



The Nativity of Our Lord Christmas Eve.

Welcome To

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

475 North Ave. W. 352-796-8331 www.clcfla.org

Pastor: Rev. Paul Meseke

Organist: Robin Walter

Please enjoy your time of worship
as we celebrate together the Birth of Jesus Christ.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

THE WHO, WHAT, AND WHY OF CHRISTMAS

AS WE GATHER

God is love. Into this world, the Father sends His only-begotten Son to be conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. The Church boldly confesses that this infant Jesus is the incarnate Immanuel – God with us for the forgiveness of our sins. God enters humanity in ways that defy human logic. Through Jesus, He unpacks grace eternal, life immortal, and love immutable. Therefore, we too, are called to love one another.

+ PREPARATION +

INVOCATION

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

OPENING SENTENCES

- P** For to us a child is born,
C To us a son is given;
P And the government shall be upon His shoulder,
C And His name shall be called
P Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
C Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- P** “When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:4–7).
Let us welcome our newborn Savior with penitent hearts that trust in His grace.
- 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 forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

+ WORD +

HYMN “O Come, All Ye Faithful” (LSB 379)



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
 2 High - est, most ho - ly, Light of Light e - ter - nal,
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, O come — ye to Beth - le - hem;
 Born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal He comes;
 Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!
 Je - sus, to Thee — be — glo - ry giv'n!



Come and be - hold Him Born the king of an - gels:
 Son of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
 Glo - ry to God — In — the — high - est:
 Word of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

Refrain

O come, let us a - dore Him, O come, let us a - dore Him,



O come, let us a - dore Him, Christ the Lord!

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KYRIE (spoken)

P In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For peace from the child born to us and the salvation He won for us, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the peace of the whole world of which the angels sang, 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.

P For this holy house and for all who fill it with Christmas carols, their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

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

C Amen.

SALUTATION AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light.

C Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven;

P through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

P The Old Testament Reading for the Nativity of Our Lord is from Isaiah, chapter seven.

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

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM*Psalm 110:1–4; antiphon: v. 2a*

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

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

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.

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

EPISTLE

P The Epistle is from First John, chapter four.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In 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. In 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. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

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

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

SOLO: Adore

Director: Robin Walter Sung by Linda Meseke

[Verse 1]

*You stepped down from heaven, humbly You came
God of all creation, here with us
In a starlit manger, Emmanuel
Light of the world, here to save*

[Chorus]

*Adore, come let us adore
Oh come let us adore Him
The Lord, worship Christ the Lord
Let all that is within us adore*

[Verse 2]

*Wise men bring their treasures, shepherds bow low
Angel voices sing of peace on earth
What have I to offer to heaven's King?
I will bring my life, my love, my all*

[Chorus]

*Adore, come let us adore
Oh come let us adore Him
The Lord, worship Christ the Lord
Let all that is within us adore*

[Bridge]

*Angels sing, praises ring
To the newborn King
Peace on earth, here with us
Joy awakening
At Your feet, we fall
Angels sing, praises ring
To the newborn King
Peace on earth, here with us
Joy awakening
At Your feet, we fall*

VERSE

P 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

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

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹ In 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.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.


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.


P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.


HYMN OF THE DAY 358 From Heaven Above to Earth I Come



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,
3 "This is the Christ, our God Most High, Who hears your
4 "He will on you the gifts be - stow Pre - pared by
5 "These are the signs that you shall mark: The swad - dling



news to ev - 'ry home; Glad tid - ings of great
cho - sen vir - gin mild; This lit - tle child of
sad and bit - ter cry; He will Him - self your
God for all be - low, That in His king - dom,
clothes and man - ger dark. There you will find the



joy I bring, Where - of I now will say and sing:
low - ly birth Shall be the joy of all the earth.
Sav - ior be From all your sins to set you free.
bright and fair, You may with us His glo - ry share.
in - fant laid By whom the heav'ns and earth were made."

