

Redeemer Lutheran Church

265 Falconer Street – North Tonawanda, New York 14120



Our Mission: "To Win and Keep Souls for Christ"

Today Is December 19, 2021 ~ 4th Sunday of Advent

A Service Of Carols

Office Phone 692-5734 ~ Office Text (716) 800-1427

Office hours: Monday through Friday 8:30am to 12:30pm

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Welcome to Redeemer Lutheran Church

We invite you to worship with us each Sunday

thru the end of December at 10:30 AM

January 2nd ~ Sunday Worship begins at 9:30 AM

Also, Please join us on

12/24 ~ Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship at 7 PM

1/9 ~ Education Classes begin after our worship service

God's continued blessings on your celebration of the Christ Child!

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Before communing, we follow our Lord's directions and examine ourselves as it says in I Corinthians 11.

We ask ourselves:

Am I baptized and do I believe in Jesus as my Savior?

Do I admit I am a sinner in need of forgiveness?

Am I ready and willing to repent of my sin,

to turn away from it,

and with God's help intentionally try to live

in a way which pleases Him?

Have I forgiven everyone who has sinned against me?

Am I free of all grudges?

Do I believe in His presence,

that I am receiving Jesus' Body and Blood as He says?

Do I believe His promise that if I confess my sins,

He will forgive me completely?

If you respond in a positive manner to these questions

and feel led by the Holy Spirit to commune

then receive the Holy Supper Jesus offers.

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Prayer Before Worship:

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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Preservice Music ~ all are welcome to sing along!

“I Am So Glad When Christmas Comes”

1. I am so glad when Christmas comes, The night of Jesus’ birth,
When Bethl’em’s star shone as the sun And angels sang with mirth.
2. The little Child of Bethlehem, The King of heav’nly grace,
Came down from His exalted throne To save our fallen race.
3. He’s now returned to heav’n above, God’s Son He is always;
He ne’er forgets His little ones But hears them when they pray.
4. I too would sing my Savior’s praise, My Joy, my Crown, my Lord;
For He has made me His own child By Water and the Word.

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Our Worship Service:

Officiant: Rev. Robert Spilman

Communion Assistant: Jim Ganschow

Greetings and Announcements

Pastor: Hear the bells ring!

Christmas Day is almost here!

Let our hearts be one as we come to worship the Christ Child,
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: We praise Jesus, our King of glory. Amen.

“Angels From The Realms Of Glory”

1. Angels from the realms of glory, Wing your flight o’er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation’s story; Now proclaim Messiah’s birth:
Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn king.
2. Shepherds in the fields abiding, Watching o’er your flocks by night.
God with us is now residing, Yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn king.
5. All creation, join in praising God, the Father, Spirit, Son.
Evermore your voices raising To the eternal Three in One.
Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn king.

~ Confession ~

P: God’s Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

C: What joyful good news!

P: God’s light came into our darkened world.

C: Shine Your light in our lives, Lord Jesus.

P: The light of Christ still shines in our darkness.

C: Forgive us for not understanding that light, O God.

P: Jesus, the true light of God, was not recognized
by those He came to save.

C: Forgive us for not receiving You, Lord Jesus.

P: All those who receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior,
to them Christ gives the right to become children of God.

C: We receive You anew, Lord Jesus.

P: Through Christ we are reconciled to God.

C: Make us one with You, Lord Jesus.

~ Absolution ~

P: Receive your pardon and see the glory of our Lord.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: This season the bells ring out throughout our world announcing the birth of its Savior. The tidings of that first Christmas still come down to us year after year: Peace on earth, good will to all. Reconciled to God, let us now join our hearts that have heard the Good News and sing:

“O Thou Joyful Day”

O thou joyful day, O thou blessed day,
Gladsome, peaceful Christmastide.
Earth's hopes awaken, Christ life hath taken.
Praise Him, O praise Him on ev'ry side.

O thou joyful day, O thou blessed day,
Gladsome, peaceful Christmastide.
King of all glory, We bow before Thee,
Praise Him, O praise Him on ev'ry side.

