

REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Serving Absecon - Galloway Township
Rev. Heidi Link – Pastor
Brian Conover - Music Director

Sunday, December 28th, 2025
THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS / 8:30 & 10:00 AM

*** ENTRANCE SONG**

Love Has Come



1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the
2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -
3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;
sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;
last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to
what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the
Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.
gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950

Music: UN FLAMBEAU, F. Seguin, *Recueil de Noël's composés en langue provençale*, 1856

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* - Congregation Stands (If for any reason you are unable to stand during the service, please remain seated.)

*** GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY**

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.

Let us pray: Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God-with-us,

we confess that we have turned away those seeking shelter, claiming there is no room when we have plenty. We have made power and wealth our idols, while you show us true glory: a baby in a manger. We have overlooked the shepherds, expecting good news in prettier packaging. Too often, we have valued violence instead of your peace. Turn us from our ways to your ways. Grant us the grace to begin again. Free us from all that keeps us bound, and forgive our sin, through Jesus Christ, who gives himself for us. Amen.

Hear the good news and rejoice! You are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, ✝ forgiven in Christ, and freed to respond in joy. **Amen.**

FIRST LESSON: Genesis 3:8-19

Carol: "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus"

**Come, Thou long expected Jesus born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.**

**Born Thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit, raise us to Thy glorious throne.**

SECOND LESSON: Genesis 22:15-18

(carol on next page...)

Carol: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

**Oh, come, oh, come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

**Oh, come, oh, come, great Lord of might, who to your tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient time once gave the law in cloud, and majesty, and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

**Oh, come, strong Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell your people save and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Carol: "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear"

**It Came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold.
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.**

**Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats, o'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains, they bend on hov'ring wing,
And ever o'er its babel sounds, the blessed angels sing.**

FOURTH LESSON: Micah 5:2-4

Carol: "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

**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.**

**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 on earth!**

FIFTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-38

Solo: "Mary, Did You Know"

SIXTH LESSON: Matthew 1:18-23

Carol: "Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming"

**Lo, how a rose e're blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung,
It came a flower so bright,
Amid the cold of winter, when half-spent was the night.**

**Isaiah had foretold it, the rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, the virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love a-right,
She bore to us a Savior, when half-spent was the night.**

**This flow'r, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor the darkness ev'rywhere.
True man, yet very God,
From sin and death he saves us and lightens ev'ry load.**

SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2:8-16

Carol: "The First Noel"

**The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay, keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.**

**They lookèd up and saw a star shining in the east beyond them far;
And to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.**

EIGHTH LESSON: Matthew 2:1-11

Carol: "As With Gladness Men of Old"

**As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;
So most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led by thee.**

**As with joyful steps they sped, Savior, to thy lowly bed
There to bend the knee before thee, whom heav'n and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet ever seek thy mercy seat.**

**As they offered gifts most rare at thy cradle, rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'nly king.**

NINTH LESSON: John 1:1-14

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

Once in Royal David's City



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and Lord of all,
3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re - deem - ing love;



where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for his bed:
and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall;
for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;



Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.
with the poor and meek and low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
and he leads his chil - dren on to the place where he is gone.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818–1895
Music: IRBY, Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805–1876

*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; 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 worshipped 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.

* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people.

A brief silence.

O God, you reveal yourself in this assembly. In water, wine, and bread, show us again and again your grace upon grace, that your church boldly testifies to your love. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself in creation. In seedlings and planets, microorganisms and galaxies, awaken us to the cry of the earth. As you nourish your people like a watered garden, empower us to nourish our creaturely companions. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself in every land and in the farthest parts of the earth. Deliver peoples who suffer under oppressive regimes. Thwart the foolish plans of unjust leaders. Give wisdom to our elected officials (*local leaders or governing bodies may be named*). God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself in every human being. Help us recognize your image in our siblings in Christ who are in the strong grip of addiction, depression, anxiety, hopelessness, or other illness (*especially*). Grant us compassion in our care for your people. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself anew every day. In this new year, renew this congregation and its ministries in our witness to the good news of the incarnation (*specific ministry areas may be named*). Transform the way we have always done things into your new future for us. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You reveal yourself in the lives of your holy ones. We give you thanks for those who set their hope on you, trusting the inheritance we receive in you. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

* SHARING OF THE PEACE

The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you. (*Worshippers move about and greet one another.*)

OFFERING / SPECIAL MUSIC

*** OFFERING SONG**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king;
peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."
Joy - ful, all you na-tions, rise; join the tri-umph of the skies;
with an - gel - ic hosts pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
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

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray: God of heaven and earth, from the beginning, you have called forth life, in which you take delight. The trees, the fields, and the seas sing for joy. Bless now these gifts, received from your bounty, that we may join the chorus of creation to tell of your salvation from day to day. **Amen.**

*** WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

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

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim:

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

*** 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

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

A child has been born for us, a Son given to us. Come, receive the gift of Jesus.

