



# Central Lutheran Church

First Sunday of Christmas  
December 31, 2023

Rev. Veronika Czutor, Pastor  
Harold Knight, PhD, Music Director  
Rachel Brown, Administrative Assistant

# Central Lutheran Church, ELCA

1000 Easton Rd., Dallas, Texas

**God calls us to proclaim the Gospel and demonstrate Christ's love for all.**

*Please turn off your cell phone.*

*This service is being livestreamed to our neighbors near and far on Facebook.*

*Most of the sanctuary- including all leaders and worshippers- is on camera.*

**BELL PEAL (10:30 A.M.)**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE** on "Good Christian Friends Rejoice" Samuel Walters

**INVOCATION**

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

**Amen.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

**ENTRANCE HYMN: 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.

## DIALOGUE

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

**We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.**

To us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

**In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people.**

## OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have filled us with the new light of the Word who became flesh and lived among us. Let the light of our faith shine in all we do; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 9: 2;6-7

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. <sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

L Word of God, Word of Life

**C Thanks be to God**

## LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING

ELW 272

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!

Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung,

it came, a flow'r so bright, amid the cold of winter,

when half-spent was the night.

Isaiah had foretold it, the rose I have in mind;

with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.

To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior,

when half-spent was the night.

This flow'r, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,  
dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.  
True man, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us  
and lightens ev'ry load.

O Savior, child of Mary, who felt our human woe;  
O Savior, king of glory, who dost our weakness know:  
bring us at length, we pray, to the bright courts of heaven  
and into endless day.

## **SECOND LESSON: Micah 5:2-5a**

<sup>2</sup>But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. <sup>3</sup>Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. <sup>4</sup>And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; <sup>5</sup>and he shall be the one of peace.

L Word of God, Word of Life

**C Thanks be to God**

## **O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM**

**ELW 279**

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.

For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.  
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

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!

### **THIRD LESSON: Luke 1:26-35; 38**

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,  
<sup>27</sup> to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's  
name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with  
you." [a] <sup>29</sup> But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this  
might be. <sup>30</sup> The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with  
God. <sup>31</sup> And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him  
Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God  
will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup> He will reign over the house of Jacob  
forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, "How can this  
be, since I am a virgin?" [b] <sup>35</sup> The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you,  
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born [c] will  
be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the  
Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

L Word of God, Word of Life

**C Thanks be to God**

### **THE ANGEL GABRIEL FROM HEAVEN CAME**

**ELW 265**

The angel Gabriel from heaven came, with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as  
flame: "All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary, most highly favored lady." Gloria!

"For know a blessed mother thou shalt be, all generations laud and honor thee;  
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, most highly favored lady." Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head; "To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.  
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name." Most highly favored lady,  
Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,  
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say: "Most highly favored lady."  
Gloria!

## **FOURTH LESSON: Luke 2:1; 3-7**

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

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**C Thanks be to God**

## **WHERE SHEPHERDS LATELY KNELT**

Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel's word, I come in half-belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred; But there is room and welcome there for me, But there is room and welcome there for me.

In that unlikely place I find him as they said: Sweet newborn Babe, how frail! And in a manger bed A still, small voice to cry one day for me, A still, small voice to cry one day for me.

How should I not have known Isaiah would be there, His prophecies fulfilled? With pounding heart I stare: A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me, A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.

Can I, will I forget how Love was born, and burned Its way into my heart—unmasked, unforced, unearned, To die, to live, and not alone for me, To die, to live, and not alone for me?

## **FIFTH LESSON: LUKE 2:8-16**

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before 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; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,[a] the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,[b] praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” <sup>15</sup>

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."<sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

L Word of God, Word of Life

**C Thanks be to God**

## ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

ELW 289

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

## SIXTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-12

<sup>1</sup>In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men[a] from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising,[b] and have come to pay him homage."<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah[c] was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd[d] my people Israel."

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the wise men[e] and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."<sup>9</sup> When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising,[f] until it stopped over the place where the child was.

<sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped,[g] they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid

him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

L Word of God, Word of Life

**C Thanks be to God**

## **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*

## **SEVENTH LESSON: John 1:1-14**

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life,[a] and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.[b]



<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own,[c] and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,[d] full of grace and truth.

L Word of God, Word of Life

**C Thanks be to God**

## **ANGELS, FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY**

**ELW 275**

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
once you sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.

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.

Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great desire of nations, you have seen his natal star.  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.

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.

