



Complete Worship Folder
December 28, 2025 – 9:30 a.m.

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Julie Bailey, Pastor

Sunday Worship 8:00am & 10:30am

Wednesday Worship 7:00pm

Lessons and Carols

Welcome and Announcements (*include announcement that the lessons will come from The Message bible*)

Once in Royal David's City" (ELW 269, verses 1-3)

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and meek and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

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First Lesson: John 1:1-5

P: The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to the Word. The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one. Everything was created through him; nothing - not one thing! - came into being without him. What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out.

C: Thanks be to God!

Lighting the Advent Wreath (*each candle lit by a different person during the song*)

Hymn: "We Light the Advent Candles" (LS 9)

We light the Advent candles
against the winter night
to welcome our Lord Jesus,
who is the world's true light;
to welcome our Lord Jesus,
who is the world's true light.

The first one will remind us
that Christ will soon return.
We light it in the darkness
and watch it gleam and burn.
We light it in the darkness
and watch it gleam and burn.

We light the second candle,
and hear God's holy word.
It tells us, cling to Jesus,
prepare to meet your Lord.
It tells us, cling to Jesus,
prepare to meet your Lord.

Three candles now are gleaming
and show us the true way.
Rejoice, the Baptist cries out:
your Lord has come today!
Rejoice, the Baptist cries out:
your Lord has come today!

Four candles burning brightly
announce that Christ has come.
Prepare, my heart, believe it,
and give the Christ child room!
Prepare, my heart, believe it,
and give the Christ child room!

Prayer - *Pastor Julie will pray*

C: Amen

Hymn: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (ELW 283)

O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him,
born the king of angels:

Refrain O come, let us adore him,
 O come, let us adore him,
 O come, let us adore him,
 Christ the Lord!

The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing! **Refrain**

Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
in the highest: **Refrain**

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing: **Refrain**

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Second Lesson: John 1:19-28

P: When Jews from Jerusalem sent a group of priests and officials to ask John who he was, he was completely honest. He didn't evade the question. He told the plain truth:

John the Baptist: "I am not the Messiah."

C: "Who, then? Elijah?"

John the Baptist: "I am not."

C: "The Prophet?"

John the Baptist: "No."

P: Exasperated, they said,

C: "Who, then? We need an answer for those who sent us. Tell us something - anything! - about yourself."

John the Baptist: "I'm thunder in the desert: 'Make the road straight for God!' I'm doing what the prophet Isaiah preached."

P: Those sent to question him were from the Pharisee party. (*pause*) Now they had a question of their own:

C: "If you're neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet, why do you baptize?"

John the Baptist: "I only baptize using water. A person you don't recognize has taken his stand in your midst. He comes after me, but he is not in second place to me. I'm not even worthy to hold his coat for him."
(*reads then walks out the center aisle.*)

P: These conversations took place in Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing at the time.

C: Thanks be to God!

Hymn: "Joy to the World" (ELW 267 *verses 1-2*)

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.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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Third Lesson: Luke 2:1-4 (Jesus is born)

(Older man wearing a head scarf and reading from the pulpit)

About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there.

(Young adult woman wearing a head scarf and reading from the pulpit)

He went with Mary, his fiancé, who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.

C: Thanks be to God!

Fourth Lesson: Luke 2:8-16 (The Shepherds and Angels)

Shepherd: There were shepherders camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep.

Angel: Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger." At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises:

C: Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

Shepherd: As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherders talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

C: Thanks be to God!

Hymn: "Go Tell it On the Mountain" (ELW 290)

Refrain Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. **Refrain**

The shepherds feared and trembled
when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. **Refrain**

Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. **Refrain**

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Fifth Lesson: Matthew 2:1-11

The Wise person: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory - this was during Herod's kingship - a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him." When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified - and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?" They told him, "Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly: It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land, no longer bringing up the rear. From you will come the leader who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel." Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship." Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time! They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.

C: Thanks be to God!

Hymn: "The First Noel" (ELW 300)

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.

Refrain Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!
Born is the King of Israel.

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. **Refrain**

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. **Refrain**

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. **Refrain**

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. **Refrain**

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Offering

Offering Song: "Love Has Come" (ELW 292)

Love has come—a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
what is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers;
Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas;
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Offering Prayer

A: God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

Thanksgiving

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.

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray

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.

Invitation to Communion / Distribution of Holy Communion

P: God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

Communion Song: "Silent Night, Holy Night" (ELW 281)

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.

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!

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 your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

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Post-Communion Blessing

P: And now may the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

A: Let us pray. Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us.

C: Amen

Final Narrative:

P: And then...*(reads then walks out the center aisle.)*

Shepherd: When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. Then, the shepherds went back to their fields, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen. *(reads then walks out the center aisle.)*

(Older adult man & Young adult woman walks out the center aisle.)

Wise-person: The wisemen returned to their country by another road, since God had warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. *(reads then walks out the center aisle.)*

Narrator: An angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave." So, Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod died.

C: Thanks be to God!

Sending Song: "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" (ELW 282)

It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heav'nly music floats
o'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hov'ring wing,
and ever o'er its babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

And you, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow:
look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing;
oh, rest beside the weary road
and hear the angels sing!

For lo! The days are hast'ning on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song
which now the angels sing.

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Blessing

P: The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, ✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

C: We work together to spread Christ's love with our community, through Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Lives, and an Open Table.

A: Glory to God in the highest!

C: And peace to God's people on earth!

A: Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

C: Thanks be to God.

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