



***St. Matthew Lutheran Church  
Christmas Eve Holy Communion Candlelight Service***

***December 24, 2025***

***7:00 p.m.***

E-mail: [stmatthewmartinsburg@gmail.com](mailto:stmatthewmartinsburg@gmail.com)

Website: [www.STMATTHEWLC.com](http://www.STMATTHEWLC.com)

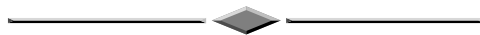
Pastor Traci Marriott 814-935-9267

9:30 Sunday School

10:30 a.m. Worship

**NOTES ON THE SERVICE**

- At the end of the service please return the candle and candleholder to an Usher as you leave.
- Individual candles will be lit following the Post Communion Prayer
- Safety Precaution: When lighting candles, tilt the *unlighted* candle over the burning one.



AN \* INDICATES TO STAND AS YOU ARE ABLE.

**PRELUDE**

Mary Nelson, Alyssa Clark

**WELCOME**

**\*INVOCATION AND ABSOLUTION**

*P:* Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, the Word made flesh, our life and our salvation. **C: Amen.**

*P:* Hear the good news: We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In ✠ Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God. **C: Amen.**

**\*HYMN**

*O, Come, All Ye Faithful*

ELW # 283



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O  
2 The 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*



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



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

## **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

*P: 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. **C: Amen.**

## **THE FIRST LESSON *Isaiah 9:2-7***

<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>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. <sup>4</sup>For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. <sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

<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.

*A: The word of the Lord. C: Thanks be to God.*



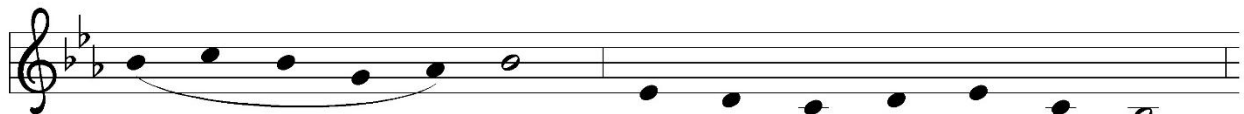
1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten ere the worlds be -  
 2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, when the vir - gin,  
 3 This is he whom seers in old time chant - ed of with  
 4 Let the heights of heav'n a - dore him; an - gel hosts, his  
 5 Christ, to thee, with God the Fa - ther, and, O Ho - ly



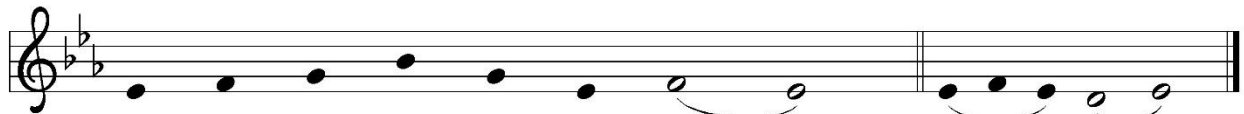
gan to be, he is Al - pha and O - me - ga,  
 full of grace, by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,  
 one ac - cord, whom the voic - es of the proph - ets  
 prais - es sing; pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore him  
 Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing



he the source, the end - ing he, of the things that are, that  
 bore the Sav - ior of our race, and the babe, the world's re -  
 prom - ised in their faith - ful word; now he shines, the long - ex -  
 and ex - tol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be  
 and un - wea - ried prais - es be: hon - or, glo - ry, and do -



have been, and that fu - ture years shall see,  
 deem - er, first re - vealed his sa - cred face,  
 pect - ed; let cre - a - tion praise its Lord  
 si - lent, ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring  
 min - ion, and e - ter - nal vic - to - ry



ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more.  
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more! A - men.

## **\*THE GOSPEL**

*P:* The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the Second chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

*The Reading of the Gospel of St. Luke 2:1-20*

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <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.

<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, 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, 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. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

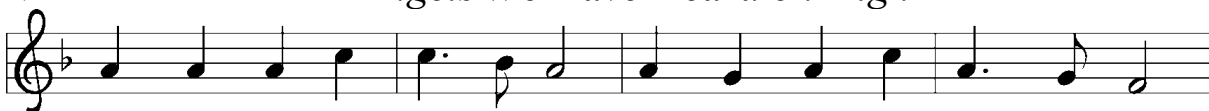
*P:* The Gospel of the Lord. **C: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**THE HOMILY**

*Pastor Traci Marriott*

\*HYMN

*Angels We Have Heard on High*



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.



Glo - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo -



ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

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

\*THE NICENE CREED

*P:* Let us confess our faith through the words of the Nicene Creed.

***C:* 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; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.**

**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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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.**

## **\*THE PRAYERS**

*P:* Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

*P:* Gathering God, you bring your people from every corner of the earth together before the manger that you have made a throne. Unite the church in love as we rejoice in the news of your coming. Hear us, O God. **C: Your mercy is great.**

*P:* Creating God, you brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Join our voices with the roaring seas, the exulting fields, and the trees of the forest singing for joy on this holy night. Hear us, O God. **C: Your mercy is great.**

*P:* Transforming God, the world trembles amid violence and war. Empower our hands, feet, and hearts with your Spirit to shatter the rod of the oppressor and turn swords into plowshares. Hear us, O God. **C: Your mercy is great.**

*P:* Shepherding God, you lead us to your love in the face of our neighbor. Send us into the world to find your Word made flesh in one another, especially those who are sick or struggling. Hear us, O God. **C: Your mercy is great.**