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SERMON The Who, What, and Why of Christmas

SECOND ARTICLE OF THE CREED (with explanation from Luther's Small Catechism)

C 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 sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

P *What does this mean?*

C **I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.**

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P God's own Son is born a child. God the Father is reconciled. So with all boldness and confidence, let us bring our needs before His throne of grace.

Brief silence

P Lord God, heavenly Father, as the shepherds praised Your Son at the angelic news, so fill Your Church throughout the world with joy that all Your people would remain steadfast with faith in Him. God's own Son is born a child,

C **God the Father is reconciled.**

P As the angels announced that their tidings were for joy throughout the world, so cause Your Word to go throughout the world that the Holy Spirit might bring many to faith in Christ. God's own Son is born a child,

C **God the Father is reconciled.**

P Lord Jesus Christ, as the sages brought You gifts from afar, so accept the offerings we present to You. God's own Son is born a child,

C **God the Father is reconciled.**

P Heavenly Father, as Your Son came lowly to free us from all sorrow wholly, visit with grace and mercy all those who are afflicted in mind and spirit, assuring them of Your grace and mercy. God's own Son is born a child,

C **God the Father is reconciled.**

P Lord Jesus Christ, as our songs echo the song of Mary, so accept our thanks for all the faithful who have gone before us. Keep us steadfast in the true faith that we may join them in life everlasting by Your merit. God's own Son is born a child,

C **God the Father is reconciled.**

P Heavenly Father, Your Son came in meekness to bear our weakness. So deliver all those who are sick and injured. If it be Your will, grant them healing in this life. Work amid their affliction to assure them of the full healing awaiting them in life everlasting. God's own Son is born a child,

C **God the Father is reconciled.**

P Lord Jesus Christ, You are God ever reigning and have gained manhood through Mary. Grant us confidence that only You can make satisfaction for sin so that with boldness and confidence in You we may never falter. God's own Son is born a child,

C **God the Father is reconciled.**

P O Holy Spirit, in Christ the sheep are safe for He will indeed take care of them. As Christ feeds us with His own body and blood, work in us that we may receive this blessed meal in true faith. God's own Son is born a child,

C **God the Father is reconciled.**

P These our prayers we lift to You, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for You live and reign, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN: O HOLY NIGHT

Organ: Robin Walter Tuba: Lynn Postel

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.**

CANDLELIGHT CAROL OF HYMNS

On the bottom of these electric candles is an on/off switch. Please turn the candles on at this time.

☐ We hear again the Good News from the Gospel according to St. Luke, Chapter 2. Following each section of the reading, we sing Hymns of Christmas Joy, echoing the sound of the angels on that first Christmas night.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

HYMN “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (*LSB* 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



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.



