

**Prepare the Way**

**“Trust”**

December 24, 2023

**As We Gather**

What normally takes nine months from its beginning, we will arrive at its fulfillment in less than a half a day. This morning's Gospel (Luke 1:26-38) relates the announcement of the angel Gabriel to Mary of her blessed destiny to be the mother of God's Messiah.

The Annunciation of our Lord is traditionally celebrated on March 25. This evening we will celebrate the Nativity of our Lord (Luke 2:1-20). The Gospel of the Annunciation will make a fine introduction to the mystery of Who the Babe of Bethlehem is and Why He has come. It also gives us an example of the importance of embracing by faith, as Mary did, the promises God makes to us through his Son, whether our time of waiting be a matter of hours, days, weeks, months, years, a lifetime! The God of grace will accomplish what He promises to do.

**Welcome and Announcements**

**+ Gathering +**

**“The King Shall Come When morning Dawns”      LSB 348**

The King shall come when morning dawns

And light triumphant breaks,

When beauty gilds the eastern hills

And life to joy awakes.

Oh, brighter than that glorious morn

Shall dawn upon our race

The day when Christ in splendor comes

And we shall see His face.

Not as of old a little child,

To bear and fight and die,

But crowned with glory like the sun

That lights the morning sky.

The King shall come when morning dawns

And light and beauty brings.

Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray:

Come quickly, King of kings.

Oh, brighter than the rising morn

When Christ, victorious, rose

And left the lonesome place of death

Despite the rage of foes.

**Invocation**

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath – Hope Candle**

Pastor:      Today we light the fourth candle of the Advent wreath. The second candle is the candle of LOVE.

*(The HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE candles are lit.)*

Pastor:      **1 John 4:9-10** - <sup>9</sup> *This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.* <sup>10</sup> *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

Pastor: Let us pray. Gracious Father, fill us with your love, the love that moved You to send Your Son as our Savior, and moved Him to give of Himself completely for our salvation. Lead us by Your Holy Spirit, so that Your love shines forth in all that we do. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

### Confession and Absolution

#### Hymn "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" LSB 359

1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming, as prophets long have sung.  
It came, a flow'ret bright, amid the cold of winter,  
When half spent was the night.

2 Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind;  
With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior,  
When half spent was the night.

3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,  
Dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.  
True man, yet very God, from sin and death He saves us  
And lightens every load.

4 O Savior, child of Mary, who felt our human woe;  
O Savior, King of glory, who dost our weakness know:  
Bring us at length we pray to the bright courts of heaven,  
And to the endless day.

### Prayer

#### + Service of the Word +

#### First Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup> he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent."

<sup>3</sup> Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you."

<sup>4</sup> But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying:

<sup>5</sup> “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? <sup>6</sup> I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. <sup>7</sup> Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?””

<sup>8</sup> “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. <sup>9</sup> I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. <sup>10</sup> And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning <sup>11</sup> and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders<sup>[a]</sup> over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

“The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you.

*This is the Word of the Lord.*

**Thanks be to God!**

#### **Second Reading: Romans 16:24-27**

Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, <sup>26</sup> but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from<sup>[b]</sup> faith—<sup>27</sup> to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

*This is the Word of the Lord.*

**Thanks be to God!**

#### **Holy Gospel: Luke 1:26-38**

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

<sup>34</sup> “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail.”

<sup>38</sup> “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

*This is the Gospel of the Lord.*  
**Praise to You O Christ!**

#### **Nicene Creed**

**I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets.**

**And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

#### **Sermon**

**“Trust”**

#### **Offering**

**"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" LSB 356**

1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
With wings as drifted snow, with eyes as  
flame:

"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,  
Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

2 "For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
All generations laud and honor thee;  
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers  
foretold,  
Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her  
head;

"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.

"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy  
name."

Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born  
In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,  
And Christian folk throughout the world will  
ever say:

"Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

**Prayers**

*Please add your prayer requests to the chat.*

**Thanksgivings**

Pastor: O Lord, we praise You.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

**Petitions**

Pastor: Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **Hear our prayer.**

**St. John's People and Families**

Dennis & Judie Arnett

Carl & Linda Hammond

Rebecca Lowe-Vitkus

Sharon Mitchell

Lisa and Grace Walter

Guillaume, Ashley, Olivia, & Benjamin Boudet

Yannick, Carolina, & Tiago Girardo

Lance, Chelsey, Charlotte, Noelle, & Amelia Holdsworth

Hayden, Quinn, Liam, & Lola Morris

Julia and Benjamin Scott

**+ The Service of Holy Communion +**

**Preface**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the  
countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we  
give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only  
begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into

death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life.

