

The Nativity of Our Lord: CHRISTMAS DAY

10:30 a.m. | December 25, 2024 | Service of the Word (Zoom)



University Lutheran Church
66 Winthrop Street, Cambridge, Mass.
unilu.org

Concordia Lutheran Church
86 Murray Avenue, Worcester, Mass.

PRELUDE “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come” [VOM HIMMEL HOCH DA KOMM’ ICH HER] (ELW 268) — Tune attributed to Martin Luther (1483–1546); setting by Johann Pachelbel (1653–1706)

GATHERING

WELCOME

A CHRISTMAS CALL TO WORSHIP

We waited,
And imagined a savior.

We imagined power,
One like the world but stronger and on our side.

We imagined a king on a white horse wielding a sword.
We received a baby born in a stable among the livestock.

We imagined the work done for us through the destruction of our enemies.
We received a baby who will teach us our calling to seek reconciliation and to love expansively.

Praise be to God for the unexpected babe of Bethlehem!
Praise to the wisdom of love. Amen!

GATHERING HYMN ELW 270 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new-born king;
2 Christ, by high - est heav’n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3 Hail the heav’n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness!

peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."
late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God - head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Refrain

Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king!"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.
Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831-1915

APOSTOLIC 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.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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 your and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING Isaiah 62:6–12

A reading from Isaiah.

⁶Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have posted sentinels; all day and all night they shall never be silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest, ⁷and give God no rest until God establishes Jerusalem and makes it renowned throughout the earth. ⁸The LORD has sworn by a raised right hand and a mighty arm: I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink the wine for which you have labored, ⁹but those who harvest it shall eat it and praise the LORD, and those who gather it shall drink it in my holy courts. ¹⁰Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway; clear it of stones; lift up an ensign over the peoples. ¹¹The LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to daughter Zion, “Look, your savior comes, bearing the reward, preceded by the recompense.” ¹²They shall be called, “The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD,” and you shall be called, “Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.”

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 98

All may sing the response and chant the verses.

Response

Bruce Brolsma



Shout with joy to the Lord,
all you lands; lift up your voice, and re-joyce, shout and sing!

Verse



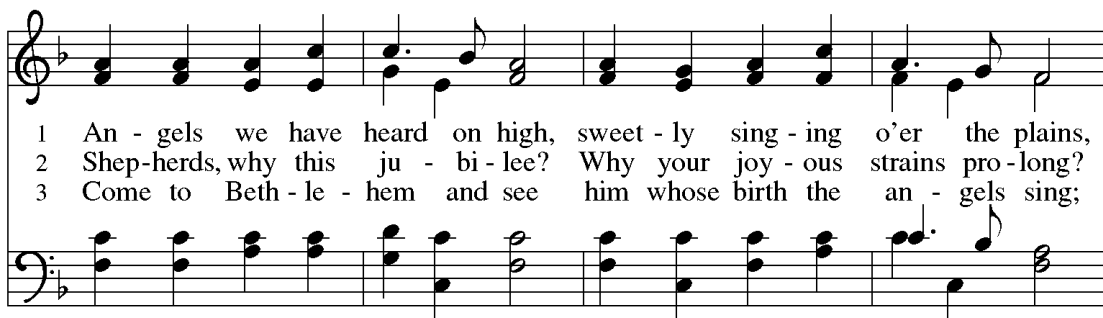
- ¹Sing a new song to the LORD, who has done | marvelous things,
whose right hand and holy arm have | won the victory.
- ²O LORD, you have made | known your victory,
you have revealed your righteousness in the sight | of the nations.
- ³You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the | house of Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen the victory | of our God.
- ⁴Shout with joy to the LORD, | all you lands;
lift up your voice, re- | joice, and sing. **Response**
- ⁵Sing to the LORD | with the harp,
with the harp and the | voice of song.
- ⁶With trumpets and the sound | of the horn
shout with joy before the | king, the LORD.
- ⁷Let the sea roar, and | all that fills it,
the world and those who | dwell therein.
- ⁸Let the rivers | clap their hands,
and let the hills ring out with joy before the LORD,
who comes to | judge the earth.
- ⁹The LORD will judge the | world with righteousness
and the peo- | ples with equity. **Response**