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,

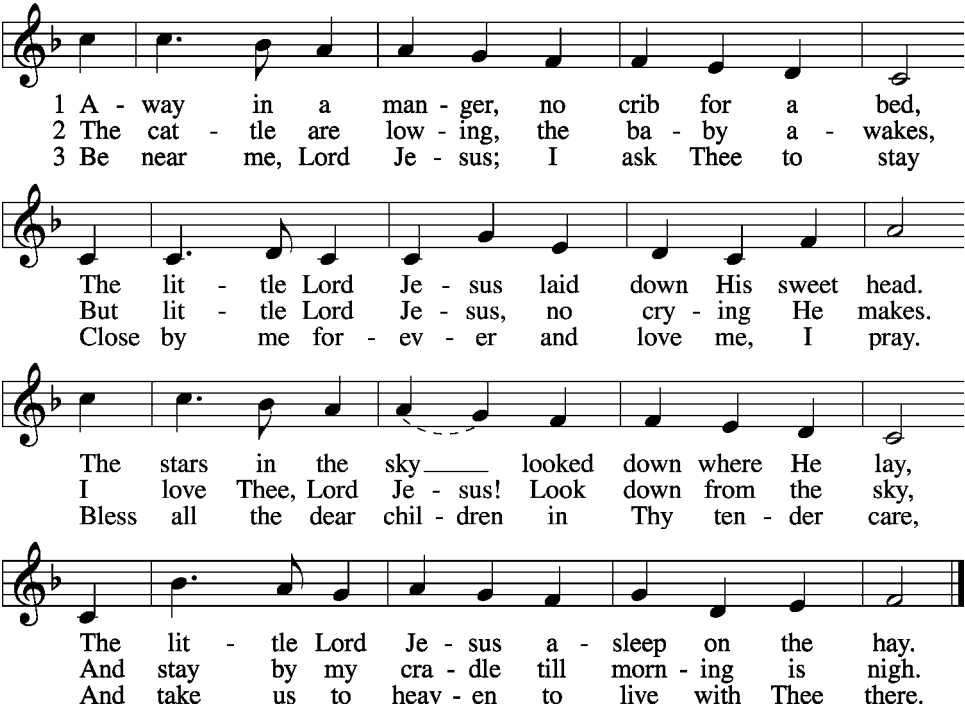


The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to-night.
 And prais - es sing to God the king And peace to all the earth!

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[P] *And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the Inn.*

HYMN “Away in a Manger” (LSB 364)



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.

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P And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you in born this day in the city of David and Savior, who is Christ the Lord, and this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

HYMN “Angels from the Realms of Glory” (LSB 367)



1 An - gels from the realms of glo - ry, Wing your flight o'er
2 Shep - herds in the field a - bid - ing, Watch - ing o'er your
5 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther,



all the earth; Ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry,
flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing,
Spir - it, Son, Ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing



Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship;

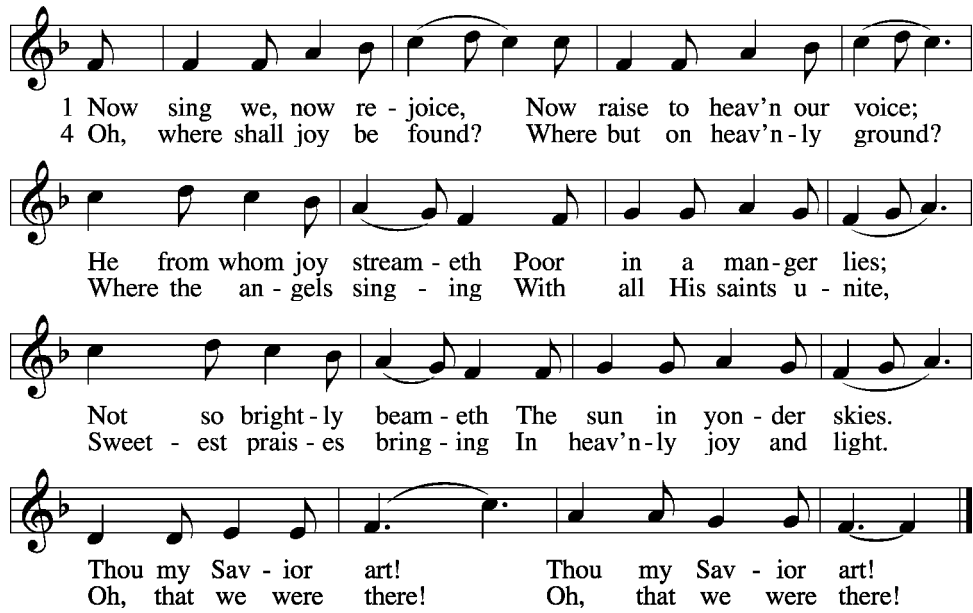


Wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

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P 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 among those with whom He is pleased!”

HYMN “Now Sing We, Now Rejoice” (LSB 386)



1 Now sing we, now re - joice, Now raise to heav'n our voice;
4 Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'n - ly ground?

He from whom joy stream - eth Poor in a man - ger lies;
Where the an - gels sing - ing With all His saints u - nite,

Not so bright - ly beam - eth The sun in yon - der skies.
Sweet - est prais - es bring - ing In heav'n - ly joy and light.

