share with others the most important gift of this season, the truth about Jesus. Even in busy times lead us to pray for those whose joy is diminished because of sickness, pain, or loss. [Especially bless... *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Give us opportunities to provide help to those in need.

**May others see the love of Christ in our words and actions.**

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

*Silent prayer*

Loving Lord, work in us during this Advent season so that our joy may be genuine and may rest in the promises of the King who comes to save.

**Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.**

## Time of Christmas

Almighty God, you gave your only Son to take on our humanity and to dwell among us. Grant that we, who have been born again and made your children in Baptism, may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

## Blessing

The almighty and merciful Lord—the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit—bless us and keep us.

**Amen.**

## Hymn

## From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

*CW 331 sts. 1–5, 15*

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### Acknowledgments

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## **Worship Notes**

Presiding Minister: Matt Holtz

Accompanist: Stacey Kraus

### **Service Teams:**

3:30 p.m. B. & F. Butch & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students

6:00 p.m. Team Woehler

# Welcome

**In an age of anxiety** we still believe that peace comes from Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

**In an age of confusion** we still believe that the Bible is the word of God, inerrant and infallible.

**In an age of doubt** we still believe that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary.

**In an age of guilt** we still believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay for the sins of the world, bringing complete pardon and joy to all believers.

**In an age of reason** we still believe that God is at work in the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

**In an age of change** we still believe in one unchanging God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Whether you are a first time visitor or returning guest, we are delighted to share our worship with you. Please come back and worship with us again.

Scan the QR code below for access to the Church Center App.



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**Worship Broadcast at 8:00 on  
WNAM radio, 1280 AM**

Videos of our service today can be found on our YouTube page or our website:

[www.stpaulappletonwi.com](http://www.stpaulappletonwi.com)