The Tradition of Christmas Caroling

Reader: Today's worship service is a service of Christmas carols and reflections. The Christmas carol we just sang comes from Sicily. The author of the words and music is unknown, but from this tiny island we have received many meaningful Christmas songs and customs. One of those customs is received from the Sicilian mariners, who on the sixth of December would sail far out into the sea taking with them the image of Saint Nicholas, the fourth century bishop of Myra and patron saint of children, pawnbrokers, and sailors. Returning at night, the sailors built bonfires and then went from house to house singing hymns. The seeds for the tradition of caroling from home to home at Christmastime may be

found here. Caroling brought the good news of the birth of our Savior to those who could not leave their homes. “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” is a carol which over time has become a caroling favorite. “Rejoice with heart and soul for Jesus Christ was born today – born to save.” That was the reason for caroling. Let us join together by singing this carol.

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

Good Christian friends, rejoice, With heart and soul and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before Him bow, And He is in the manger now,
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice, With heart and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss; Jesus Christ was born for this!
He hath ope’d the heavenly door, And man is blessed forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Good Christian friends, rejoice, With heart and soul and voice!
Now ye need not fear the grave; Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all To gain His everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

~ Psalm 98 ~

R: O sing to the Lord a new song, for God has done marvelous things.

C: The Lord’s right hand and holy arm have brought victory.

R: The Lord has made known His victory;

C: The Lord has revealed His vindication in the sight of the nations.

R: God’s steadfast love and faithfulness
is remembered by the house of Israel.

C: All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

R: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;

C: Break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

R: Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
C: With the lyre and the sound of melody.

R: With trumpets and the sound of the horn
C: Make a joyful noise before the king, the Lord.

R: Let the sea roar, and all that fills it:
C: The world and those who live in it.

R: Let the floods clap their hands;
C: Let the hills sing together for joy,

R: At the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is coming to judge the earth.
**C: God will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity.**

Psalm 98 Becomes a Christmas Carol ~

Reader: Isaac Watts, the founder of English hymn writing, wrote this inspiring carol, which first was published in 1719. Lowell Mason arranged the music for this hymn in 1839, borrowing some tunes from George Handel's masterpiece, Messiah. These were the days before modern copyright laws, which today frown upon such borrowing. Watts had penned the words because he was upset with the way the psalms were being sung in his day. His desire was to inspire and animate the Old testament liturgy with the fervor of the New Testament news of salvation. The words to "Joy to the World" are a loose paraphrase of the joyful Psalm 98 which we just recited. Let us add joy to the Old Testament prophecy that a Messiah, the Lord, has come!

"Joy to the World"

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.

“The Angels Sang with Joy”

Reader: Walking to church one early Christmas morning in 1730, the famous Protestant hymnwriter Charles Wesley became inspired to write this beautiful carol as he heard the bells pealing with joy. An English church musician, William Cummings, later noticed how well the words went with an inspiring melody composed by Felix Mendelssohn for a men’s chorus and brass instruments presented at a festival at Leipzig in 1840. The combination of the two have given us the final modification for this Christmas classic which was published in 1856. However, the composer once declared that such joyous music would never fit with sacred words. How wrong he was! There is joy in the birth of a Child. We are especially filled with joy as the angels once again sing out, “Christ is born in Bethlehem... Glory to the newborn king!”

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

1. Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king:
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.”
Joyful, all you nations, rise; Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”
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 us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”

First Reading ~ Titus 3:4-7

⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus

Christ our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

In the Silent Night A Savior Was Born

Reader: Christmas Day arrives this week. Some greet the day with sighs of relief. That sigh can be heard coming to us from over the centuries by the Reverend Joseph Mohr of St. Nicholas Church. On Christmas Eve in 1818, in the small village of Oberndorf in Upper Austria, a music director's nightmare had occurred. Mice had eaten the bellows of the church organ, causing the music program to be scrapped. Mohr had to find something to substitute quickly. Prayerfully quieting his soul, he sat down and penned the words to "Stille Nacht... Heilige Nacht." The village schoolmaster and church organist, Franz Gruber, assisted his friend by setting Mohr's words to music. That night the two men sang "Stille Nacht" as a duet, with Gruber accompanying on the guitar. But this was not the end to the story. The organ was still in need of repair, and God had further plans for sharing "Silent Night." The organ repairman, Karl Mauracher, heard the song and asked for a copy. He then began sharing it with others as he traveled about the Austrian countryside repairing other instruments. Eventually the song found its way to the Stasser family of Zillertal, who had the dual occupations of making gloves and singing folk songs at fairs. In 1831, the Stasser family sang Mohr's song at a Leipzig fair. Since then, it has been known and sung throughout the world as a traditional Christmas hymn. Out of the silence of an organ has come one of our favorite Christmas carols.

"Silent Night"

1. 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.