With thankful hearts we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus," confident that in His body and blood, given us to eat and drink, we receive the forgiveness of sins and so proclaim His death until He comes again in glory.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

### **The 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.

### **Words of Institution**

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**People: Amen.**

### **Communion**

Pastor: Take, eat; this is the true body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given into death for your sins.

**People: Amen.** *(Take and eat)*

Pastor: Take, drink; this is the true blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, shed for the forgiveness of your sins.

**People: Amen.** *(Take and drink)*

**“Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending” LSB 336**

1 Lo! He comes with clouds descending,  
Once for ev'ry sinner slain;  
Thousand thousand saints attending  
Swell the triumph of His train;  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
Christ the Lord returns to reign.

2 Ev'ry eye shall now behold Him  
Robed in glorious majesty;  
Those who set at naught and sold Him,  
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,  
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply  
wailing,  
Shall their true Messiah see.

3 Those dear tokens of His passion  
Still His dazzling body bears,  
Cause of endless exultation  
To His ransomed worshipers.  
With what rapture, with what rapture, with  
what rapture  
Gaze we on those glorious scars!

4 Yea, amen, let all adore Thee,  
High on Thine eternal throne;  
Savior, take the pow'r and glory,  
Claim the kingdom as Thine own.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!  
Thou shalt reign, and Thou alone!

**“O Sing of Christ” LSB 362**

O sing of Christ, whose birth made known  
The kindness of the Lord,  
Eternal Word made flesh and bone  
So we could be restored.  
Upon our frail humanity  
God's finger chose to trace  
The fullness of His deity,  
The icon of His grace.

What Adam lost, none could reclaim,  
And Paradise was barred  
Until the second Adam came  
To mend what sin had marred.  
For when the time was full and right to be  
The Heirs of heav'n above,  
He came to us as life and light  
And our redemption won.

He came to that which was His own  
But He was not received;  
Yet still through Him God's glory shone,  
And some His name believed.  
To these He gave the right to be  
The heirs of heav'n above,  
Born not of human ancestry  
But born of God in love.

Lord Jesus Christ, You deigned to dwell  
Among us here on earth  
As God with us, Emmanuel  
To bring this holy birth.  
Through rich, You willingly became  
One with our poverty,  
That we might share Your wealth and name  
For all eternity!

**Communion Blessing**

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body  
and soul to life everlasting. His peace be with you.

People: Amen.

**Prayer**

## Benediction

### “Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord” LSB 352

1 Let the earth now praise the Lord,  
Who has truly kept His word  
And at last to us did send  
Christ, the sinner's help and friend.

2 What the fathers most desired,  
What the prophets' heart inspired,  
What they longed for many a year,  
Stands fulfilled in glory here.

3 Abram's promised great reward,  
Zion's helper, Jacob's Lord--  
Him of twofold race behold--  
Truly came, as long foretold.

4 As Your coming was in peace,  
Quiet, full of gentleness,  
Let the same mind dwell in me  
Which is Yours eternally.

5 Bruise for me the serpent's head  
That, set free from doubt and dread,  
I may cling to You in faith,  
Safely kept through life and death.

6 Then when You will come again  
As the glorious king to reign,  
I with joy will see Your face,  
Freely ransomed by Your grace.

## Offering

<http://stjohnslutheran.net/give/>

You may also mail your offering to St. John's (3521 Linda Vista, Napa, CA 94558)

### Memory Verse for This Week

“Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will  
be accomplished!”

*Luke 1:45*

### Serving in Worship Today

Preacher

Lay Reader

Organist

Communion Assistants

Sound Technician

Streaming Technician

Projector Tech

Worship Preparation Team

Ushers

Rev. Ted Zimmerman

Brett Carey

Erin Blackwood

Gerry Schneider, Mike Newton,

Dove Bain, Paula Schweiger

Brian Schoenfeld

Joel Wahlers

Sarah Kramer

Betsy Gewirz, Bob & Doris Klein

Bob & Lisa De Young