



St. James Lutheran Church
Fishersville, VA
December 24, 2023

INTRODUCTION

God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

BRIEF ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God,
who opens the heavens
and draws near to us with salvation.

Amen.

God is patient and merciful,
desiring all to come to repentance.
Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.
Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God,
you love justice and you hate wrongdoing.
We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness
that make us reluctant to work against oppression.
We are complicit in systems of exploitation.
We choose comfort over courage.
We are careless with creation's bounty.
Look upon us with mercy.
Turn our hearts again to you.
Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways
for the sake of our waiting world.

Amen.

Hear these words of assurance:
God clothes you with garments of salvation
and covers you with robes of righteousness.
In the tender compassion of ✚ Jesus Christ,
your sins are forgiven.
God's covenant is eternal,
and God's blessing rests upon us all.
Amen.

ENTRANCE HYMN: "Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn" (WOV 633)

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.

KYRIE



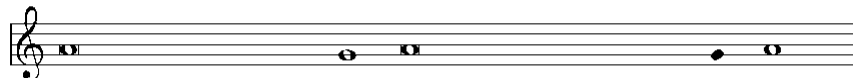
A) In peace, let us pray to the Lord. ☩ Lord, have mer - cy.



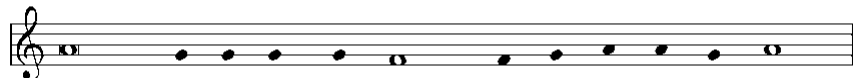
IA For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



☩ Lord, have mer - cy.



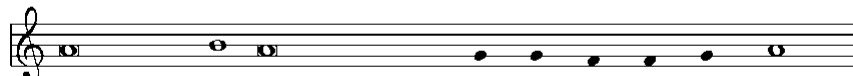
IA For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



☩ Lord, have mer - cy.



IA For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. ☩ Lord, have mer - cy.



A) Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord. ☩ A - - men

HYMN OF PRAISE



Ⓐ This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



Ⓑ Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and



strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le-lu-ia.



Sing with all the peo-ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre-a-tion: Bless-ing and hon-or and glo-ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for-ev-er. A-men.



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be-gun his reign. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us,
sharing our flesh and bones.
As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed,
so we dream and wait for you.
Bless us and let your face shine upon us,
more radiant than these candles,
and more dear than all else we seek.
Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good,
and banish all our fears.
We pray in the name of Emmanuel,
your promised child and our Savior.
Amen.

*Light four candles and sing
the fourth verse of
"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"
(WOV 630)*

FIRST READING:

Instead of David building a house (temple) for God, God promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, God's anointed.

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

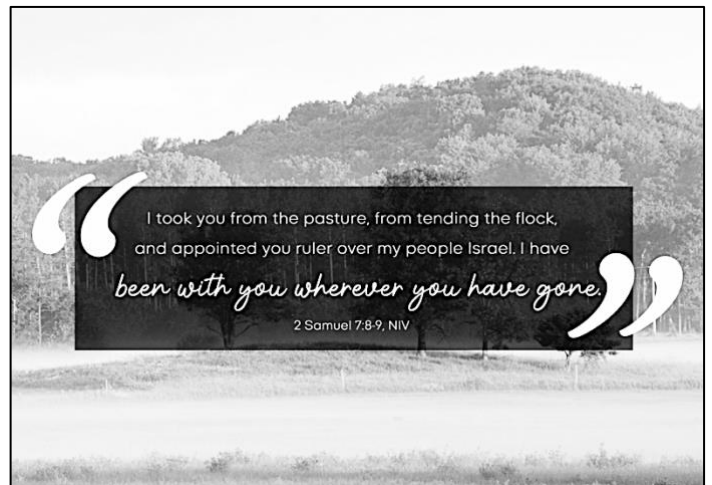
⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle.

⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal

leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Here ends the reading.

Thanks be to God.



PSALM: Luke 1:46b-55



The Magnificat
Luke 1:46-55

All

1., 3. My soul pro-claims your great-ness, O God, and my
2. You have cast the might - y down from their thrones, and up -

spir - it re - joic - es in you. You have looked with love on your
lift - ed the hum-ble of heart. You have filled the hun - gry with

ser - vant here, and blessed me all my life through.
won - drous things, and left the wealth - y no part.

Great and might - y are you, O Ho - ly One,
Great and might - y are you, O Faith - ful One,

strong is your kind-ness ev - er - more. How you fa - vor the
strong is your jus - tice, strong your love, as you prom-ised to

D.C.

weak and low - ly one, hum - bling the proud of heart!
Sar - ah and A - bra - ham, kind - ness for - ev - er - more.

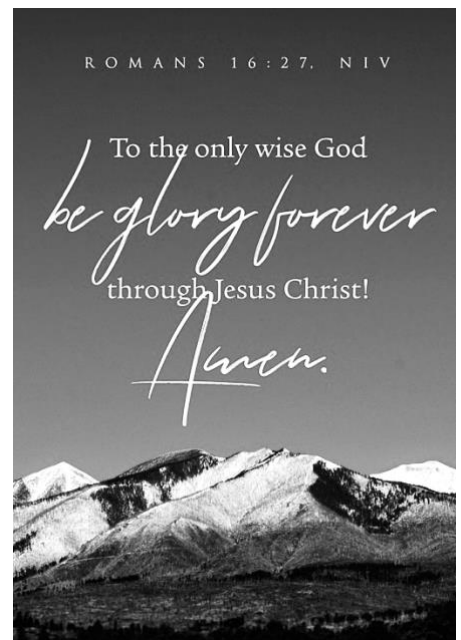
SECOND READING:

Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because, in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.

Romans 16:25-27

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Here ends the reading.
Thanks be to God.





GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38



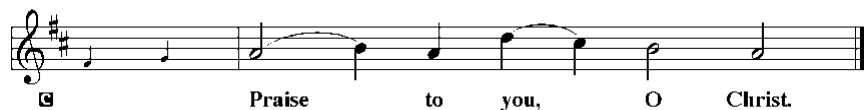
In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.



²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” ³⁴Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son

of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.



SERMON: Rev. Gordon Putnam

HYMN OF THE DAY: “All Earth Is Hopeful” (WOV 629)

APOSTLE'S CREED

With the whole church, let us confess our faith by using the words of the Apostle's Creed.

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born
of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

**He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

He will come again 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.**



THE PRAYERS

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

You promise mercy to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants forever. Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, and collaborative relationship with those of other faiths. Strengthen our shared values, that we work together in caring for our world. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

As fields and crops lie dormant, bless them with holy rest. Prepare them to thrive, that they provide abundant food in due season. Protect animals who hibernate and provide for all who scavenge for food in the lean season. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

You raise up the lowly and cast down the arrogant. Teach humility to all in positions of authority. Break down systems of oppression, especially systems that perpetuate inequity and exclusion. Do not allow wealth, power, or pride to become idols that obscure your call to justice. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Look with favor upon all who cry out to you. Accompany with tenderness all who are afraid or ill (*especially*). Rescue all who experience abuse or who live under threat of violence, especially refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers in search of a safe and stable home. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

You are pleased to make your home among us. Make our homecomings joyful as we gather with friends, families, and chosen families in celebration. Grant safety to all who travel. Sustain the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other ministries that assist in setting up new homes. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Blessed are you for Mary and all your servants in every generation who lived according to your promise of mercy. Strengthen us by their example until the revelation of your glory is made known. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Comfort your people with tender words of love and healing. Surround all who are grieving, all who know depression or anxiety, or all who feel lonely or forgotten, especially Norma, Gillian, Cecilia, Jean, Betty, Inez, Charlotte, Zeby, Susan, Claire, Charles, Ellen, Pastor Stewart and Loretta. Deliver all in any need. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

(For whom else and what else shall we pray...)

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. **Amen.**

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

(Greet each other in the peace of the Lord.)

ANTHEM: “Now The Heavens Start To Whisper” Welsh melody, From All Creation Sings songbook; Text, Mary Bringle

OFFERING



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 dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

God our provider,
by your merciful hand
abundance springs up from the earth.
Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty.
Let them be a sign of your steadfast love
and faithfulness for all people,
through Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

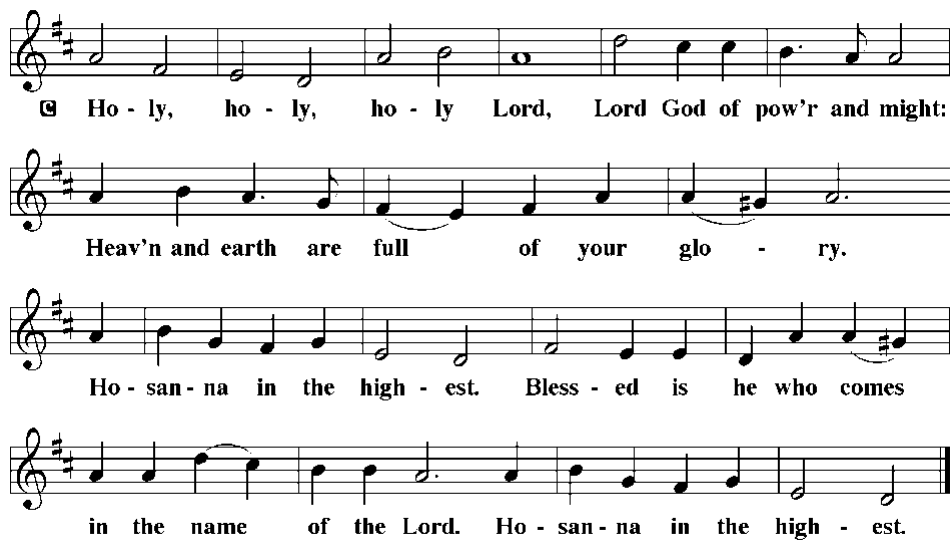
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

PREFACE

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, almighty and everliving God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:
Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
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.

THANKSGIVING

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.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together.
Come, take your place at the table.

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
Amen.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

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

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous God,
in bread and cup you have revealed your glory
for all people to see together.
Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim
your good news of liberation and release,
brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: "Hark, the Glad Sound!" (LBW 35)

BLESSING

The God of peace bless you,
the love of Christ sustain you in hope,
and the anointing of the Spirit ✝ remain upon you
now and forever.
Amen.

DECEMBER



26th Sarah Grove Jordan
26th Jaxon Diehl



December

24th – 11am Sherie W-Rohal

24th – 7pm Anne Putnam

31st Debbie Snyder

January

7th Danny Snyder

14th Ivan Diehl

21st Flora Williams

28th

Dismissal

Go in peace. Keep awake.
Thanks be to God.



We need your help the Backpack program now has 19 kids. Your support by purchasing any of the items listed below is much appreciated. Items can be placed in the box in the narthex. There is also an offering basket for financial support of the program.

Mac and cheese	Kroger meals
Chef Boyardee meals	Fruit cups
Boxes of cereal	Poptarts
Oatmeal	Ramen Noodles, any kind
Boxed juices	Yahoo chocolate milk
Apple sauce	Raisins
“Hugs” Drink Barrels	All single servings

Pastor Gordon Putnam
434-760-0263
Grputnam1949@gmail.com
Pastor Carl Trost
Hannah Pingel, Pianist
Sam Diehl and Bambi Straw, Assisting Ministers

Prayer Concerns

Ongoing Need for Prayer

Norma Turak, Cecilia Shott, Jean Geiser, Betty Diehl, Gillian Taylor, Charlotte Shifflett (Danny’s aunt), Inez Johnson (Becky and Debbie’s aunt), and Susan Zirges (friend of Sherie & Paul).

Prayer Request for

Zeby (Ellen & Charles’ grandson), Charles, Ellen, Claire, Pastor Stewart, and Loretta Whiting (Sherie’s mother).

Community Conversations

- December flowers are given by Gene Giltner.
- January flowers will be given by Anne Putnam.
- Choir practice every Tuesday at 6pm at Betty Bartley’s home.
- Men’s Group meets every Friday at 9:00 am.
- December 31st Soup luncheon after worship and before taking down the Christmas decorations. Sign-up sheet in the Narthex.
- January 9th Open Circle meets at 1pm at St. James. Sherie is our hostess.
- January 9th Council meeting at 7pm in Fellowship Hall.
- January 28th Reports for our Annual Report are due to Anne.
- For prayer concerns, contact Pastor Gordon.
- Council Person of the Month
 - December—Lynda Diehl

Annual Reports

- Pastor’s Report—Pastor Gordon
- President’s Report—Gene Giltner
- Property Committee—Paul Rohal & John Grove (co-chairs)
- Social Ministry—Joyce Dull (chair)
- Worship & Music & Altar Guild
Flora Williams (chair)
- Open Circle—Anne Putnam (President)
- Cemetery Treasurers’ Report—John Wright
Reports due by January 28th