



St. John's Lutheran Church, ELCA

"A Legacy of Worship and Outreach in San Antonio since 1857"

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December 29, 2019
First Sunday of Christmas



GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

Prelude **Improvisation on *I Saw Three Ships***

Bells

Welcome and Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who shines in glory,
clothes us in compassion,
and bears gifts of mercy for all.
Amen.

Let us confess our sins with confidence in God's promise of forgiveness.

God, wonderful counselor,
We confess that we have turned from your gifts and chosen our own way. We have not made room for you in our hearts or in our world. We have lived in fear; we have not welcomed the stranger; we desire gifts that will not endure. Forgive us our sins, known and unknown, and open us to receive the peace of Jesus dwelling in and among us. Amen.

God's loving kindness has appeared to us in Christ our Savior. We are saved, not by anything we have done, but by God's mercy poured out on us richly. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Through the Spirit living in you, God give you faith to trust Jesus, who is Love born for you, now and always.
Amen.

Gathering Hymn **"O Day of Rest and Gladness"** **ELW #521**

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.

Assisting minister



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



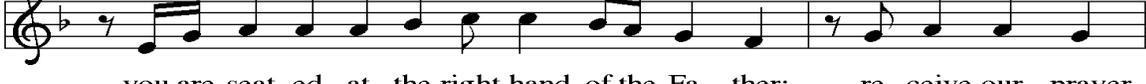
we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



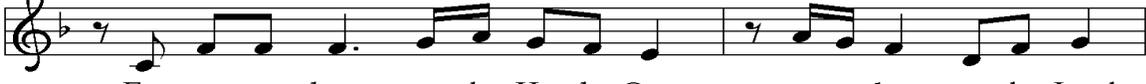
Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

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.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture and preaching; we respond in profession of faith and prayer

First Reading: Isaiah 63:7-9

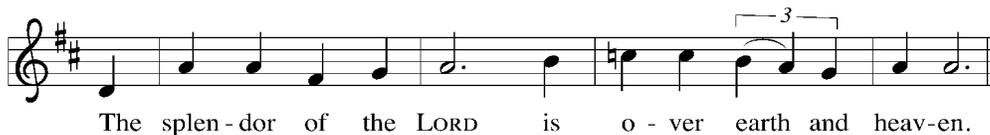
God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or angel. God's own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God's gracious deeds. God trusts that God's people will not act falsely.

⁷I 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 ⁸For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely"; and he became their savior ⁹in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Word of God, word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

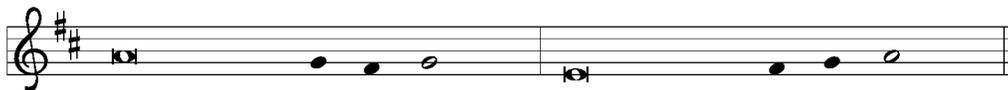
Psalm 148



Psalm 148:13

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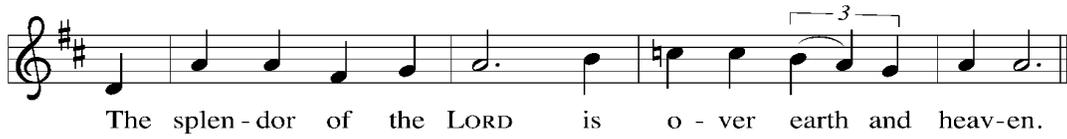
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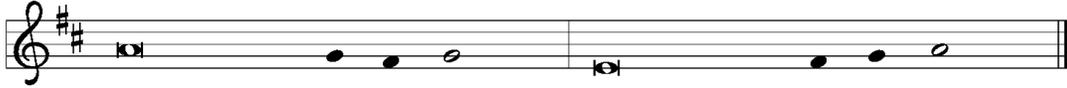
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- ¹Hallelujah! Praise the LORD | from the heavens;
praise God | in the heights.
- ²**Praise the LORD, | all you angels;
sing praise, all you | hosts of heaven.**
- ³Praise the LORD, | sun and moon;
sing praise, all you | shining stars.
- ⁴**Praise the LORD, heav- | en of heavens,
and you waters a- | bove the heavens.**
- ⁵Let them praise the name | of the LORD,
who commanded, and they | were created,
- ⁶**who made them stand fast forev- | er and ever,
giving them a law that shall not | pass away. R**
- ⁷Praise the LORD | from the earth,
you sea monsters | and all deeps;
- ⁸**fire and hail, | snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, do- | ing God's will;**



Psalm 148:13
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- ⁹mountains | and all hills, fruit trees | and all cedars;
¹⁰**wild beasts | and all cattle, creeping things and | flying birds;**
¹¹sovereigns of the earth | and all peoples,
 princes and all rulers | of the world;
¹²**young | men and maidens, old and | young together. R**
¹³Let them praise the name | of the LORD,
 whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over | earth and heaven.
¹⁴**The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all | faithful
 servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. |
 Hallelujah! R**

Second Reading: Hebrews 2:10-18

Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.

