

# *O Holy Night*



THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD  
TREE OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

# Welcome to Tree of Life Lutheran Church



December 24, 2023 ~ The Nativity of our Lord

Leader in regular type, **congregation in bold type**

↑ means stand as you are able

Restrooms are located by the kitchen, in the nursery or at the end of the piano wing of the sanctuary.

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## We Gather as God's People

**PRELUDE**

**"A Christmas Alleluia"**

**BLACK BINDER #30**

*The Tree of Life Choir will lead the song. You are invited to join as you wish.*

### ↑ **ANCIENT PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> day of December, according to the teaching of the Church;

many ages after God created the heavens and the earth,  
when man and woman were formed in God's own image;  
long after the great flood,  
when God set the rainbow in the clouds as a sign of the covenant;  
21 centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah;  
13 centuries after Moses led God's people to freedom;  
11 centuries from the time of Ruth and the judges;  
1,000 years from the anointing of David as king;  
in the 65<sup>th</sup> week as Daniel's prophecy takes note;  
in the 194<sup>th</sup> Olympiad;  
the 752<sup>nd</sup> year from the founding of the city of Rome;  
the 42<sup>nd</sup> year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;  
in the sixth age of the world, all earth being at peace,

Jesus Christ, eternal God, Son of the eternal Father, willing to hallow the world by his coming in mercy, was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea.

Come, now, let us go to Bethlehem, to join with the shepherds and the angels and with the Church from every time and place, as we gather to pray and worship our God. For today is the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh!

1 O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; come and behold him,  
born the king of angels:

*Refrain* O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

2 The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,  
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes; Son of the Father  
now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

3 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God  
in the highest: *Refrain*

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n! Word of the Father,  
now in flesh appearing: *Refrain*

↑ CHRISTMAS DIALOG AND GREETING

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

**We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.**

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

**In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.**

May the grace and truth of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

- 1 Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.

*Refrain* Gloria in excelsis Deo, gloria in excelsis Deo.

- 2 Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song? *Refrain*
- 3 Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king. *Refrain*

### ↑ PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray: 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 Hear God's Word

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

A reading from Isaiah:

<sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>You 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.

<sup>4</sup>For 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. <sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. <sup>6</sup>For 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. <sup>7</sup>His 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 Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: Psalm 96

<sup>1</sup>Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

<sup>2</sup>**Sing to the LORD, bless the name of the LORD;  
proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**

<sup>3</sup>Declare God's glory among the nations and God's wonders among all peoples.

<sup>4</sup>**For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised,  
more to be feared than all gods.**

<sup>5</sup>As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;  
but you, O LORD, have made the heavens.

<sup>6</sup>**Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;  
power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

<sup>7</sup>Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples,  
ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

<sup>8</sup>**Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the holy name;  
bring offerings and enter the courts of the LORD.**

<sup>9</sup>Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; tremble before the LORD, all the earth.

<sup>10</sup>**Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is king!  
The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved  
will judge the peoples with equity."**

<sup>11</sup>Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;  
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

<sup>12</sup>**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O LORD,  
for you come to judge the earth.**

<sup>13</sup>**You will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with your truth.**

## SECOND READING: Titus 2:11-14

A reading from Titus:

<sup>11</sup>The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, <sup>13</sup>while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

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

↑ **CAROL**

**“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”**

**RED HYMNAL #275**

- 1 Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
once you sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 2 Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing, yonder shines the infant light.  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 3 Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great desire of nations, you have seen his natal star.  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 4 All creation, join in praising God, the Father, Spirit, Son,  
evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One.  
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.

↑ **GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20**

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>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: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and

lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

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.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The 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.**

**SERMON**

**No Returns**

**Pr. Robbie**

↑ **CAROL**

**“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”**

**RED HYMNAL #270**

- 1 Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.”  
Joyful, all you nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;  
with angelic hosts proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

*Refrain*

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”

- 2 Christ, by highest heav’n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see! Hail, incarnate deity!  
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*
- 3 Hail the heav’n-born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings, ris’n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,  
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth. *Refrain*

## ↑ NICENE CREED

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, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who 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 OF INTERCESSION

Trusting in the newborn Lord, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors and all in need:

Glory to you, Almighty Father, for the song of the angels, proclaiming your Son's holy birth. Grant that your Church might always bring the Good News of peace and salvation to all people. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you for the stars that shine in the depth of night. Provoke awe in our hearts at the clear darkness of night and the first glimmers of dawn. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you for the Child who establishes a Kingdom of justice and righteousness. Break bonds of oppression, bring reconciliation to warring lands, and establish peace from this time onward and forevermore. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**



Glory to you for Mary's loving care. Lead us to tend to one-another in time of need. Share the comfort of your presence with all people tonight who are alone. Be with all in any trouble of body, mind or spirit, including those whom we now name aloud or in our hearts... *Time for personal petition.* Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you for the faithfulness of the shepherds in their vocation. Grant peace to families, retail and seasonal workers, and all who feel exhausted from their work during the holidays. Inspire Tree of Life to continue its vocation of love and service in your name. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you for the new and everlasting life that is given by your Son. Accept our thanksgiving for all in our lives who now rest in your eternal care, and sustain us in comfort and hope until the day we are reunited in Paradise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Rejoicing in your Word made flesh among us, we commend these prayers to you, confident of your grace and love made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior.  
**Amen.**

## ↑ PEACE

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

## We Share God's Holy Meal

### OFFERING

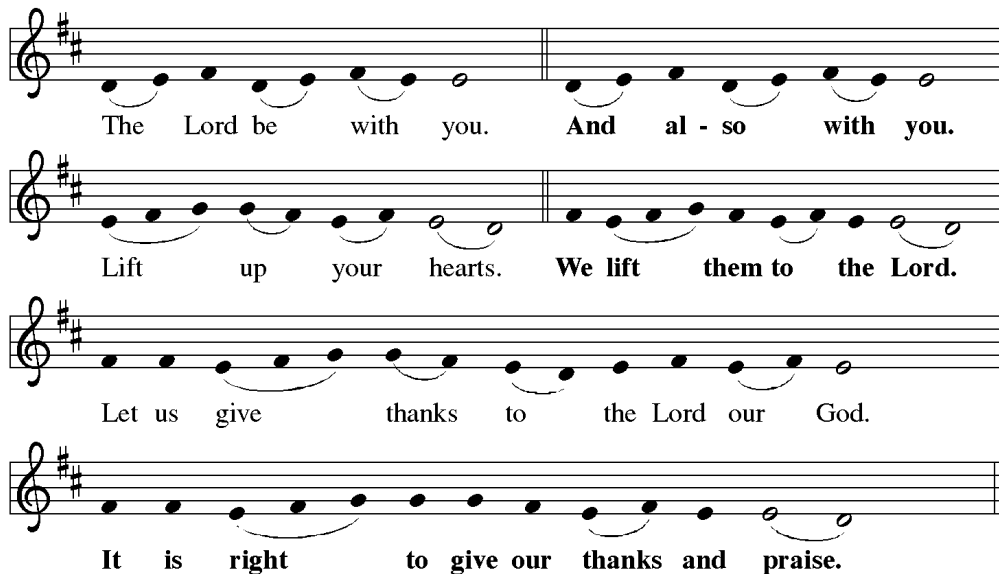
↑ OFFERTORY                    "What Child is This?"                    RED HYMNAL #296, vss. 1,3

- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!
- 2 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.  
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.  
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;  
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

## ↑ OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together: **God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.**

## ↑ GREAT THANKSGIVING



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*The thanksgiving continues with the preface for the day. The congregation responds:*

## ↑ SANCTUS

Composed by D.D. Dillard

Voice

HO - LY HO - LY HO - LY LORD GOD OF POW'R AND  
MIGHT HEA - VEN AND EARTH ARE FULL OF YOUR GLO - RY HO -  
SA - NA IN - THE HIGH - EST BLESS - ED IS HE - WHO  
COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD HO - SA NA IN THE  
HIGH - - - - EST

## ↑ EUCHARISTIC PRAYER AND WORDS OF INSTITUTION

### ↑ LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

### ↑ INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace.  
Thanks be to God.

## **COMMUNION**

*All baptized Christians are welcome to commune. At the direction of the usher, please come forward and kneel or stand at the rail. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. Wine and white grape juice are in the individual cups. Those not wishing to receive Communion may receive an individual blessing. Indicate this by crossing your hands in front of you at the rail.*

## **↑ PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray together: **God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

## **We Praise the Light of Christ**

## **↑ LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES**

*The pastor lights a large candle from an altar candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world. The ushers light their candles from the pastor's candle, then light the candle of each worshiper nearest the aisle. Please tip only the unlit candle when spreading the light.*

## **↑ CAROL**

### **“Away in a Manger”**

**RED HYMNAL #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.
- 2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky  
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
- 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.

