

Festival of Our Lord's Nativity

December 25, 2023

Order of Worship: Holy Communion, Setting Four

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PRELUDE & BELLS *We observe a moment of silence for prayer and meditation.*

WELCOME *congregation responds* **and unto ages of ages. Amen.**

We stand **OPENING HYMN**

#298

“The Bells of Christmas”

✠**HOLY COMMUNION**✠

GREETING

Jesus Christ is born. Alleluia. Alleluia.

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.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

“Glory Be to God”

tune “Joyful, Joyful”

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

Let us pray... 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.**

WORD

Next Steps Weekly Memory Verse

A holy day has dawned upon us. Come, you nations, and adore the LORD. For today a great light has come upon the earth.

We sit FIRST READING: ISAIAH 62:6-12

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 him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it renowned throughout the earth. ⁸The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by his 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 garner 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, "See, your salvation comes; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him." ¹²They shall be called, "The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord"; and you shall be called, "Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken."

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

We stand. GOSPEL VERSE: John 6:68

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GOSPEL READING: LUKE: 2:8-20

Glory to You, O Lord.

⁸In that 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 he 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. ¹⁹But 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, as it had been told them.

The Gospel of the Lord **Praise to You, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

#268

“From Heav’n Above”

vv1-4, 8

We sit. SERMON

Love in the Ruins
Not Forsaken

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

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.

*means whole, entire Christian

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

O come, let us adore Christ our Lord, and kneel before him with our prayers and supplications.

A brief silence

Father, we praise you for your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Savior. Let Jesus fill us with grace and truth, so that our joy may be complete. Provide the Church with pastors, bishops, and theologians who teach and admonish your people in all wisdom. By the gift of your Spirit, let the Church's every word and deed be in the name of the Lord Jesus, to your glory and for the good of all whom he came to save.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are persecuted for Jesus' sake. Let the peace of Christ rule their hearts, so that their tormentors repent, and flee to the Savior for forgiveness. Make this congregation a company of the upright. Help us to proclaim your mighty works of salvation. We pray for mission to develop fully devoted followers of Jesus; to support Solid Rock our mission in action; and that you send us adults for baptisms. Use us to draw our neighbors, friends, and families to faith in your dear Son.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give our earthly leaders the holy fear that is the beginning of wisdom. Help them to study your works and perform your precepts. Let faithfulness and uprightness, graciousness and mercy, guide those who take counsel for the nations. Bestow upon all peoples the blessings of food, shelter, health, honest work, justice, and peace. Shield and guide all who risk their lives on behalf of others. Give their loved ones hope and patience. Bring healing and comfort to the wounded, and redemption to the fallen. Establish your peace among us all, so weapons of war may be shaped into instruments of your peace.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Be gracious and merciful to all whose lives are shadowed by suffering in this season of light, including: {List}. Let them see your salvation,³¹ dwell in your love, and glorify you, surrounded by all who love them.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear Father, you have bestowed on our beloved dead the fullness of your salvation, and we commend them into your care. While we walk the pilgrim-path of life, let your dear Son's Spirit dwell in us richly, filling us with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. For these are the gifts of Christmas that shall last forever.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive our prayers, dear Father, for the sake of your dear Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also, with you.**

We briefly greet those in our row with a handshake and the words "Peace be with you."

We sit OFFERING, OFFERTORY SONG & PRAYER- *Giving back to God*



First- and second-time guests are not expected to give a monetary offering.

Your Connection Card and your presence this morning are your gifts.

Safe, secure & easy electronic giving is available by scanning this code& on our website

stpeterhallettsville.org/giving

We stand #294

“In the Bleak Midwinter

v3 only

3 What... can I give him, poor... as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;

if I were a wise... man I would do my part;

yet what can I give him...give my heart.

BLESSING OF TOYS & GIFTS

Gracious Heavenly Father...of the child of Bethlehem we pray. **Amen.**

OFFERING PRAYER

Blessed are you...Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

"Lift Up Your Hearts"

tune "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful"

The Lord be with you...

And with you, His servant.