PSALM PRAYER

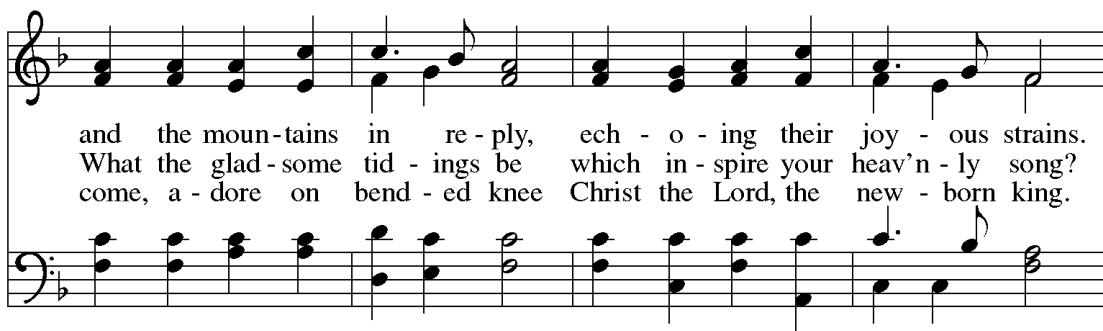
Let us pray.

Lord God, we sing to you a new song, for your mercy is ever new. In the incarnation of Jesus Christ you have given us an everlasting promise, and in your coming among us you have filled our hearts with your grace and truth. As the seas roar and the hills sing together, we too will praise you for your great love, Holy Parent, Holy Child, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

GOSPEL HYMN ELW 289 “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.

Refrain

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; arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1887–1958

GOSPEL Luke 2:8–20

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

⁸Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And 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!”

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

The gospel of the Lord.

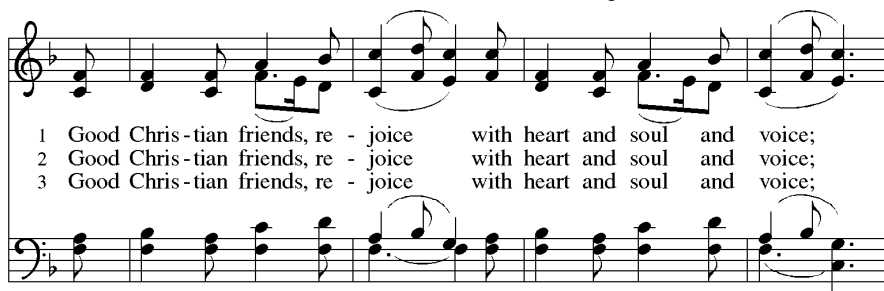
Praise to you, O Christ.

SPOKEN REFLECTION *Carrie Ballenger*

MUSICAL REFLECTION *Imogene Stulken*

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” [IN DULCI JUBILO] —
German carol (14th century); setting by Johann Michael Bach
(1648–1694)

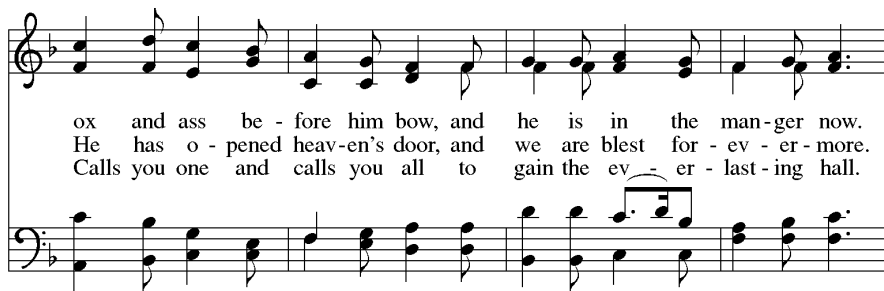
HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 288 “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”



1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi-ce with heart and soul and voice;
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi-ce with heart and soul and voice;
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi-ce with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.
 He has o - pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866
 Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.; arr. Robert L. Pearsall, 1795–1856

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Jesus Christ, born in a stable, be with the poor and homeless this Christmas time.

As we pray, live and give; shine your everlasting light.

Jesus Christ, born of Mary, be with young mothers across the world this Christmas time.

As we pray, live and give; shine your everlasting light.

Jesus Christ, visited by Shepherds, be with all who have to work this Christmas, and those who long to work.

As we pray, live and give; shine your everlasting light.

Jesus Christ, who became a refugee, be with those who fear for their lives, and those who have left homes and families this Christmas.

As we pray, live and give; shine your everlasting light.

Jesus our healer, give strength, comfort, and healing to those who are grieving, those who are sick, those who are lonely, and those who are nearing the end of their earthly journeys. We especially remember those people on the Concordia and UniLu prayer lists, and those we name before you now, either aloud or in our hearts.

All this we ask in the name of Jesus, born in Bethlehem and born today in our hearts. **Amen.**

PEACE

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

LORD'S PRAYER

Friends, it gladdens the heart of Jesus when we pray:

**God our Mother, God 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.**

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION "A Christmas Affirmation"

Let the love that shaped earth and heaven
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that created humanity
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that overcomes suffering and hatred
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that causes us to rejoice with loved ones
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that forgives and renews
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that brings reconciliation after separation
dwell within us this Christmas.