## ↑ **GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION: John 1:1-5, 10-14**

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

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

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

## ↑ **CAROL**

### **“Silent Night, Holy Night”**

**RED HYMNAL #281**

- 1 Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright  
round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.
- 2 Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;  
glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!
- 3 Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light  
radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

## ↑ **BLESSING**

May Christ, who by his incarnation has filled us with grace and truth, give you peace this Christmas and always. Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

*Please extinguish your candle.*

↑ **CAROL**

**“Joy to the World”**

**RED HYMNAL #267**

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
  
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
  
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.
  
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

↑ **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus. **Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

*You may listen to the music or depart to do God's work.*

# **Welcome to Tree of Life Lutheran Church!**

We are a growing congregation located in Odessa, and part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA). In a friendly atmosphere, we teach the Gospel of the Lord and share a living confidence in God's grace. We embrace you as a whole person – questions, complexities and all. Our mission is to be faithful children of God, called by grace through Christ, and sharing this gift with Middletown, Odessa, Townsend and the world.

## **Worship**

We gather for worship with Holy Communion at 10:30 a.m. every Sunday. We follow a traditional order of worship, with both traditional and more contemporary music. People wear everything from suits to T-shirts, so no matter how you look, you'll fit right in!

## **Youth**

Kingdom Kids is our youth group, which meets most Fridays during the school year from 3:30-5 p.m. Youth from kindergarten through high school are welcome; after a snack, we then have age-appropriate lessons for younger kids and teens.

## **Seniors**

Our "Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors" (OWLS) get together every month for a meal or a special outing. And even if you don't consider yourself "older," you can still join the fun!

## **Service**

We work with Neighborhood House and Our Daily Bread in Middletown to help those in need in our area. Our 'Knot-Quilters' prepare quilts for people worldwide.

## **To Learn More**

Find us online at *TreeOfLifeChurchDE.com*

Find us on Facebook at *Tree of Life Lutheran Church*

Call us at (302) 378-3345

Or come and join us this Sunday! We'd love to meet you!

## **SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY**

**Presiding Minister:** Rev. Robbie Ketcham  
**Assisting Minister:** Janet Adams  
**Music Minister:** Duane Dillard  
**Usher:** Maxine Campbell  
**Acolyte:** Anders Fratta  
**Altar Care:** Maxine Campbell  
**Livestream:** Gail Russell

**CHRISTMAS LESSONS & CAROLS:** Our Christmas celebration continues on Sunday as we hear the story of God’s love for us from the Creation through the Old Testament prophets and fulfilled in the birth of the Messiah. In place of a regular Sunday liturgy and sermon, we will sing Christmas carols, share Communion and hear the Word of God’s salvation in the Christ Child!

**PR. ROBBIE ON VACATION:** Pr. Robbie will be on vacation this week from Tuesday through Saturday. For any urgent pastoral needs, you can call the Rev. Linda Ray, pastor of St. Paul’s United Methodist Church in Odessa, at (540) 207-1787.

**FREE CPR CLASS:** If someone were having a heart attack, would you be able to give life-saving care? Tree of Life will hold a free CPR class on Sunday, Jan. 7, from 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. This class will be given by New Castle County paramedics. You can take the class for certification (ability to say you are CPR-certified) or for your own learning. The class will include how to properly use the church’s AED (automated external defibrillator) machine. Lunch will be included.

A sign up on the sheet is located at the back of the Sanctuary. For questions, you can contact Lorraine Williams at [lorraine.k.williams@newcastlede.gov](mailto:lorraine.k.williams@newcastlede.gov) or (302) 395-2736.

**COVER ART:** “The Nativity,” Lorenzo Monaco (Piero di Giovanni), ca. 1406–1410. In the public domain, and held at the Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence.