

Christmas Eve at Home



Muhlenberg Lutheran Church



A Wellspring of God's Grace

The Nativity of Our Lord ~ Christmas Eve ~ DECEMBER 24, 2020

WELCOME TO WELLSTREAM WORSHIP

We welcome you in the name of Christ to this digital form of worship. You are encouraged to join in all parts of worship, responding and worshipping as you would in person. Everything you need is printed in this worship booklet so that you may follow along with the worship leaders. Portions of worship in bold print are to be spoken/sung by the whole congregation, wherever you are. We stand for portions of our worship service, and invite you to do this as it is comfortable. If you are watching this service LIVE, we encourage you to engage with other members of the community in the comments on either Facebook or YouTube—responding to prayers, offering prayer requests, or sharing the peace.

We recognize that worship and the formation of community are central to living out our mission in the world. Worship is where we gather around the true Wellspring of God's Grace—the Word and Sacraments of Jesus Christ—in order that we might find renewal, and become a source of this same grace in our daily living. Worship, and the community we find there, is at the heart of who we are. However, in this season of Social Distancing in the midst of COVID-19, the best way to be community, is to not be in community. This service is not meant to replace face-to-face community, and digital worship cannot provide the sacramental nature of worship to those who engage online. However, this can be a powerful tool in this difficult season for connecting and equipping all people to live out Christ's love.

CONNECT WITH US ON SUNDAYS

Worship with the 8:30 am communion service via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84731416878>.

Worship with the 11:00 am service on Facebook or YouTube. Connect on the homepage of our [website](#), or visit Muhlenberg's [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#) channel.

Join us for fellowship via [Zoom](#) each Sunday from 8:30-11:00 am. Christian Formation (Sunday School) classes begin at 9:30 am, and all are welcome to join classes or stay in "The Gathering Area" for conversation. Full group Coffee Hour begins at 10:30 am. If you'd like a private word with the pastor on call, or would like a room to catch up with a small group, we have private breakout rooms for that! You're welcome to join whenever you'd like! Join each week at this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84731416878>.

GIVE ONLINE

While we aren't meeting in person, the work of the church has not ceased. Please don't forget your financial gifts to God's mission in this place. You may mail your check to the church (281 E. Market St, Harrisonburg, VA 22801) or give online at www.muhlenberglutheran.org/give.

PREPARE YOUR HEART AND MIND FOR CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

- Have candles and matches ready for the Service of Light—pick up at the church between 3:00-6:00 pm or use whatever you have at home
- Gather your family together—avoid distractions and make worship something for all
- Project the feed on your largest screen—it will feel more like you're "there"
- Sing along loud and proud—yes, it feels weird, but it feels weird for those leading worship in an empty room too!
- Engage in the message—let this time be the beginning of a conversation with your friends and family; call and check in with others who "went to church"
- Trust that even though this year is very different, Christ is still born among us!

MUHLENBERG LUTHERAN CHURCH: A WELLSPRING OF GOD'S GRACE

Open ✝ Authentic ✝ Relational ✝ Serving

Pastor Lauren Eanes

Pastor Alex Zuber

281 E. Market Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

(540) 434-3496
www.muhlenberglutheran.org

If you're interested in why we do what we do, follow the notes in this column.

SERVICE OF THE WORD

GATHERING

We come from our homes, our labor, our struggles, and our joys – which we share in fellowship as a Christian community. We are gathered together as God's people to worship.

PRELUDE

O Come O Come Emmanuel (adapt. J. Schmidt, 2013)

Cello & Piano

A Rose E'er Blooming (E. Larter)

Flute & Piano

Angelic Invitation (C. McClure)

Combined Children's Choir

WELCOME

CHILDREN'S TIME *Children are invited forward for a brief message with the pastor.*

(We stand)

CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION

This contemporary version of an ancient proclamation places the birth of Christ into human history. The last phrase reminds us that the nativity of Jesus is not only then but now, today, in our own time.

Many ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed man and woman in his own image;
long after the great flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant;
twenty-one centuries from the time the promise was given to Abraham and Sarah;
thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt and Miriam danced in freedom;
eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges;
one thousand years from the anointing of David as king,
in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days discerned by the prophets;
in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;
the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome;
the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;
while the whole world enjoyed a span of peace,
Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father,
desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming,
being conceived by the Holy Spirit and nine months of growth in the womb of his mother—
now in our own times is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.

We sing as the Spirit gathers us for worship. This hymn sets the tone for the day.

GATHERING HYMN ~ O Come All Ye Faithful

The congregation turns and faces the cross as the procession approaches the altar, reminding us that Christ leads us into the presence and love of God.

we sing verses 1-3

O, Come, All Ye Faithful



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!

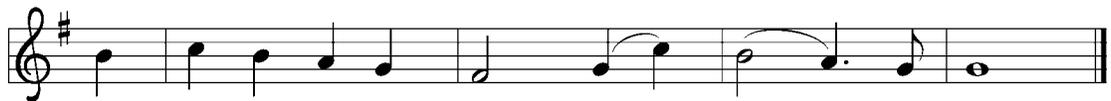


come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:
Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:
Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

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!

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.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

Angels We Have Heard on High

This prayer
collects the
themes from
today's scripture
readings.



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.

Refrain



Glo - ri - a



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



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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.**

(We sit)

Liturgy, from the Greek, means “the work of the people.” Our worship is designed so we all take part. We are far more than just spectators.

The scripture readings follow a four-year cycle called the Narrative Lectionary. We are connected with other Christians all over the world, in many denominations, reading the same texts.

