

*Joy*  
TO THE  
*world*  
THE LORD  
IS COME!

BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY,  
WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL PEOPLE.

LUKE 2:10

**First St. John Lutheran Church**

2471 Seaman Street - Toledo, Ohio 43605  
Phone: 419-691-7222 - [www.firststjohn.com](http://www.firststjohn.com)

Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

*December 24, 2024*

*Christmas Eve*

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**ORDER OF WORSHIP—(11:00 pm)**

**Prelude**

Dr. Anthony Pattin

**Ringing of the Bell**

**Processional Hymn** *“Joy to the World”* (v. 1, 2, 4) ELW #267

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.*

*Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding  
joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy*

*He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.*

**Invocation**

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

**C: And also with you.**

***Lighting the Christmas Candle***

P: The four candles have now been lit. The four weeks of Advent  
preparation have passed. This evening we light the center candle  
on the wreath. The light it gives reminds us of the One who is the  
True Light of the World, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: For unto us is born in the city of David a Savior who is Christ  
the Lord.**

P: Jesus Christ is the Light of the world.

**C: The light no darkness can overcome.**

P: Stay with us Lord, for it is evening,

**C: and the day is almost over.**

P: Let your light scatter the darkness,

**C: and illumine your church.**

**P:** Tonight is the night of the Son's in-breaking! Come to his light!  
Receive his light into your hearts! Celebrate his light and so live  
forever in his glory! Rise, shine, for your light has come.

**C: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Christmas Song** "Love Has Come" ELW #292

*Love has come—a light in the darkness!  
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.  
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;  
Hear how their song of joy arises: Love! Love!  
Born unto you a Savior! Love! Love!  
Glory to God on high.*

*Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.  
Love is God now asleep in the hay.  
See the glow in the eyes of his mother,  
What is the name her heart is saying? Love! Love!  
Love is the name she whispers; Love! Love!  
Jesus, Im-man-u-el.*

*Love has come and never will leave us!  
Love is life ever lasting and free.  
Love is Jesus within and among us.  
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking. Love! Love!  
Love is the gift of Christmas, Love! Love!  
Praise to you, God on high!*

### **The Prayer of the Day**

**P:** The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

**P:** Let us pray. Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with  
the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may  
walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the  
brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our  
Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God,  
now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**FSJ Chancel Choir** "Sing Gloria" Whitaker  
Craig Whitaker, Interim Director

## **The Christmas Gospel in Word and Song**

**Scripture Readings** Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 & Luke 1:26-38

**Hymn** "Once in Royal David's City" (v. 1-2) ELW #269

*Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,  
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for his bed;  
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.*

*He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,  
And his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;  
With the poor and meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.*

**Scripture Readings** Philippians 2:5-11 & Luke 2:1-7

**Solo** "Cantique de Noel- Adams (O Holy Night)" Bennett Whitaker

**Scripture Readings** Colossians 1:15-20 & Luke 2:8-

**Hymn** "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (v. 1-2) ELW #270

*Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born king;  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."  
Joyful, all you nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;  
With angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born king!"*

*Christ, by highest heav'n adorned, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold him come, off-spring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Hail, incarnate deity!  
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born king!"*

**Scripture Readings** Micah 5:2-5 & Luke 2:15-20

**Christmas Message** Pastor Jerald K. Rayl

**Message Hymn** "Go Tell It on the Mountain" (v. 1-2) ELW #290

*Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!  
While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night  
Behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.*

*Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!  
The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.*

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;  
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

### The Offering

**Offertory Hymn** "Jesus, Oh What a Wonderful Child" Larson  
FSJ Chancel Choir  
Craig Whitaker, Interim Director

**Intercessory Prayer** (Each petition concludes with the following:)

P: Hear us good Lord.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

P: Let us pray. Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### The Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

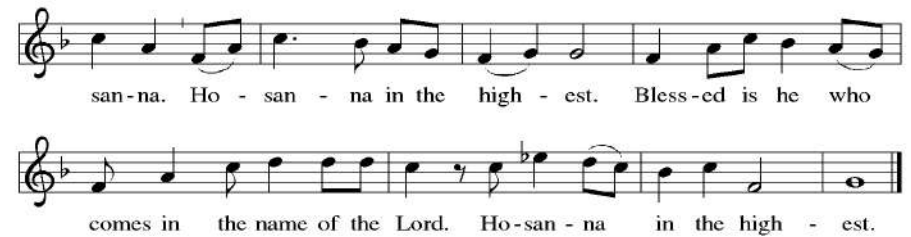
P: Lift up your hearts.

