THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

Friday, December 24, 2021
Musical Prelude at 7:00 pm
Worship at 7:30 pm

Immanuel Lutheran Church + 867 North Pleasant Street + Amherst, Massachusetts
413.549.0322 + immanuel-amherst.org
Prelude

O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the new-born Lord, lying in a manger!
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb was worthy to bear our Savior, Jesus Christ. Alleluia!
Welcome to Worship

Welcome to Immanuel Lutheran Church. Please feel at home, sign our guest book, and join us for coffee and fellowship in the parish hall following the worship service.

Listening Devices are available in the Narthex. Please ask any usher for assistance.

Communion: This is the table of the Lord. It is not the table of this congregation or denomination. All are welcome. At communion time, please come forward at the direction of the ushers. After receiving the bread and wine (red) or juice (white), you may consume it where you are or take it back to your seat and consume it there. A gluten-free option is available. Those who do not wish to receive bread and wine may come forward for a blessing. Those who have difficulty coming forward may speak to an usher either for assistance in coming forward or to have bread and wine brought to their seat.

Musical Prelude

We are pleased to offer a half hour of music for Christmas, presented by friends and members of Immanuel. We thank our choir especially for coming together and for friends who have joined us for this festival occasion.

The Christmas Liturgy

Christmas Nativity and Wreath Litany
The assembly may stand.

Reader: “While in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to deliver her child. And she gavebirth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger.” (Luke 2:6-7).

Reader: Tonight, angels far and near sing glory to God; well-worn fabric full of years holds in the warmth of parental love; animals and shepherds crowd in tight, glowing with adoration, while a muffled cry squeezes out to greet the world.

People: Tonight we give thanks for every child among us. Each new birth -- regardless of circumstances -- reminds us of the preciousness of life, the potential of tomorrow, the promise of God.

Reader: On this Christmas Eve, we light the Christ candle for the child-King, the infant-Redeemer, the lowly-Lord. And now we know . . . He is born and nothing will ever be the same!
Gathering Hymn: ELW 283 “O Come All Ye Faithful”

1 O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant! O
2 The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,
3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning:

Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Jesus, to thee be glory given!

Come and behold him, born the king of angels;
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!
Glory to God in the highest;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:

Ve - ni-te a-do-re-mus, ve - ni-te a-do-re-mus,
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,

Ve - ni-te a-do-re-mus Do - mi-num.
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Greeting: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.
Prayer of the Day
Let us pray.
Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus’ presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

The assembly may be seated.

Musical Offering: “The Virgin’s Slumber Song”
Max Reger
Sung by Katherine Benfer

First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96

The organist plays the refrain once; it is then sung by the congregation and repeated where indicated with R.

Refrain

1 Sing to the LORD a new song; 
sing to the LORD, all the earth.

2 Sing to the LORD, bless the name of the LORD; 
proclaim God’s salvation from day to day.

3 Declare God’s glory among the nations 
and God’s wonders among all peoples.

4 For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised, 
more to be feared than all gods. R

5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; 
but you, O LORD, have made the heavens.

6 Majesty and magnificence are in your presence; 
power and splendor are in your sanctuary.

7 Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples, 
ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

8 Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the holy name; 
bring offerings and enter the courts of the LORD. R

9 Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; 
tremble before the LORD, all the earth.

10 Tell it out among the nations: “The LORD is king! 
The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity.”

11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; 
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

12 Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O LORD, 
for you come to judge the earth.

13 You will judge the world with righteousness 
and the peoples with your truth. R
Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14

The assembly may stand.

Gospel Procession: ELW 270 “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” (verses 1 & 2)

The gospel is announced.

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The gospel concludes:

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Hymn: “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” (verse 3)
The assembly may sit.

Sermon
The assembly may stand.

Hymn of the Day: ELW 295 “Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.  

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession
Joining our voices with the heavenly host and Christians throughout time and space, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

Each petition concludes:
Merciful God,
Receive our prayer.

Rejoicing in your Word made flesh among us, we commend these prayers to you, confident of your grace and love made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

Sharing of Peace
The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

Choir Anthem: “Amid the Cold of Winter”  arr. by Bret Rhoades
Offering Hymn: ELW 296 “What Child is This” vs. 1,3

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?
2 Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
3 So bring him in cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
Good Christian, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts en-throne him.

This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross he borne for me, for you:
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lulu-bye:

Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

Offering Prayer

The assembly may stand.
Let us pray.

God with us:
You came as a baby to a manger.
You slept on straw and greeted shepherds. You come again in bread and wine.
Remind us how good you are at blessing ordinary things. And then, through these gifts, help us to bless the lives of others in the strength of your holy name. Amen.
Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and joy, that we should at all times and in all places givethanks and praise to you, Almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory; that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Hymn: ELW # 276 “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly”

1 Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the child is Lord of all,
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.

Swiftly winging, angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing;
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:

Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child was born for you!
Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. Amen.
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.

Invitation to the Table

Distribution

The assembly may be seated.

Those who wish to receive communion may come forward in two lines at the direction of the ushers. The choir will commune first. After receiving the bread, there will be a station on each side with wine (red) and juice (white). You may consume it where you are or take it back to your seat and consume it there. Gluten free bread is available. Please return to your pew by the side aisle. Those who do not wish to receive bread and wine may come forward for a blessing. Those who are unable to come forward may speak to the usher and bread and wine will be brought to their seat.
Communion Hymns

ELW #279 “O little town of Bethlehem”

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above.
How silently, how silently the world deposition gift is given!
O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
So God in parts to human hearts the blessings of his heav’n.
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us to-day.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth.
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell:

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!
ELW # 278 “Away in a Manger”

1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay

2 But little Lord Jesus, laid down his sweet head;
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.

3 The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
Bless all the dear children in your tender care

4 The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
And fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

Post-Communion Blessing and Prayer

The assembly may stand.

The Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in his grace.
For from his hand we have received grace upon grace. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Let us pray.
Radiant God, with our eyes we have seen your salvation, and in this meal we have feasted on your grace. May your Word take flesh in us, that we may be your holy people, revealing your glory made known to us in Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.
Sharing of the Light

Please tip your candle to receive the light from your neighbor.

Hymn:  ELW 281 “Silent Night, Holy Night”

Benediction:

May Christ, born into time to bring endless peace, guide your days and years in righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the name of the † Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Extinguishing of Candles

(Please extinguish your candle while holding your hand in front of it.)
Hymn: ELW 267 “Joy to the World”

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing.
2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy.
3 No more let sin and sorrow 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.
4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteous love, and wonders of his love.

Dismissal

Glory to God in the highest!

Peace to God’s people on earth!

As heralds of God’s peace, go forth in joy to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Colleen Harris
**Worship Leaders**

Presiding Minister  
Pastor Jeffrey Schulz

Assisting Minister  
Marilyn Paterno

Organist & Choir Director  
Colleen Harris

Trumpeter  
Roger Grette

Pianist  
Marilyn Paterno

Readers  
Heather Craig, Cheryl Mattocks

Communion Assistants  
Marilyn Paterno, Cheryl Mattocks

Ushers  
Tony Butterfield, Chris Mattocks

Greeter  
Catharine Butterfield

Crucifer  
Ruth Rinard

Paschal Candle Bearer  
Jack Finn

Acolytes  
Randy Dettmers, Priscilla Finn

Altar Guild  
Julie Brigham-Grette, Yvonne Nicholson