2. 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!
3. Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light'
Radiant beams from your holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

The Gospel Reading ~ Luke 1:39-45

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

From A Little Town Comes a Great King

Reader: Tradition has painted a picture of Joseph walking to Bethlehem while Mary, to whom he was engaged, is carried by a small donkey. In that royal city, the city of King David, Mary gave birth to Jesus. On Christmas Eve in 1865, Phillips Brooks journeyed by horseback from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, pausing in the fields where the shepherds first heard the angelic announcement of Christ's birth. Three years later this pastor of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Philadelphia drew upon his memories of that special night to write this carol for the children of his Sunday School. The words, inspired by the Lord, were set to music by Brooks' organist, Lewis Redner, who had been awakened one

night with an angelic melody ringing in his ears. He quickly wrote down the tune, finishing the arrangement in time for the Christmas Day service. Six Sunday school teachers and 36 children first sang this carol. From this humble beginning, this carol is now sung by millions around the world today. From the little town of Bethlehem comes a great King!

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

1. O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

4. O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

A Christmas Prayer for our Children

Reader: Our next Christmas carol is often referred to as Martin Luther’s “Cradle Hymn.” However, neither the words nor the music existed until many years after Luther’s death. Originating with a German Lutheran colony in Pennsylvania, the carol was first publicized with a picture of Luther and his family in a Philadelphia collection in 1855 under the title “Luther’s Christbaum.” Later the song was published in a children’s collection of songs and titled “Luther’s Cradle hymn, composed by Martin Luther for his children, and still sung by German mothers to their children.” However, this American carol had to be translated years later into German for this to become a reality. James R. Murray, the author of these inaccurate words, contributed something positive to this carol by composing the charming melody we still sing today. Whatever its origin, the second verse below is a beautiful prayer. This truly is a beloved song of children and adults everywhere.

“Away in a Manger”

1. Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with you there.

Our Christmas Prayer ~

P: We come as faithful people to offer our prayers to God.

C: Hear and receive our prayer, O Lord.

P: We come to Bethlehem and behold our Lord and King.

C: Hear and receive our prayers, O Lord.

P: We pray that our hearts would become mangers for the Christ Child,
the holy child of Bethlehem.

C: Hear and receive our prayers, O Lord.

P: We join our voices with the heavenly choirs of angels,
giving praise to God most high.

C: Hear and receive our praises, O Lord.

P: We pray for the lonely, the sick, the homeless, the grieving.

Reach out, O God, and touch their hearts. We especially pray for
those we make personal intercession for now during this moment
of quiet. Be present to them, Lord Jesus.

C: Hear and receive our prayers, O Lord.

P: We adore you, O gracious Lord.

We give you thanks and praise for hearing our prayers.

C: Hear and receive our love, O Lord. Amen.

~ Celebration of Holy Communion ~

P: The Words of Institution

**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.**

~ Distribution and Carols ~

“The First Noel”

1. The first Noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

2. They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

3. And by the light of that same star
Three Wise Men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

4. This star drew near to the northwest,
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay

Right over the place where Jesus lay.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

5. Then entered in those Wise Men three,
Full rev'rently upon their knee,
And offered there in his presence
Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

“Go Tell It On The Mountain”

Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!

1. While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light.
Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!
2. The shepherds feared and trembled When lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior's birth.
Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!
3. Down in a lonely manger The humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation That blessed Christmas morn.
Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!

The Faithful Worship Christ the Lord

Reader: Our final hymn, was originally sung in Latin. It is a stirring carol known in that language as “Adeste Fideles.” The hymn is addressed to every Christian, exhorting us to come and worship our Lord. The composer is thought to be John Francis Wade, an obscure English music copyist and teacher who penned the words

and music to this classic in 1744 while living in France. The English translation sung today is by the Reverend Frederick Oakeley, an Anglican minister. Oakeley longed to enhance the worship of his London church and so sought out little known musical gems that might enrich the congregation's hymnody. Today this carol has been sung in more than 100 languages, bringing to the world Wade's vision of brothers and sisters everywhere worshiping and adoring Christ our Lord. Please stand as we sing:

"O, Come, All Ye Faithful"

1. Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!
O, come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him Born the king of angels:
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!
O come let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!
3. Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God In the highest:
O come let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Benediction ~

P: And now may the blessing of the Christ Child go with you.

Go and celebrate the Savior's birth. Go and hear the bells ring,
"Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth."
Go in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Go adoring Christ the Lord. **C: Amen**