Thou my Sav - ior art! Thou my Sav - ior art!
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

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P When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger

HYMN “Gentle Mary Laid Her Child” (*LSB* 374)

1 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child Low - ly in a man - ger;
 2 An - gels sang a - bout His birth, Wise Men sought and found Him;
 3 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child Low - ly in a man - ger;



There He lay, the Un - de - filed, To the world a strang - er.
 Heav - en's star shone bright - ly forth Glo - ry all a - round Him.
 He is still the Un - de - filed But no more a strang - er.



Such a babe in such a place, Can He be the Sav - ior?
 Shep - herds saw the won - drous sight, Heard the an - gels sing - ing;
 Son of God of hum - ble birth, Beau - ti - ful the sto - ry;



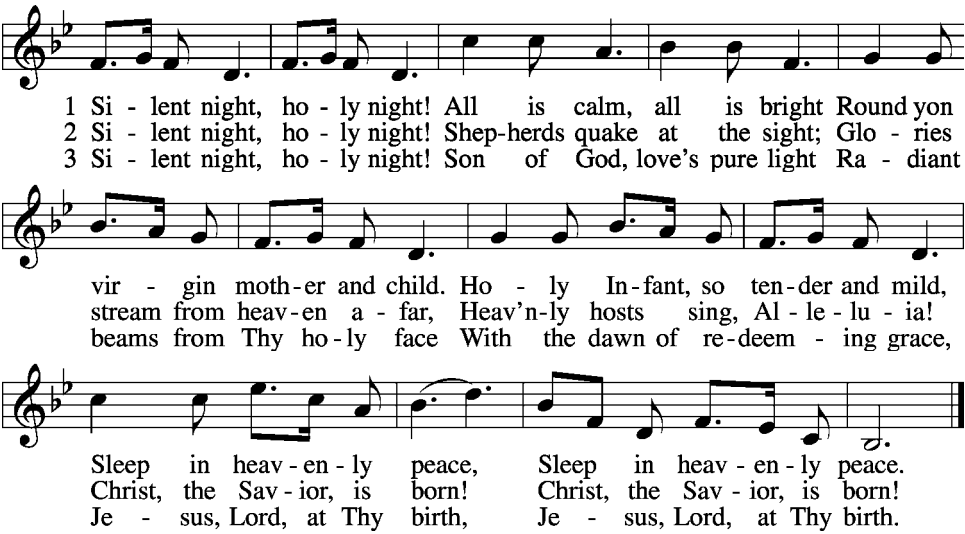
Ask the saved of all the race Who have found His fa - vor.
 All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ring - ing.
 Praise His name in all the earth; Hail the King of glo - ry!

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[P] *And when they [the shepherds] saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as had been told them.*

P St. Luke writes that Mary “treasured up all these things in her heart.” That phrase “all these things” includes her personal experience of that first Christmas night with the angels and the shepherds and the promise of God coming true. God has kept His covenant with his people, and we are blessed by it. With renewing faith, growing hope, and expanding love on this most holy night, let us sing possibly the most well known Christmas hymn; Silent Night.

HYMN “Silent Night, Holy Night” (LSB 363)



1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright Round yon
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep-herds quake at the sight; Glo - ries
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light Ra - diant

vir - gin moth-er and child. Ho - ly In-fant, so ten-der and mild,
stream from heav-en a - far, Heav'n-ly hosts sing, Al - le - lu - ia!
beams from Thy ho - ly face With the dawn of re-deem - ing grace,

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

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At this time please turn your candlelight off. Please return them to the boxes in the narthex as you leave.

BENEDICTION

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.
- C** Amen.

HYMN “Joy to the World” (LSB 387)



387 Joy to the World

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 -
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.

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-  Go in peace and serve the Lord
-  Thanks be to God.

The flowers on the altar were placed there by Debra Shepard in memory of her husband Dennis who is with the Lord now twelve years.

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