WORD

The first half of our liturgy focuses on the Word of God through the reading of scripture and preaching. The pattern of reading, singing, reading, singing is an ancient one, which comes from Christianity’s roots in Jewish synagogue worship.

READING ~ Isaiah 9:2-7

² 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. ³You 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. ⁴For 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. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For 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. ⁷His 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.

The reading concludes:

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM ~ Bethlehem Night (T. Taylor, 2008)

Tween Choir

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly



1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, an - gels sing - ing, bells are ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing:
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

We stand during
the gospel because
we believe our
Lord is present
with us in the
reading.

CHRISTMAS GOSPEL ~ Luke 2:1-20

Kathy Thompson, Biblical Storyteller

We invite you to put your bulletin down and listen to the Biblical Storyteller.

The Holy Gospel according to ... **Glory to you, O Lord.**

After the reading:

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

(We sit)

SERMON

Pastor Alex Zuber

(We stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

It Came upon the Midnight Clear



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.

The creeds (statements of faith) date back to the 4th century and contain the basics of what Christians around the world hold to be true.

The use of the non-capitalized word "catholic" here means simply worldwide or universal.

We pray as a community. The assisting minister leads this time to gather the prayers of all, and at his/her invitation you may add others aloud or silently in your heart.

NICENE CREED

Let us confess our faith:

**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.
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.**

PRAYERS

After each petition:

. . . Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

The presiding minister concludes the prayers:

**Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray,
trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.**

Amen.

Have a prayer concern to share? Share it live or email it to info@muhlenberglutheran.org.

Much more than a pleasant greeting – we do this to proclaim God’s promise of peace to one another.

Our offerings are collected and dedicated to our Lord’s service. They support the ministries of Christ’s church in this congregation, the Virginia Synod, ELCA, and our global mission partners.

This Service of the Word derives its pattern from the service of Holy Communion. Although a weekly celebration of the Lord’s Supper is the norm, a service of the word of God is also celebrated regularly or occasionally in many places.

Gathered by the Holy Spirit, we hear and proclaim the saving word of God for all the world. We give thanks for that saving word and all the gifts of God, who then sends us to share the good news we have received and to care for those in need.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

The congregation may greet one another with a gesture of peace, using these or similar words:
“Peace be with you.”

(We sit)

THANKSGIVING

We give thanks for the saving word and all the gifts of God, who then sends us to share the good news we have received and to care for those in need.

OFFERING ~ O Holy Night (A. Adam, 1993)

Vocal Solo

(We stand)

OFFERING PRAYER

Good and loving God, **we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be a blessing for others. With all heaven and earth, we sing for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

CHRISTMAS THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Holy God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, wonderful Counselor, at the beginning your Word brought light into the world, and throughout the ages, you proclaim newness of life. For your wondrous Word, we thank you, O God.

We thank you, O God.

In the fullness of time, your Word became flesh, to shine in our world’s darkness, to speak peace to all peoples, and to welcome us as members of your family. For your loving Word, we adore you, O God.

We adore you, O God.

Grant us now the gift of your Spirit, that held, nourished, and protected by your Word, we may live as your children, bearing your goodness throughout the world. For your powerful Word, we praise you, O God.

We praise you, O God.

All glory to you, holy God, now and forever.

Amen.

Jesus taught his disciples this prayer. In this prayer, all our needs and concerns are addressed. See ELW page 1163 for Martin Luther's explanation of this prayer in the small catechism.

Symbolically, we receive and share the light and love of Christ – banishing the darkness.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

As the pastors light the candles, you are invited to light your own candles at home. We give thanks for the glory of God shining forth from a manger in Bethlehem, where the Light of the World is humbly born into the darkness of human night.

CANDLE LIGHTING HYMN – Silent Night, Holy Night!

~see next page~

Silent Night, Holy Night!

Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht!



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.

SENDING

Our worship does not end, but continues in the world. In our daily lives we are called to be ministers of God's love and mercy as we live and serve by the power of the risen Christ.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, Son of God, Love's Pure Light, by your holy birth you have brought us dignity, hope, and salvation. May the beams radiating from your face shine in our hearts and lives. May the good news of your birth pierce the silence of this and every night. And may you lead us from this place into the darkness of the world, there to share your glorious presence and love. **Amen.**

In this blessing we are reminded we bear God's name as we depart to live out our baptism, serving our neighbor and spreading the gospel.

We gather once more in song as our worship concludes, and we prepare to take this good news into the world.

Feel free to stay and listen to music.

BLESSING

Grace from God's own heart, peace from the ☩ Child in the manger, and strength from the Spirit of life be blessings for you today and forever.

Amen.

(Extinguish Candles)

SENDING HYMN

Joy to the World



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.

DISMISSAL

Glory to God in the highest!

Peace to God's people on earth!

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE ~ Go, Tell It on the Mountain (Spiritual, arr. K. Wissinger) Gloria Dei Ringers

PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

PREACHING MINISTER ~ Pastor Alex Zuber

PRESIDING MINISTER ~ Pastor Lauren Eanes

LAY ASSISTING MINISTER ~ Meg Wightman

MUSICIANS ~ Elizabeth Williams, Music Minister

Rachel Peters, Flutist

Gloria Dei Ringers; Kath Wissinger, Handbell Director

Cherub Choir and Tween Choir

Jenny Anne Flory, Vocal Soloist

Edward Gant, Cellist

Alice Wightman, Organist for hymn "Joy to the World"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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