Oh, come, let us lift our hearts . . . unto the Lord.

With hearts . . . uplifted, thanks to Him we render:

With joy we come before Him,

in gratefulness implore Him,

With thankful hearts adore Him Evermore!

It is indeed right and salutary . . . and join their unending hymn:

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

tune "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Holy, holy, holy Lord!

God of hosts, by all adored!

Heaven and earth cannot contain.

All of the glory of your name!

Hail, hosanna, God most high!

Blest is He who now draws nigh

In the name of God the King!

Hallelujahs glad we sing:

Hail hosanna! Praises due

be forever, Lord, to You!

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER & WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven & earth...

As he comes to us in his holy supper. **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

In the night in which he was betrayed, ... Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

tune "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

Our Father, Lord on heaven's high throne, Most holy be Your name.
Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth– In heaven the same.
Give us this day the food we need; Forgiven may we be;
Into temptation do not lead. From evil set us free.

Yours is the kingdom; unto you In grateful love we bow;
And yours the power; Lord, let us view Your mighty presence now.
The glory yours; your praise be sung By angel hosts and men
In every land, by every tongue Forevermore! Amen

We sit. INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The gifts of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Communion is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ present and received in, with, and under the bread and wine. All who are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and who believe the Lord's words "This is my body given for you" and "This is my blood poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins" may receive Communion. Young children, not yet receiving Communion, may receive a blessing.

(Matt 26:26ff, Mark 14:22ff, Luke 22:19ff, 1 Cor. 11:24ff)

Communion administration occurs by row by intinction. To receive the host, extend your hand, palm up; you may dip the wafer into the chalice. For those unable to consume either bread or wine, the Church affirms the Lord's full presence in each element alone. Once you have received the elements, return to your seat by the side aisles. If you do not desire to receive Holy Communion, you may remain seated

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"Lamb of God"

p154 John 1:29

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;

grant us peace, grant us peace.

We stand POST-COMMUNION BLESSING, SONG, & PRAYER
May the body and blood...keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

#268

"From Heav'n Above"

vv12-14

Let us pray... we give thanks to you, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing powers of this gift of life. In your mercy strengthen us through this gift in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Silence is kept for reflection.

BENEDICTION

"Aaronic Blessing"

tune "Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful"

The Lord bless and keep you, look with love upon you.

Be gracious, and cause His face to shine . . . with peace!

Glory to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

The Savior close beside us,

God's love from harm to hide us,

The Spirit's power to guide us evermore!

We stand. CLOSING HYMN

#279

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

ST. PETER LUTHERAN CHURCH
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Our mission is Christ's mission – "I will build my church"
by developing fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Opening Hymn "The Bells of Christmas" (#298)

Text by Charles Porterfield Krauth; Music by Carl Balle

1 The bells of Christmas chime once more;
the heav'nly guest is at the door.
He comes to earthly dwellings still
with new year gifts of peace, good will.

2 This world, though wide and far outspread,
could scarcely find for you a bed.
Your cradle was a manger stall,
no pearl nor silk nor kingly hall.

3 Now let us go with quiet mind,
the swaddled babe with shepherds find,
to gaze on him who gladdens them,
the loveliest flow'r of Jesse's stem.

4 Oh, join with me, in gladness sing,
to keep our Christmas with our king,
until our song, from loving souls,
like rushing mighty water rolls!

5 O patriarchs' Joy, O prophets' Song,
O Dayspring bright, awaited long,
O Son of Man, incarnate Word,
great David's Son, great David's Lord:

6 Come, Jesus, glorious heav'nly guest,
and keep your Christmas in our breast;
then David's harpstrings, hushed so long,
shall swell our jubilee of song.

Hymn of the Day: "From Heaven Above" (#268)

Text & Music by Martin Luther

vv1-4, 8

1 From heav'n above to earth I come
to bear good news to ev'ry home!
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
to all the world, and gladly sing:"

2 "To you this night is born a child
of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
this newborn child of lowly birth
shall be the joy of all the earth."

