

The Nativity of Our Lord

December 25, 2020 + Mount Olive Lutheran Church



Focus on the Season: The Nativity of Our Lord

On this Christmas festival the people of God gather around the world (and for most of us, separate from our faith communities) to celebrate the birth of the Word made flesh, Christ our Lord. Luke recounts the familiar story of shepherds and angels; John's gospel tells of the Word that dwells among us, full of grace and truth. We see in this birth the fulfilling of Isaiah's promise that the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. We go forth to be bearers of light as we proclaim this good news to all the ends of the earth.

Keep this document open on the screen, to aid in your worship today. The links are embedded in this pdf, so you don't have to return to the email. You can also print these pages and use the links in the email.



Centering and Gathering

Light your candle. [Start the video by clicking here](#); it will continue through the Postlude.

PRELUDE

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"	Hugo Distler
<i>Recorded by members of the Mount Olive Cantorei on December 9, 2020.</i>	
From <i>Messiah</i>	G. F. Handel
Pastoral Symphony	
Recitative for Soprano ("There were shepherds...")	
"Glory to God"	
<i>Recorded at Mount Olive on Christmas Eve, 2018.</i>	
"A Christmas Carol"	Charles Ives
<i>Recorded at Mount Olive on Christmas Eve, 2018.</i>	

Entrance Liturgy

PROCLAMATION OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Recorded on December 15, 2020.

HYMN: ELW 283, "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

Sung at Mount Olive on Christmas Eve, 2019.

GREETING

- P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- G** **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you gave us your only Son to take on our human nature and to illumine the world with your light. By your grace adopt us as your children and enlighten us with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

HYMN: “Break Forth, O Beauteous, Heavenly Light”

setting by J. S. Bach

Sung at Mount Olive on Christmas Eve, 2016.

Word

FIRST READING: John 1:1-14; reader – Andrew Andersen, lector

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

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

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

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.

ANTHEM: “The Glory of the Father”

Egil Hovland

Recorded by members of the Mount Olive Cantorei on December 9, 2020.

SECOND READING: Isaiah 9:2-7; reader – Amy Thompson, lector

²The 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.

ANTHEM: "For Unto Us a Child is Born" from *Messiah*
Sung by the Mount Olive Cantorei on Christmas Eve, 2018.

G. F. Handel

THIRD READING: Isaiah 52:7-10; reader – Judy Hinck, Assisting Minister

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."
⁸Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy;
for in plain sight they see
the return of the LORD to Zion.
⁹Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the LORD has comforted his people,
and has redeemed Jerusalem.
¹⁰The LORD has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

HYMN: *ELW 288, "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"*
Sung at Mount Olive on Christmas Day, 2017.

FOURTH READING: Hebrews 1:1-4; reader – Vicar Andrea Bonneville, lector

¹Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days God has spoken to us by a Son, whom God appointed heir of all things, through whom God also created the worlds. ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and sustains all things by his powerful word.

When the Son had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: *ELW 270, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" stanzas 1, 2*
Sung at Mount Olive on Christmas Eve, 2013.

HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

¹ In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ 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. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ 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.

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ 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: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom God favors!”

¹⁵ 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.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: ELW 270, “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” stanza 3

Sung at Mount Olive on Christmas Eve, 2013.

SERMON

Imprint

Pastor Joseph Crippen

Silence for reflection.

HYMN: “O Infinite Greatness, O Limitless Good”

Sung at Mount Olive on the Second Sunday of Christmas, January 5, 2020.

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

*Our Assisting Minister for today, Judy Hinek, has prepared intercessory prayers for us to pray this Christmas festival. As our prayers rise up from all over the metro area and beyond, once more we are joined together in Christ. (Our weekly prayer list is on the last page.) Response: **Hear our prayer.***

PEACE *Please greet one another with Christ's peace.*

OFFERING

There are ways to continue to give of your gifts to our shared work at Mount Olive during this time apart. *The Olive Branch* has suggested ways both electronic and by mail. See:

<https://www.mountolivechurch.org/resources/olive-branch-newsletter/>

Sending

HYMN: ELW 281, “Silent Night, Holy Night”

Sung at Mount Olive on Christmas Eve, 2018.

LORD'S PRAYER *Sing along with the congregation on the video.*

Sung at Mount Olive on The Fourth Sunday of Advent, year A, December 22, 2019.

PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS

P Let us pray. All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

G Amen.

SOLEMN BENEDICTION

P Coming to us as fully human, the Son of God scattered the darkness of this world, and filled the earth with God's glory. The God of infinite goodness scatter the darkness of sin and brighten your hearts with holiness.

G Amen.

P God sent angels to the shepherds to herald the great joy of our Savior's birth. God fill you with joy and make you heralds of the Gospel.

G Amen.

P When the Word became human, earth was joined to heaven. God give you peace and goodwill, and fellowship with the heavenly host.

G Amen.

P The blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever.

G Amen.

HYMN: *ELW 267, "Joy to the World"*

Sung at Mount Olive on Christmas Eve, 2019.

DISMISSAL *The assisting minister leads the dismissal.*

A Glory to God in the highest,

G and peace to God's people on earth!

A Go in peace. Share the Good News!

G Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE:

"In Dulci Jubilo"

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

Recorded on Wednesday, December 16, 2020.

String Ensemble: Marc Levine and Conor O'Brien, violins
Emily Hagen, viola
Jane Cords-O'Hara, 'cello
Mark Kausch, bass

Soloist: Susan Palo Cherwien

