



# Calvary Lutheran Church

December 24, 2023  
9:00 p.m.

**CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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Stacy Nick-Casey, Director

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Calvary Lutheran Church

is a member congregation of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

Serving Cranford and the surrounding area for more than 90 years

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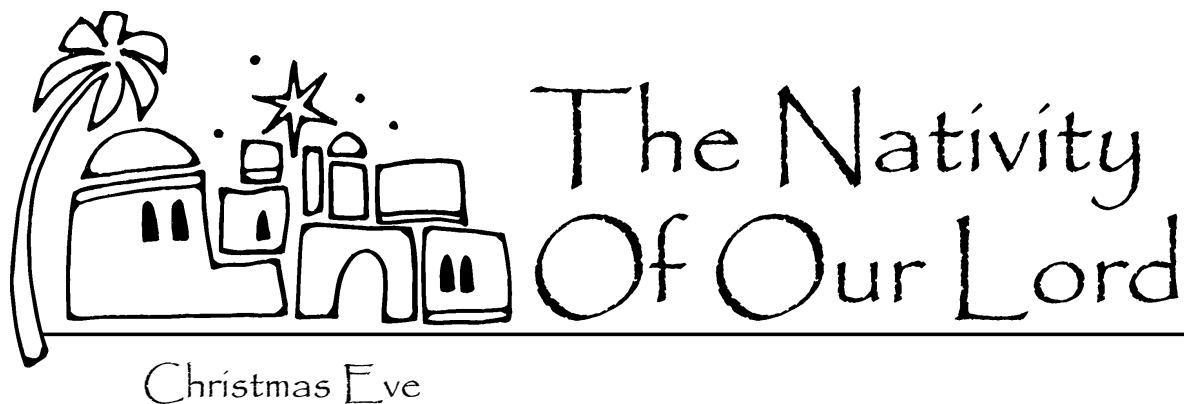
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Calvary Lutheran  
Cranford, New Jersey



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.



**December 24, 2023**  
**Candlelight Holy Communion Service**  
**9:00 p.m.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

*In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.*

### **PRELUDE**

*Organ and Trumpet*  
*Bell Choir*

### **GREETING**

**P** Welcome to Christmas Eve here at Calvary Lutheran Church in Cranford, NJ. 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.

### **INTROIT**

*"Bring Us Hope"*  
*Meg Sorensen Spatz - Bassoon*

*Ruth Elaine Scram*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

**P** “Joy to the World, the Lord is come!”

**C** “Let earth receive her King!”

**P** We confess our Sin to the Babe born to Save

**C** We rejoice in God’s love and forgiveness wrapped snugly in those swaddling clothes.

**P** “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place.”

**C** “Glory to God in the highest!”

## PROCESSIONAL CAROL

*“O Come, All Ye Faithful”*

*ELW #283*



## SALUTATION AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And also with you.

**P** 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 Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen

## KYRIE

**P** O, Lord, have mercy upon us.  
O, Christ, have mercy upon us.  
O, Lord have mercy upon us.  
O, hear us, Holy Jesus.

Tune of *ELW #296*

*ELW #296*

**C** What Child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are  
keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king, who shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

## GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

**P** Glory be to God on High!  
Peace on earth,  
Goodwill toward all!

Tune of *ELW #289*

*ELW #289*

**C** Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains  
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo  
  
Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the new-born king.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo

<b>FIRST READING:            Isaiah 9:2-7</b>
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A READING FROM ISAIAH THE 9<sup>th</sup> CHAPTER

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep  
darkness—  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing  
plunder.

<sup>4</sup>For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of  
Midian.

<sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping  
warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood

shall be burned as fuel for the fire.  
<sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of  
Peace.

<sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his  
kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and  
forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do  
this.

**P** THE WORD OF THE LORD.

**C** Thanks be to God.

<b>SECOND READING:        Titus 2:11-14</b>
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A READING FROM TITUS THE 2<sup>nd</sup> CHAPTER

<sup>11</sup>The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, <sup>12</sup>training us to  
renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that  
are self-controlled, upright, and godly, <sup>13</sup>while we wait for the blessed hope  
and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus  
Christ. <sup>14</sup>He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all  
iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good  
deeds.

**P** THE WORD OF THE LORD.

**C** Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL: Luke 2:1–20****[P] THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE THE 2<sup>ND</sup> CHAPTER****[C] Glory to you, O Lord.**

<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] THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD.****[C] Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

## STARRY NIGHT!

## HYMN

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

ELW #279

## THE PRAYERS

**A** Trusting in God’s good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

*A brief silence.*

**A** Glory to you, God, for the song of the angels, proclaiming to the world Christ’s holy birth. Give your church a joyful song to sing, that we bring the good news of peace and salvation to all people. Hear us, O God,

**C** Your mercy is great.

**A** Glory to you, God, for the stars that shine in the depth of the night. Provoke awe in our hearts at the expansive mystery of the cosmos. Open us to find beauty in the clear darkness of night and in the first glimmers of dawn.

Hear us, O God.

**C** Your mercy is great.

**A** Glory to you, God, for the child born to us who establishes a kingdom of justice and righteousness. Break bonds of oppression, bring reconciliation to warring lands, and establish peace from this time onward and forevermore.

Hear us, O God.

**C** Your mercy is great.

**A** Glory to you, God, for Mary’s loving care. Lead us to tend to one another in time of need. Share the comfort of your presence with all people tonight who are alone or separated from loved ones due to estrangement, incarceration, or illness (*especially*) **Mary Anderson, Aronson Family, Norm Bauer, Sue Bird (Wisconsin), Barbara Birger, Linda Hartney, Beth Juntilla, Sharon Peterson, Mabel Rapp, Brenda Richardson, Bud Sorenson, Heather Viscito** and those we name aloud, and in our hearts (*pause*). We also pray today, Lord for our homebound members and our military personnel, persons facing abuse and those struggling with mental health issues. Hear us, O God.

**C** Your mercy is great.



**A** Glory to you, God, for the faithfulness of the shepherds in their vocation. Grant rest to any who feel exhausted from their work during this season: retail and restaurant workers, church musicians, administrative staff, and clergy, organizers of charitable-giving events, and service workers doing essential tasks. Hear us, O God.

**C** Your mercy is great.

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

**P** We pray that your spirit empower Calvary and Holy Cross in worship, fellowship and service to the glory of your holy name. Guide our pastors and leaders as they shepherd the work we do to grow in love and serve our community both near and far. Hear us, O God.

**C** Your mercy is great.

**P** Glory to you, God, for the multitude of the heavenly host. We rejoice in the zeal of all your saints who have witnessed the appearing of your grace, and who reveal to us your salvation for all. Hear us, O God.

**C** Your mercy is great.

**P** Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

**C** Amen.

## PEACE

**P** At the birth of Christ the angels sang a song of peace and goodwill. May the peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C** And also with you.

## OFFERING

**MUSICAL OFFERING** “*The Beautiful Impossible*”  
*Meg Sorensen Spatz - Flute*

*Joseph M. Martin*

## OFFERING PRAYER

**[A]** Lord God, receive and bless these gifts which we have brought to the manger tonight. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace, poured out upon us through Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

**[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 him thanks and praise.

## PROPER PREFACE

**[P]** In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh, you have opened our eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your love; that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. Therefore, we praise you and sing:

## SANCTUS

**[P]** Holy, holy, holy, holy, in the highest, Hosanna! *Tune of ELW #490*  
Blessed is He who cometh, in the name of God most High.

*ELW #490*

**[C]** Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;  
ponder nothing earthly minded, for with blessing in his hand,  
Christ our God to earth descending comes full homage to demand.

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

## LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread,  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.  
Amen

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

**P** Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of love and forgiveness.  
**C** Amen.

## AGNUS DEI

*Tune of ELW #490*

**P** Jesus, Lamb of God, dies for us our Redeemer lies in the straw  
Ponder all these things deep inside you, as did Mary in her heart.

*ELW #490*

**C** King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood,  
Lord of lords in human vesture, in the body and the blood,  
He will give to all the faithful his own self for heavenly food.

## DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

## MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION

*“Christmas Sanctus”*

*Dengler*

## COMMUNION BLESSING

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**A** We give you thanks Almighty God for this greatest gift of Christmas, your only Son, who enters our world and our lives this holy night. Strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you, and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord

**C** Amen

## THE CANDLE LIGHTING

*The ushers will receive the light from the Christ candle and pass it on to the congregation. Please tip your candle only to receive the light, hold your lighted candle upright to pass the light. Please extinguish your candle following the Blessing.*

**P** Gracious God of heaven and earth, you have thrown a lifeline to us in our darkness – a beam of light that shines through Jesus. Though born in a manger, he is the firstborn of all creation. Though crucified on a cross, he is the Lord of life. Fill us with the wonder and joy of his presence in the world and in our hearts.

**C** Amen.

## POST COMMUNION CAROL

*Silent Night, Holy Night!*  
(verses 1, 2 and 3)

*ELW #281*

### Verse 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.

### Verse 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!

### Verse 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.

## BLESSING

**P** God bless you and keep you, Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

## SENDING CAROL

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

*ELW #270*

## DISMISSAL

**A** Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this Good News.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## POSTLUDE

*Organ and Trumpet*

*We welcome the people of Holy Cross and thank Pastor David Knecht  
for his service.*

**0.**

*We also thank our musicians:*

*Matt Spatz – Trumpet*

*Meg Sorensen Spatz – Bassoon, Flute*

*Sean Garnhart – Piano*

*Calvary Bell Choir*

*Calvary Choir*

### ***Prayers for the homebound***

✝ Pray for our elderly members who are unable to attend worship and help us to minister to them faithfully especially Meta Brockmann, June Kaiser, Jean Kissack, Eddie Leicht, Rocky Metroka, Fred Miller, and Chuck Sherrick.

### ***Prayers for the military***

✝ Protect and comfort our servicemen and women as they stand in harm's way (*especially*), Steven Bobrowski, Ian Hay, Jeff Hill and Phillip Spatz. We pray for families and countries in conflict throughout the world.



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S i l e n t N i g h t , H o l y N i g h t