3 "This is the Christ, God's Son most high,
who hears your sad and bitter cry,
who will himself your Savior be
and from all sin will set you free."

4 "The blessing that the Father planned
the Son holds in his infant hand,
that in his kingdom, bright and fair,
you may with us his glory share."

8 Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,
through whom this sinful world is blest!
You turned not from our needs away;
how can our thanks such love repay?

Post Communion Hymn: "From Heav'n Above" (#268)

Text & Music by Martin Luther

vv12-14

12 Ah, dearest Jesus, holy child,
prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,
a quiet chamber in my heart,
that you and I may never part.

13 My heart for very joy now leaps;
my voice no longer silence keeps;
I too must sing with joyful tongue
the sweetest ancient cradle-song:

14 "Glory to God in highest heav'n,
who unto us the Son has giv'n."
With angels sing in pious mirth
a glad new year to all the earth!

Closing Hymn: “O Little Town of Bethlehem”(#279)

Text by Phillips Brooks; Music by Lewis H. Rednerr

**1 O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.**

**2 For Christ is born of Mary,
and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all the earth!**

**3 How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.**

**4 O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel!**



2023 Poinsettias adorning the church in celebration of Christ's birth are given by:

Michael & Whitney Adee & family

in honor of Maeve Lynch

Martha Bludau

in memory of all deceased family members
in honor of family & God's many blessings

James & Rida Chovanetz

in memory Fred & Tina Chovanetz
in memory of family members who have passed
in honor of our children & grandchildren

Shannon & Kari DeForest

in celebration of Olivia's Baptism

John & Cheryl Draper

in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Claude Draper
in memory of Mr. & Mrs. J.R. Thompson
in memory of Ms. Claudia Draper Tabor
in memory of Mrs. Florence Draper

Judy Drozd

For God's many Blessings

Dickie & Judy Garmon

in honor of our many blessings

Melanie Gilliam

in honor of granddaughter, McKenna Patterson

Warren & Barb Grindeland

Thankfulness for all of God's Blessings & Grace

Leonard & Carol Hollas

in memory of our parents



Mark & Debbie Hopper

in honor of our daughters, Amber Ferrell & Shelly McMillan

Gary Huser

in memory of Mom, Marie Huser

in honor of Norma Garcia

Barb Koehn Family

in memory of our beloved husband, Dad, Opa-Larry Koehn
and other family members who have joined God's Kingdom

Luther & Earlene Lorfing

in memory of John & Bessie Lorfing and Emil & Frances Melnar

Jennifer Martin

in memory of loved ones who have passed

Juliean Mihalovich & Joelle Williams-Mihalovich

in honor of Bill & Faith Williams

in memory of John & Bernice Kovacik

Doug & Ann Mischer

in memory of our daughter, Michele Mischer Staats

Max & Kathryn Murdock

John Parker

in celebration of Lucille's Birthday

June Pence

in memory of Bill & June Renger

Harvey & Karen Renger

in thanksgiving for all God's Blessings

Kay Rother & Family

For all God's Blessings

Mae Rother

in memory of James Rother and Lorre Rother Knebel



Darlene Stacy & Les Besetsny

in honor of Carrie Besetsny

Doug & Sharon Schaefer

in memory of Carolyn Boyd

Leroy & Mary Schroeder

for God's many Blessings

Linda Smith & Family

in memory of James Smith and Adela Claus

Rev. Jared, Donna, Maggie, & John Stillions

in memory of Clenon Tackett

Dondra & Jeremy Wilson

in honor of our "Bebe", Kay Rother

in honor of JoZelma Brown

Judy Winfield

in memory of Woodrow Winfield



St. Peter New Year's Schedule:

Sunday, Jan 31st 9:00 AM Epiphany | Lessons & Carols Service

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to worship with you this morning. We hope you will do so again. We celebrate Holy Communion worship at 9:00 AM & 5:00 PM on Sundays. Sunday worship is followed by coffee at 10:00 AM and then learning for all ages at 10:30 AM. We pray that you have a blessed Christmas and that the light of Jesus Christ shines brightly in your life.