We come.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

(BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS who believe that the risen Christ is present in the Eucharist to forgive sin and renew life are invited to either come to the altar area for communion as directed or share at your pew. If you come forward, you will receive bread and a pre-filled cup of wine. If you choose to receive at your seat, please remain there, kneel as you are able, and receive the elements using the communion packets available from the ushers. If there are other special needs, please speak to an usher.)

*** POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen

*** POST COMMUNION HYMN**

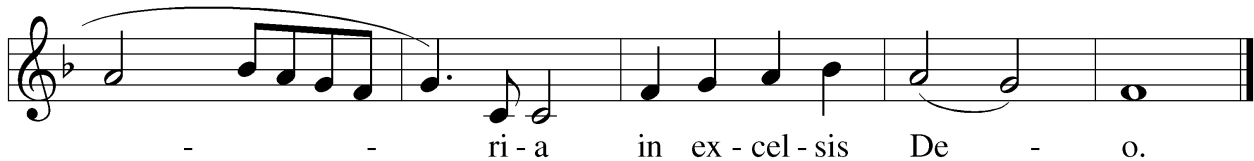
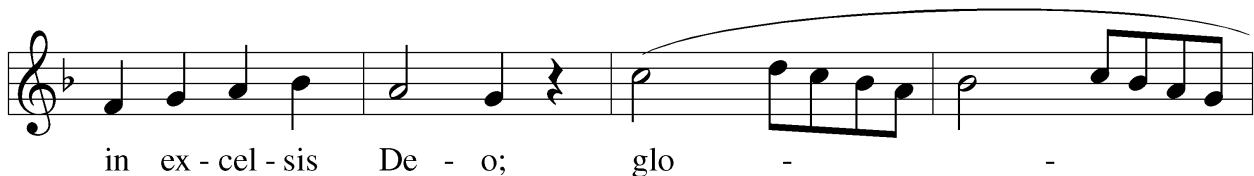
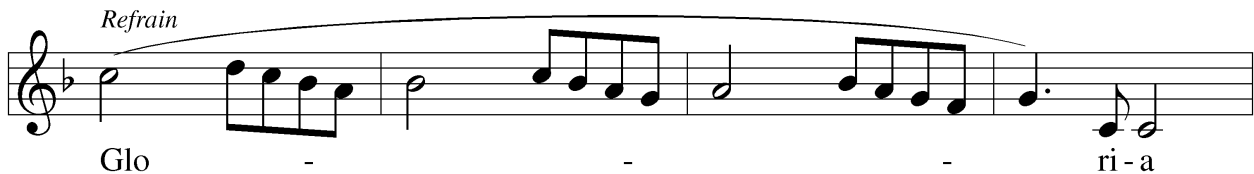
Angels We Have Heard on High



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.



Text: French carol; tr. "Crown of Jesus," 1862
Music: GLORIA, French carol

*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray: Merciful God, we thank you for Jesus, who is our heavenly food. Strengthened by this goodness, send us forth to announce your peace, comfort the afflicted, and share the good news of great joy. **Amen.**

*** BLESSING**

And now a blessing: The God of love, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, lavish you with grace, illumine your path, and increase your joy, today and always. **Amen.**

***CELEBRATIONS!!!**

* CLOSING SONG

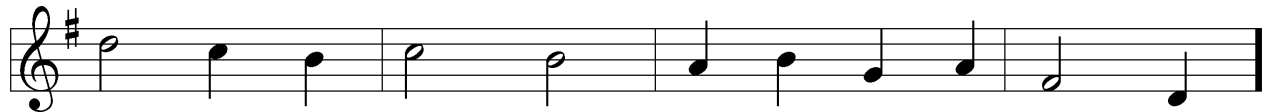
Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful



1 Oh, come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! Oh,
 2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of light e - ter - nal,
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, oh, come ye to Beth - le - hem;
 born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!
 Je - sus, to thee be . . . glo - ry giv'n!



come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:
 Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
 Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

Refrain



Oh, come, let us a - dore him, oh, come, let us a - dore him,



oh, come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2
 Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786

* SENDING

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

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