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

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

**C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. 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 all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



P: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

P: 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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P: To you, O God, Father, (+) Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

P: Remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

### The Lord's Prayer (prayed by all)

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**

P: Glory to God in the highest, Come to the table of peace.

C: We come at our Lord’s command.

**The Communion** (distribution will be continuous)

“All baptized Christians, believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, are welcome to gather at the Lord’s table.

Infant children and others who have not been baptized are welcome to come to receive a blessing; please make an X with your arms across your chest if you are not receiving the bread and wine.”

If you wish to receive apple juice instead of wine, place your hand over your shoulder as you approach the person distributing the wine.

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(After all have received communion, please stand.)

***Prayer After Communion***

P: Let us pray. God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table With gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord

C: Amen.

***Hymn*** “*Silent Night, Holy Night*” (v. 1-2) ELW #281

*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.*

*Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight; Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly host sing Alleluia! Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!*

***Christmas Benediction***

P: May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, (+) Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

***Dismissal***

P: Go in peace, Christ is with you.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Dr. Anthony Pattin

*We joyfully greet our members, loved ones and visitors on this Christmas Eve! We remember with awe and gratitude how God shone His light into our darkness on that first Christmas.*

*May we share with others the light that shines from our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**A RECORDING OF THE SERVICE** - The worship service has been recorded. It will be available on the church website (www.firststjohn.com) in time to be viewed at 11:00 p.m. It will remain posted throughout the Christmas season.

**READER**

Carol Haar

**ELDERS**

Bob Haar, Sherrie Haar

**SOUND BOARD**

Mark Ackerman

**POINSETTIA PICK UP:** is available after the 11:00pm service. Please only take the color and quantity you ordered. Pick up will be available again on Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>.

**REMINDER:** If you want a contribution included on your 2024 financial statement, please place it in the offering plate next Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup>, or you can drop it off or mail it so it arrives at the church office by Friday, December 27<sup>th</sup>. Any offerings that come into the office after January 1<sup>st</sup> or post-marked after December 31<sup>st</sup>, will be attributed to your 2025 statement.

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*A Christmas Prayer*

*Dear Jesus,*

*Thank you for the gift of your loving presence. Help me in this season of love never to turn away from you through indifference to my neighbors in need. Give me the grace to welcome you in every helpless child or adult who is outcast, poor, forgotten, or afraid — giving freely with a heart full of love.*

*May I be a light for everyone I meet, a guiding star to illuminate the way that leads us all home to you, our saving hope.*

*Amen.*

## **Born for You**

To frightened shepherds on the edge of town, an angel makes a startling announcement: To you is born a Savior. One who saves. Saves from what? In the gentle glow of our Christmas celebrations, we might pause for a moment to ponder this question. Jesus came to destroy the power of sin and death, to save us from our slavery to sin and from the spiritual death that accompanies separation from God.

To you is born a Savior. This announcement is made not just to the shepherds, but to all who hear these words in faith. This word is a plural "you." This good news is for *all* people: for *all* of God's favored ones in every time and place. It is for all of you gathered in this room to hear the Christmas story. It is for all who marvel in astonishment, who laugh and rejoice that Christ is born in their hearts and in their lives over and over again. It is for all of those who have not yet heard the story, but whose lives cry out for a strand of hope, a word of healing, a promise of peace.

To you is born a Savior. This is also a singular "you." Jesus comes to save each one of us, each unique individual. To you is born a Savior. You reading these words. You the expectant parent. You the laid off employee. You the addict. You the one weighed down by doubt. You the one wearied by loneliness. You the one giddy with joy. You the one driven by anxiety. You the sinner. You the believer. Jesus is born for you. Jesus died for you. We--all of us together and each one of us individually--need this Savior, this Jesus. His birth means new life for us. Glory to God in the highest!