¹⁰It 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. ¹¹For 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, ¹²saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you. ¹³And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I and the children whom God has given me." ¹⁴Since, 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, ¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Cantor: Alleluia. Let the peace of Christ rule | in your hearts, and let the word of Christ dwell | in you richly. *Alleluia.* (Col. 3:15, 16)

The Holy Gospel: John 1:1-14

The good news of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. Luke:
Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹ The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ 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.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Children are invited to go to their Sunday lesson and activity. They will return at Holy Communion. Parents are welcome to accompany them.

Sermon

Pastor James Dew

Hymn of the Day **"Of the Father's Love Begotten"**

ELW #295 (vs 1-2, 5)

Apostles' Creed

With the whole Church in heaven and on earth, we confess our faith...

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

*Each petition concludes: "Hear us, O God." The congregation responds: **"Your mercy is great."***

We hold in prayer: Bob Cauble, Frances Bara, Chris Gates, Danny Myers, Ralph Detwiler, Elisa Hueda Feliciano, Jane Campa Alvarez, Joan Arnet, Frances Franz.

*For prayer requests and updates, please contact the church office
(210) 223-2611 or info@StJohnsSA.org*

Peace

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

(Please share with those nearest you these or similar words: "Peace be with you.")



MEAL

*We bring our "first fruit" offerings to the Table of the Lord
where we are strengthened and nourished with the Body and Blood of Christ*

Offering

In the Bleak of Mid-Winter

Lori Bade and Michael Bade

Offertory Hymn

"Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful"

ELW #182

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful *Offering Song*

Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

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Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923
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Offertory Prayer

Holy God, your beauty shines forth from the manger and your love flows from the cross. As you gather us around these signs of your love, come among us, warm us to extend your care among the hungry and all in need. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

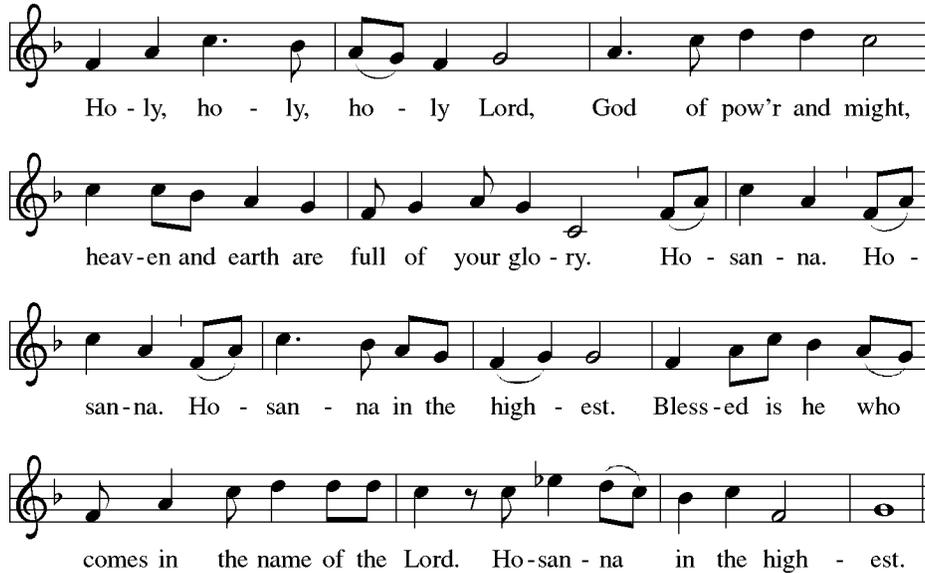
Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.
And also 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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Holy, Mighty, and Merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love for us and for all your creation, you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who took upon himself our own flesh and blood, who showed us your face, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

For on the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this, as often as you drink of it, for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

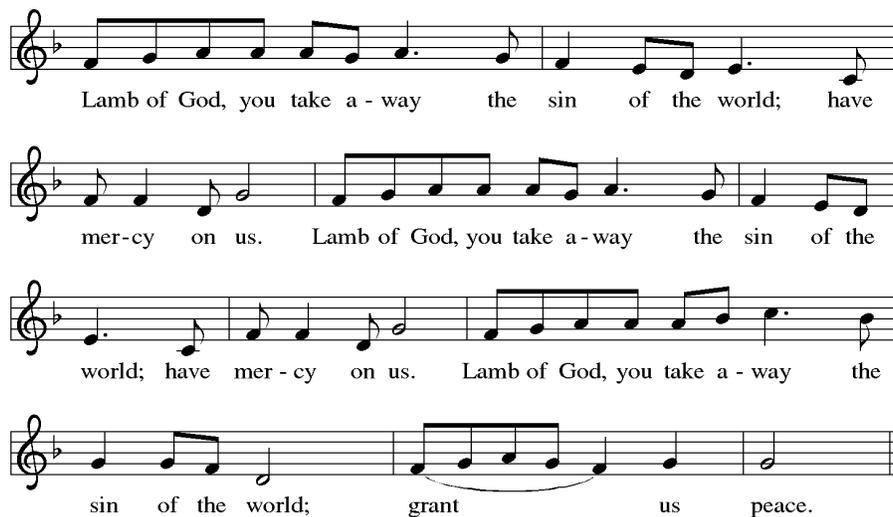
All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Remember us, Lord, in your kingdom, and help us to pray:

**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.**

Come to the table where Christ himself meets you, and where all are welcomed.

Agnus Dei



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.

Holy Communion

We believe that Christ is truly present in the consecrated bread and wine and we welcome all who wish to receive the Holy Sacrament. Please follow the direction of the ushers. A gluten free host is available upon request.

Communion Hymns

- ELW #273 *All My Heart Again Rejoices*
- ELW # 277 *Away in a Manger*
- ELW #286 *Your Little Ones, Dear Lord*

Communion Blessing

Communion Prayer

God of wonder, in Jesus we behold the light of the world come near. As you have now come among us, send us out in joy, hastening to share the good news of your love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit dwelling among us now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us out in mission to the world

Benediction

God the Creator who delights in you,
Jesus the Savior who is born for you,
And the lifegiving Spirit who shines in you,
✠ bless you and keep you in hope and peace.

Amen.

Sending Hymn

"Go Tell It on the Mountain"

ELW #290

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the joy of Christ.

Thanks be to God!

Postlude

Improvisation on Good Christian Friends

Worship Leaders

Presiding Minister + Pastor James Dew

Assisting Minister + Julie Shadrock

Lector + Karen Knudson

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Worship is central to who we are as a people of God. Every time we gather to hear and respond to the Word, to offer up our prayers for the needs of many, and to receive Christ's living presence in the consecrated bread and wine, we seek to "become what we receive", namely, the Body of Christ for the sake of the life of the world. As we are gathered, fed, and then sent back out in mission, God empowers us to be bearers of blessing and vessels of grace, commissioning us to intentionally live out the reign of God throughout the course of our weekly living.

This week at St. John's

Mon – Sun 30th – 5th • Pastor Jim on vacation
Tues – Wed 31st – 1st • Church office closed for New Year's Eve and Day

*Please see our online calendar at stjohnssa.org (under the Home tab)
for weekly recurring events and the current month's Tidings.*

**Financial Reports and Council Minutes are available in the Member Section
of the church website, and in the church office by request.**

Let the Children Come

All is not "calm and bright" in the continuing Christmas story. Already in the early months after Jesus' birth, he encounters danger and tragedy. Avoid the urge to shelter your congregation's children from the story of the slaughter of the Bethlehem children. Even if they do not live in fear of genocide, children have heard much in recent years about the suffering of innocents, including the separation of children from their parents. We can assure them that God's tender affection for all children (young and old) is so great that God gave Jesus to take on our humanity—including childhood—and kept Jesus safe in Egypt, guided him back to Nazareth, and led him to his prophetic path and purpose. God, who knows what it is like to be a small child, holds them in loving care, and nothing can separate them from that embrace.

Theological Reflection

"I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD" (Isa. 63:7). Even in the midst of such tragedy as the slaughter of the innocents as recounted this day in our gospel reading, the prophet Isaiah invites us to be a people grateful for the mercy and love of the Lord. In our well-wired world with its 24-hour news cycle and nearly instant reporting through social media, nearly every Sunday must face its own tragedy while bearing witness to Christ's mercy and love. How is gratitude lifted up corporately during worship, not only this Sunday but on a regular basis? Consider setting apart scheduling a regular time for the sharing of personal testimonies of gratitude during worship.

Liturgical Calendar Commemorations

Name of Jesus

Wednesday, January 1, 2020

By Jewish law, every baby boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day of life, so on the eighth day of Christmas the church celebrates this event in Jesus' life. The keeping of the covenant as well as Jesus' name are signs of God's salvation given to us through him.

Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, renewer of the church, died 1872

Thursday, January 2, 2020

A nineteenth-century German Lutheran pastor, Loehe worked to enliven the church with the eucharist at its center, from which would flow evangelism and social ministry. He sent pastors to North America, Australia, New Guinea, Brazil, and the Ukraine.



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.