

A Mission Congregation of the ELCA  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358

**The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus**

December 24, 2024

4:00 and 10:00 PM Services



**Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]**



Scan with your Smartphone and link to our web page, our Facebook page, and our YouTube Channel.



• **PRELUDE**

**Roxanne Groff**

• **WELCOME**

**Pr Mel Musser**

• **LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES**

R: Emmanuel is here among us!

**C: We light the 1<sup>st</sup> candle of hope fulfilled.**

**C: We light the 2<sup>nd</sup> candle for love incarnate.**

**C: We light the 3<sup>rd</sup> candle with joy at your coming.**

**C: We light the 4<sup>th</sup> candle for peace on earth.**

**C: We light the Christ candle in a proclamation of God with us!**

**C Thanks be to God!**

\* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism...*

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

*Pause for silence and reflection.*

L: We confess our sins before God and one another.

*Pause for silence and reflection.*

P: Gracious God,

**C: We confess to you and to our siblings in Christ that we have made decisions which have caused harm to you and our neighbors. We have put our selfish desires ahead of the needs of others. We have sought comfort in worldly things and forgotten you. For these and for all the ways in which we have fallen short, forgive us. Lead us back into a right relationship with you, our neighbors, and all of creation.**

P: Beloved of God, I bring you good news of great joy for all people, for in Jesus Christ, all things are made new. For his sake, God forgives us all our sin and calls us into abundant life. Receive this gift with joy, in Jesus' name.

**C: Amen.**

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\* = Please stand if able

• = Please be seated

\* **GATHERING SONG**      **“O Come, All Ye Faithful”**

**LBW 45**



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O  
 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, O 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!

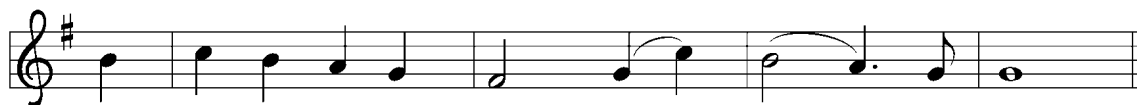


come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:  
 Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!  
 Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:  
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

*Refrain*



*Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,*  
 O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



*ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.*  
 O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

\* **APOSTOLIC GREETING**

**P:** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C:** **And also with you.**

\* **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P:** Almighty God, as we hear the story of our Savior’s birth, we are filled with wonder and awe. Thank you for the gift of your Son, born in a manger. In our daily lives, help us remember the profound joy of this story. In Jesus’ name we pray.

**C:** **Amen.**

\* = Please stand if able  
 • = Please be seated

• **WORD OF GOD**

P: The Gospel according to Saint Luke the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter...

C: Glory to You, O Lord

R: <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!”

<sup>15</sup>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.” <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ

- **SERMON**

**Pr Mel**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the newborn Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

In a few minutes we're going to sing one of the most popular Christmas carols of all time, Silent Night. The words of this hymn were written by an Austrian Pastor named Joseph Mohr in 1816, shortly after his town had been devastated in the Napoleonic War. (SLIDE) Two years later, in 1818 Pastor Mohr asked the children's choir director Franz Gruber to set the words to music for the guitar because the organ of the church was broken. So, on Christmas Eve 1818 in the little town of Mariapfarr, Austria Silent Night was first performed with guitar accompaniment. Since then, Silent Night has been translated into over 300 languages and is a staple on Christmas Eve in Churches around the world. The words, Silent Night, Holy Night, all is calm, all is bright have come to symbolize what we believe is the idyllic Christmas. (SLIDE) We make that first Christmas into a perfect scene of joy, beauty, and peace. It was calm. It was bright. Everything was wonderful and perfect...

As I thought about that first Christmas, it's worth asking the question, "Do you think the first Christmas was actually that way?" Let's unpack the situation a little bit as we ponder the events of that first Christmas. In her third trimester the Roman Government decided all the male heads of their households had to return to their ancestral town so they could register and be taxed. (SLIDE)

Now, do you think the Romans cared that Mary was very pregnant? Obviously not... Do you think the government officials gave a care if Mary lost her baby on that hard and arduous trip from Nazareth down to Bethlehem? Certainly not!... In those days many women lost their lives in childbirth. So, it was important for them to be surrounded by people and in a place of calmness and serenity. Mary had none of that. (SLIDE) Here these words from the Gospel of Luke once again, "... 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." That's all we really know about the birth. It doesn't say she was in a barn with other animals. The scripture never mentions that the cattle were lowing or any other details. A manger was a feeding trough for the donkeys. Mangers were found in front of the inns near the street. It's possible Mary gave birth on the streets of Bethlehem, not in some cozy animal stall surrounded by sheep and goats and cows. The early Church tradition says there was a stable, it was really a cave out back behind the inn. (SLIDE) Even then, there was no cattle lowing, no sheep and goats, just donkeys. The place where Jesus was born was more like a first century parking garage than a cozy animal stall. As far as being silent, imagine with me, the screams of pain from Mary as she gave birth to the savior of the world without benefit of modern pain medicines, with no mother or female relatives for comfort, and no midwife to assist in the actual birthing process. It was anything but a Silent Night... Think about the scene. This was Mary, the handmaid of the Lord, giving

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- \* = Please stand if able
  - = Please be seated

birth to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. This is God doing the most profound act in human history and it's happening in a cave surrounded by donkeys, in a place Mary didn't want to be... If that scenario is true for Mary, how much more for you and me?

God has never promised there wouldn't be pain or adversity or suffering. God never said we wouldn't have dark times or that we would never get sick or have to watch as our loved ones take their final breaths. Jesus even said that in this life you will have pain and you will have sorrow. Think about it. If life were idyllic and always wonderful, you wouldn't need a savior. Christmas is God's response to everything in this world that is off the mark and broken. The birth of Jesus doesn't mean we will live in a rose garden where everything is perfect. Christmas is God embracing the world in the midst of all that's broken. It's God's response to the brokenness of humankind.

In this moment God was doing something profound. God didn't change Mary's situation. She was still going to give birth in a first century parking garage. God doesn't change our situation either, but God gives us a new and different perspective on our situation. God gives us a way to live through whatever situation you find yourself in. God gives us hope and strength to walk, even through the shadow of the valley of death knowing we are not alone.

Part of what Christmas means for us is that God's love for us has come from down from heaven to earth. (SLIDE) Jesus came here to show us how

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- \* = Please stand if able
  - = Please be seated

much God loves you and me. He showed us by the way he treated people, how he forgave their sins, how he explained what the Kingdom of Heaven is like in stories and parables. Jesus demonstrated God's extreme love by stretching out his hands and allowing himself to be nailed to a cross and killed in a most cruel and inhumane manner. (SLIDE) Jesus was the embodiment of God's infinite and unconditional love for you. Now, you might have been rejected by others in your life. Maybe you've been rejected by a boyfriend or girl friend, by a spouse, by your parent or your child. You may have been rejected by your boss or a co-worker or your friends, but there is someone who will never reject you, no matter what. That person is your Savior, Jesus Christ. That is the real gift we receive on Christmas.

On this Holy night we wonder what all this could mean for us. Most of the time I think about what God did on Christmas and it's more or less an academic exercise. I try to understand it and make sense out of this great love God has for me. Then the reality of all the things I've done that hurt others or the things I should have done, but couldn't find the time hits me. In those moments, when I'm feeling ashamed of my past, I remember God's love, God's Grace, and God's mercy and the true meaning of Christmas washes over me. In those moments I begin to see what God did in Jesus Christ was for me. Before Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph were told they would have a son and they would name him in the Hebrew Yeshua, which means God Saves. (SLIDE) This baby boy will save us

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from ourselves and from our sins. Somehow on the cross, Jesus was taking our sins upon himself and giving his pureness, his holiness, his righteousness to us. By his suffering, you are made whole and Holy. For this reason, it's important for us to remember that Christmas and Easter are inseparable. (SLIDE) The one born in Bethlehem will be the same one who will die for our sins and be resurrected to eternal life as the first fruit of all of us who will also be resurrected from the dead. That's the Gospel story we preach and proclaim in our words and in the way we live our lives.

There will always be darkness we must walk through. There's a darkness when you watch a friend or beloved family member slip slowly into death. There's a darkness you walk through when you find out you're mortal. When you have that diagnosis or maybe a close brush with death. When you walk through those dark times, where is your light found? Jesus once said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will never die." Those words don't mean you won't ever get sick or die in a car accident, but it means that no matter what happens to you, there's a house, not made with human hands, where you will spend eternity with God and with your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Christmas doesn't change your situation, it changes your perspective. Christians grieve when we've lost loved ones, but we grieve with a lasting hope that death doesn't get the final word.

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So, going back to that first Christmas night... (SLIDE) After the pain of childbirth had subsided. After the child was wrapped in bands of cloth. After all the hubbub had died down. Mary held her son in her arms and looks at his tiny hands and his beautiful face and finally all was calm and all was bright. In that moment she felt all the love and the peace and the contentment that made it all worth the effort. To this day, when we hold Jesus close to our breast and when we follow him in the mission he left the Church we can still find that it really is a Silent Night and this little baby can calm all your fears.

May the light of Christmas shine in your darkness and reveal to you the real joy of God's love for you. Merry Christmas and Amen.

*Silence for reflection may follow.*

- **Special Music** "When Love Was Born" **Larry Harter**

\* **NICENE CREED**

*The Nicene Creed is said on all festivals and on Sundays in the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter. The Apostles' Creed is said at other times. The Creed is omitted here if the service of Holy Baptism or another rite with a creed is used.*

**C: 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.**

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*\*Or, He descended to the dead.*

**\* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

L: Confident in your grace and truth, we pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

*A brief silence.*

L: We pray to fully receive this good news of great joy for all the people. Thank you for sending Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. In the busyness of the season, help us to center our lives and hearts on the incredible gift of your Son. God, in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: We pray for creation. Instill in us a deep sense of love and care for the earth, and strengthen those who work tirelessly for its wellbeing. God, in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: We pray for leaders around the world. May the light of Christ guide nations towards peace, unity, and cooperation, and may their leaders help create a world where all can thrive. God, in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: We pray for all who are suffering. Pour out your love and care on the sick, grieving, and all who need your comfort and strength, *(especially...)* Bring healing and restoration to our world. God, in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: We pray for the most vulnerable in our world. Be with those affected by conflict, poverty, and injustice. Lift up their voices and help us to listen with compassion and care. Help us all work together for a transformed world. God, in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

L: We pray for all who grieve the loss of loved ones this Christmas. Bring them your comfort and peace, and may the memories of their loved ones be a light in these difficult times. God, in your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

P: We lift up all of our prayers, spoken and unspoken to you. In Jesus' name we pray.

**C: Amen.**

**\* SHARING OF THE PEACE**

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

C: **And also with you.**

**• OFFERING**

*The Offering is received as the Lord's table is prepared.*

P: As we collect our offering here in person, those worshipping with us through the internet may go to our website located at [www.pitsburgtlc.org](http://www.pitsburgtlc.org) where you'll find a button labeled "Give to Trinity." You can make your offering to God through our secure website.

**\* OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: God, you have given us treasure upon treasure, even to the gift of your own Son. With joy we bring before you our gifts in return, and offer them to you for the continuation of the work you began in Jesus Christ, for the flourishing of all creation.

C: **Amen.**

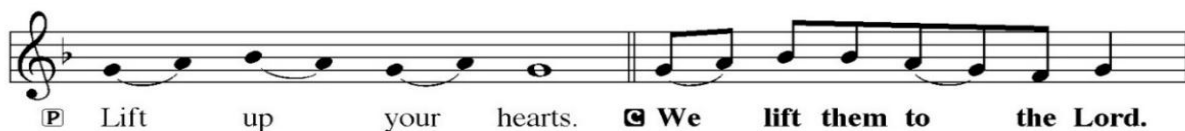
**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

*Communion is by Station. All the Baptized are welcome to celebrate this Holy Meal.*

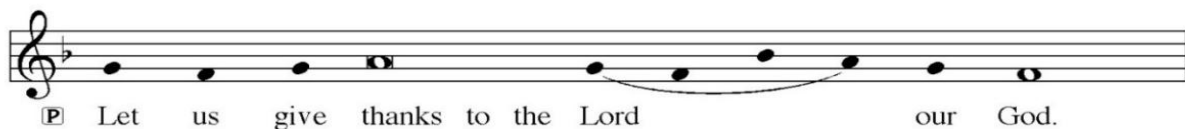
**\* DIALOGUE**



P The Lord be with you. C And also with you.



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



P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



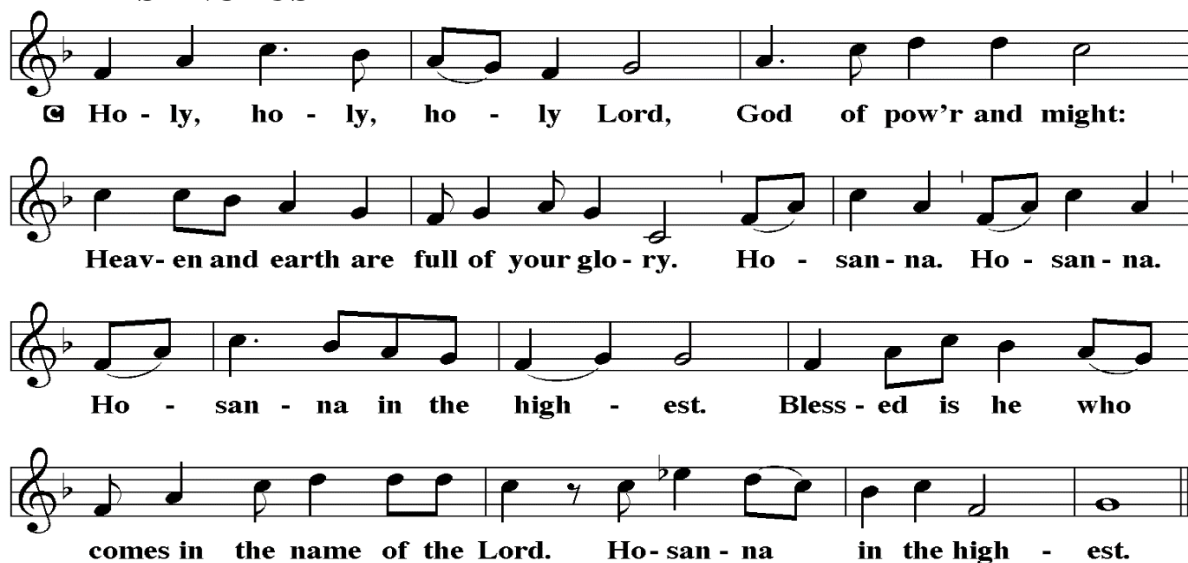
C It is right to give him thanks and praise.

**\* THE PREFACE**

P: It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory; that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

\* = Please stand if able  
• = Please be seated

\* **THE SANCTUS**



☞ 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.

\* **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

P: Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world. In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons. In 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 for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him. By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son. Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

\* **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: United into one through this heavenly food, we pray as Jesus taught...

**C: 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.**

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**\* INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: God with us, Emmanuel, Jesus who is called Christ, now welcomes you to the table of life, to the celebratory feast of all creation. In joy, come with your siblings in Christ and share in this precious and holy meal.

**• COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION**

*The Communion follows. The bread may be broken for distribution. As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:*

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*The communicant may say: Amen.*

**\* POST COMMUNION CANTICLE**



☒ Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re - joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re - calls his prom - is - es and leads his peo - ple forth in joy with



shouts of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

**\* POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

P: May this Body and Blood of our Savior Lord Jesus strengthen, keep, and unite us, ✝ now and forever, amen.

**\* POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

P: Let us pray... On this day, O God, you gave us Christ the Son to save us. As you sent the one foretold, send us now with good news for all people. Let the gladness of this feast have no end as we share with others the joy that fills us; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

**\* LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES**

*The Pastor and Acolyte will distribute the flame from the Altar Candles down the center aisle and the congregation will pass the flame from the center aisle outward. Unlit candles lean to lighted candles so as not to drip hot wax. The overhead lights are dimmed as the candles are lighted. When all candles are lit and the only light in the sanctuary, the congregation will sing Silent Night.*

**Lighted Candles Hymn: “Silent Night”**

- 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.

*The candles are extinguished and the lights are restored in the Sanctuary.*

**\* ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**\* BLESSING**

P: The God of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, lavish you with grace, illumine your path, and increase your joy, today and always.

C: Amen

**\* SENDING SONG**

**“Joy to the World”**

**LBW 39**

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
 plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

- \* = Please stand if able
- = Please be seated

\* **DISMISSAL**

P: Thank you all for joining us to worship our great and gracious God! Thanks also to our Facebook and other social media viewers for joining us as well. We're glad you're with us today. Merry Christmas! Until the next time we gather together as God's people to offer our worship and praise, depart in Christ's Love.

C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!

\* **Postlude**

**Roxanne Groff**

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**Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff**

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Lector – 4 pm	Linda Baker
Lector – 10 pm	PJ Musser
Musician	Roxanne Groff
Acolyte – 4pm	Miles Baker
Acolyte – 10 pm	
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
Facebook Live Recorder	PJ Musser

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29<sup>th</sup>** – We will sing some of your favorite Christmas hymns

**AND on December 29<sup>th</sup>,** you are invited to wear your



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  - = Please be seated



## Trinity Contact Info

Pastor	Mel Musser
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Secretary:	Sharon Fourman
Email:	<a href="mailto:secretary@pitsburgtlc.org">secretary@pitsburgtlc.org</a>
Office Hours:	By Appointment
Office Phone:	937-692-5670
Website:	<a href="http://www.pitsburgtlc.org">www.pitsburgtlc.org</a>



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