

PRELUDE**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS****CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace. **Amen.**

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin. Reconciling God,
we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; we have not always embraced your message of peace. We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear. We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones; our reluctance to embody your good news. Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. **Amen.**

God's grace upon grace flows over you. ✙ Christ's presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad! **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG*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!

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

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

GREETING**ELW p. 203**

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.

KYRIE**ELW p. 203**

Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.

We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.

Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.

Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.

Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart.

Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!

CANTICLE OF PRAISE**ELW p. 204**

Glory be to God in heaven; peace, goodwill to all the earth.

Mighty God of all creation, Father of surpassing worth:

we exalt you, we adore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.

Saints and angels bow before you; here on earth our songs we raise.

Glory be to Christ forever, Lamb of God and Lord of love.

Son of God and gracious Savior, you have come from heav'n above;

on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.

Hear our prayer; restore, forgive us; in your promise firm we stand.

Holy One we now acclaim you; Lord alone, to you we call;

Holy One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:

Jesus Christ, with God the Spirit, in the Father's splendor bright.

For the peace that we inherit, glory be to God on high!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

CHILDREN'S READING

FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:7-9

⁷ I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. ⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not act deceitfully," and he became their savior ⁹ in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. The word of the Lord.

SECOND READING: Hebrews 2:10-18

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you." ¹³ And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I and the children whom God has given me." ¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested. The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW p. 205

Alleluia! Lord and Savior: open now your saving word.

Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred.

Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:13-23

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹³ Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." ¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: ¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more." ¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

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

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *Let All Together Praise Our God*

ELW 287

1 Let all together praise our God before the highest throne;
today God opens heav'n again and sends the only Son,
and sends the only Son.

3 O tender Child, you veil in flesh the splendor of your might;
a servant's garb now wraps the one who clothed the sky with light,
who clothed the sky with light.

5 A wonderful exchange you make: you take our flesh and blood,
and in return give us to share the shining realm of God,
the shining realm of God.

CREED

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

OFFERING *Away in a Manger*

ELW 277

1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.
God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand. (*We pray especially for . . .*) Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones (*especially*). Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING

DISMISSAL Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

1 Cold December flies away at the rose-red splendor.
April's crowning glory breaks while the whole world wonders
at the holy unseen pow'r of the tree which bears the flow'r.
On the blessed tree blooms the reddest flow'r.
On the tree blooms the rose here in love's own garden,
full and strong in glory.

2 In the hopeless time of sin shadows deep had fallen.
All the world lay under death. Eyes were closed in sleeping.
But, when all seemed lost in night, came the sun whose golden light
brings unending joy, brings the endless joy
of our hope, highest hope, of our hope's bright dawning,
Son belov'd of heaven.

POSTLUDE

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