## **PRAYERS FOR CHRISTMAS**

Glory to God in the highest,

**and peace to God's people on earth.**

Blessed are you, Prince of peace. You rule the earth with truth and justice.

**Send your gift of peace to all nations of the world.**

Blessed are you, Son of Mary. You share our humanity.

**Have mercy on the sick, the dying, and all who suffer this day.**

Blessed are you, Son of God. You dwell among us as the Word made flesh.

**Reveal yourself to us in word and sacrament that we may bear your light to all the world.**

### **THE 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.**

### **THE OFFERING**

*We give thanks for what God has first given us. Our ministry to the people of East Dallas is supported by your offering. You may also use our online giving through **PayPal**, **Vanco**, or **Givelify** (available in the App Store) or continue to mail your offerings to our office.*

### **BLESSING**

Let us bless the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **GOOD CHRISTIAN FRIENDS REJOICE**

**ELW 288**

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 has opened heaven's door, and we are blest 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 the everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

## **POSTLUDE**

## **Acknowledgments:**

Liturgy from sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845-1925, st. 3; John C. st. 4 Mattes, 1876-1948

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885-1933, alt.

Angels We Have Heard on High

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, The Crown of Jesus Music, 1864

The First Noel

Text: English traditional

Angels, From the Realms of Glory

Text: James Montgomery, 1771-1854, alt., sts. 1-3; Salisbury Hymn Book, 1857, st. 4

Good Christian Friends Rejoice

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Visitors, we are glad to have you with us and invite you to come again!**

**Pr. Veronika's Office Hours:** Tuesday – Friday 10 am - 2 pm; other days/times by appointment.

**Pastor Veronika will be out of town until January 12.** Should you need pastoral care during this time, please contact the following:

**Dec 31, 2023-Jan 4, 2024**

Pastor Rachel Ringlaben (Emanuel Lutheran Church, Dallas, TX)  
email: rachel.ringlaben@emanueldallas.org  
cell: 501-944-1277

**Jan 5, 2024 - Jan 12, 2024**

Pastor Tom Schwolert (Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Garland, TX)  
email: pastor@gloriadeigarland.org  
cell: 214-995-1720

**Serving in Worship today:** Ushers: Mary & Joel Glenn; Leader: Jan Moody;  
Lectors: Meredith Lopez, Mary Glenn, Sara Jutton, Jeff Lowry, and Myke Riley.

**Ushers & Lectors needed:** Please sign up on the bulletin board in the back of the church.

**Sunday School & Lunch:** We have once-a-month "Sunday School" for all ages. Join us for a lunch and discussion of the Bible and our Lutheran heritage. Our first meeting of 2024 will be on Sunday, **January 7, after the worship service.** For lunch, we will have hot dogs, brats, salad, and peanut butter sandwiches. **We are looking for volunteers to bring food.** See the Count-me-in sheet in the back of the church to sign up to bring something. Come join the fellowship and ministry together! All are welcome!

**Offering Envelopes for 2024 are here** for those who ordered them. They are in the back of the church.

**Lydia Circle** meets for the first time in the new year on **Monday, January 8 at 7:00 pm.** They meet in the church library on the second Monday of every month. This group is open to any women who want to join.

**Visitation:** If you know someone who would like to receive home communion from our Visitation Team, please contact the church office. If you are willing to visit folks requesting home communion, please let us know as well.



**Scan this QR code (or go to [linktr.ee/centrallutheranchurch](http://linktr.ee/centrallutheranchurch)) to connect with us, join our mailing list, or donate online.**

**Our Prayer List:** Please submit your prayer requests to the church office via email ([central.lutheran.dallas@gmail.com](mailto:central.lutheran.dallas@gmail.com)) or via phone (214-327-2222).

**PRAYERS FOR HEALING & COMFORT**

**For healing**

Ruth & Eddie Steiner

Charlotte Breedlove

Irisz Gonda

Tracee Bond

Paula & Robin Holland

Michael DuCote

Eloy Aguirre

Selena Dybdahl

**Relationship**

Sister & Brother-in-law of Susan

Wrobbel and Judy Koble

Neighbor of Harold Jones

Friend of Pastor Veronika

Friend of Charlotte Danielson

Friends of Anne Monson

Friend of Rachel Brown

Friend of Pr. Veronika

Sister of Mary Glenn

**Church Members**

Lydia Landfair

Don Smith

Mario Montejo

Kris McDowell

Yuvonne Muirhead

Paul Chambers

**Those We Mourn**

Vivian Curry

# Central Lutheran Church



Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America

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