Let the love that brings the blessing of peace
dwell within us this Christmas.

And may we share that peace with all people near and far. **Amen!**

SENDING HYMN ELW 290 "Go Tell It on the Mountain"

Refrain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born;



Refrain



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

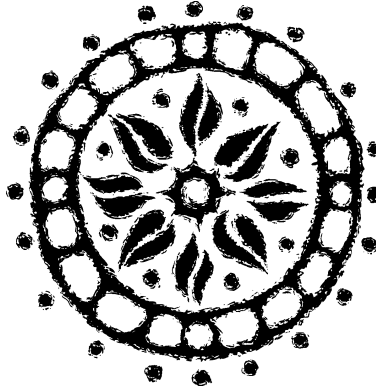


Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.
Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. The Word of God dwells in you richly.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE “Carol Fantasy” — Traditional carols; arranged by John Iveson (b. 1941)



SERVING TODAY

Preacher and Presiding Minister: Carrie Ballenger

Assisting Minister: Gracious Moyo

Reader: Brenda Genon

Musicians: Imogene Stulken (organ and keyboard), Holly Druckman (flute), Michael Neufeld (clarinet), Brian Tracey (trombone), Bruce Brolsma (keyboard), Kerstin Brolsma (voice), Dave Newsome (trumpet), Dave Douglas (trumpet), Bob Berens (French horn), Laura Meyer (French horn), Laura Tracey (tuba); and UniLu congregants (voice)

Tech Verger: Chris Pollari

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE are asked for:

Cheri Agaskar — UniLu member
David Bailey — friend of Gail Bucher
Ellen Bartlett — sister of Gail Bucher
Margrit Betke — UniLu member
Lorraine and Roland Blanchard — friends of Gail Bucher
Alice Conway — sister of Karin Kutrieb
Solveig Ericson — UniLu member
Bob Flannery — UniLu member
Family and friends mourning the death of Karen Gil
 — friend of Helen Schwickrath
George Gordon — UniLu member
Nancy Gould — UniLu member
Vera Ryen Gregg — UniLu member
Charles Jaferian — grandson of Nancy Gould
Friends and family mourning the death of Gail Kaepplein — UniLu alum
Friends and family mourning the death of Rev. Lynne Morrow
 — friend of Carrie Ballenger
Duncan McCoy Norton — son of Megan McCoy
Anne Minton — colleague of Imogene Stulken
Ambrose Moyo and family — friends of UniLu
The Ralston-Lamb family — UniLu members
Jeanette Searson — sister of Imogene Stulken
Judy Steele — sister of Phyllis Steele
Karen Worst — mother of Susan Worst

For our siblings at Faith Lutheran Church in Cambridge and their pastor, Robin Lütjohann.

For our siblings in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

In the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, we remember the peoples of Japan, North Korea, and South Korea.

We pray for all who are seeking refuge, who are facing immigration challenges, who have been deported to homes that are not home, and who have been separated from their families.

(revised 12/23/2024)

*Join us for the following services during the
Christmas season and time of Epiphany!*

Sun., Dec. 29, 10:30 a.m. (hybrid worship) — Lessons and Carols
with Holy Communion for the First Sunday of Christmas

Sun., Jan. 5, 10:30 a.m. (hybrid worship) — Epiphany of Our Lord

Sun., Jan. 12, 10:30 a.m. (hybrid worship) — Baptism of Our Lord
and Reception of New Members



SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Carrie Ballenger, *Pastor*

Gracious Moyo, *Associate Pastor*

Laurel Oberstadt-Petrik, *Ministry Intern*

Kristian Kohler, *Office Administrator*

Lorraine Fitzmaurice, *Music Director—Choir / Building Manager*

Imogene Stulken, *Music Director—Organ*

Hanqi Zhang, *Tech Verger*

Jessica Chicka, *Boston University Chaplain for International Students*

Brian Tracey, *Council President*

Ed Bucher, *Treasurer and Bookkeeper*

Gail Bucher, *Service Deacon*

Chris Porter, *Financial Secretary*

Susan Worst, *Webmaster*

Joyce DeGreeff, *Lutheran Chaplain at Northeastern University*

Andrew Heisen, *Lutheran Chaplain at MIT*

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Welcome to University Lutheran Church, a Christian witness and ministry of and to members of the academic and wider communities in Cambridge-Boston — and, virtually, across the world! We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation, welcoming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. We are also a member congregation of the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO).

Land Acknowledgment: *University Lutheran Church is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Pawtucket and Massa-adchu-es-et (Massachusetts) peoples, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have called, and who continue to call, this land their home.*