*P:* Nurturing God, you dwell with us in humble places. Sustain housing and clothing ministries in this community, that all find shelter and warmth. We pray especially for youth seeking safety and care. Hear us, O God. **C: Your mercy is great.**

*P:* Abiding God, you remain at the side of all the departed. Grant all who mourn hope in the resurrection and peace in Christ Jesus. Hear us, O God. **C: Your mercy is great.**

*P:* With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **C: Amen.**

## **\*THE PEACE**

*P:* The peace of the LORD be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

*Please share the peace with those around you using a greeting that is comfortable for both you and them.*

## **\*OFFERTORY PRAYER**

*An offering plate is located near the entrance to the nave;  
we offer thanks for the abundance God has first shown us:*

*A: Let us pray...* God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. **C: Amen.**

### **\*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING & PROPER PREFACE**

*P:* The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

*P:* Lift up your hearts. **C: We lift them to the Lord.**

*P:* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

*P:* It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord.

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.

### **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER & WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

*P:* Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, in the beginning your word brought light into the whole world.

In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

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: Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **C: Amen.**

### **\*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 THE TABLE**

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

**C: Thanks be to God.**



1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,  
 2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,  
 3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,  
 4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
 and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.  
 who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow:  
 when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king.”  
 A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,  
 look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;  
 when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.  
 and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.  
 oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!  
 and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810–1876

Music: CAROL, Richard S. Willis, 1819–1900

### \*THE POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

*P:* 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.**

### A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

(INDIVIDUAL CANDLES WILL BE LIGHTED DURING THE READING.)

**\*HYMN**

*Silent Night, Holy Night!*



*Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,*  
1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,  
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake  
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



*ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.*  
all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.  
at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,  
love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



*Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher*  
Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly  
heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is  
with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



*Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.*  
peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!  
birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885  
Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

**\*BENEDICTION**

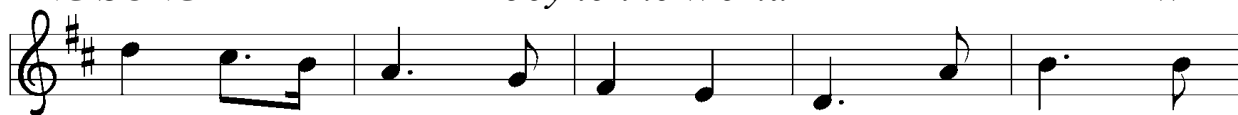
*P:* The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, † bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy. **C: Amen.**

(INDIVIDUAL CANDLES ARE EXTINGUISHED.)

**\*SENDING SONG**

*Joy to the World*

ELW # 267



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing  
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
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.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

**\*THE DISMISSAL**

*P:* Glory to God in the highest!

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

*P:* Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

***C:* Thanks be to God.**

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Also, please be advised that our parking lot has surveillance cameras and  
that our worship service is video recorded.

## Serving God and Us

Our Ministers - the People of St. Matthew  
Our Pastor – Rev. Traci Marriott  
Our Organists – Mary Nelson, DeAnna Cree  
Our Missionary Family – Robin Abrol, On Eagle’s Wings  
Our Administrative Assistant – Jen Ripka  
Our Assistant Administrative Assistant – Laura Orczeck  
Our Sexton – Phil Claar  
Our Assisting Minister – Jane Fagans  
Our Lector – Andrea Paul  
Our Acolytes – Gabby Decker, Lily Lightner, Lucy Lightner  
Our Usher – Martie Gilbert  
Our Altar Guild – Jeannie Smith, Cindy Snyder, Jane Fagans  
Our Audio/Video Tech – Jay Hoenstine  
Our Offering Counters – Jim Barley, Beth Garner

### Fourth Quarter Ventures in Faith to “*United Lutheran Seminaries*”

#### A Christmas Message from Interim Bishop Barbara Collins



*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. John 1:1-5*  
“In the beginning...”

What was your “beginning” memory of Christmas? The lights? The giving and receiving of gifts? The gathering of family? The music of the season? Baby Jesus? For me, it was sitting in a church sanctuary with everyone holding small lit candles while singing Silent Night. Even as young as I was, I knew it was a special night, a Holy Night, even though I didn’t fully understand the depth of God’s Word made flesh. The depth of God’s gift to us in Jesus – the reason for our gathering and our worship that night.

I once asked a class of students what they felt was the most important holiday for the church and for them. Their answer was Christmas! I asked why. And they said, “That’s when Jesus was born!” Our limited human understanding of life inevitably sees birth as the beginning. But this reading from the gospel of John speaks of another “beginning.” The beginning of all things with the Word, who was with God and who was God. The Word from whom all things came into being.

Jesus is the Word, was with God and is God from the very beginning. In him is the beginning of life, and all stages of life. In him is the light of all people, shining for us through our brightest and darkest days. Through him we see, and experience, God’s glory full of grace and truth which leads us through all the days of our lives, from our beginning to our end.

Together, we have journeyed to the end of another year and now look toward the future year with hope and expectation. There are new things on the horizon, new things coming into being, all of which continue to be surrounded and guided by the Holy One who has been with us from the beginning. May God’s holy light shine on our path and through us as children of the light.

*Holy One, who is the Word, we give thanks for our beginning with you. We celebrate your birth, when you became flesh to live among us, the greatest gift from the greatest love. Continue to guide us, to light our way, and help us remember that your beginning in our lives never ends. In your holy name we pray. Amen.*