

Rejoice!



*For unto you is born this day in the city of David
a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

Luke 2:11

First St. John Lutheran Church

2471 Seaman Street - Toledo, Ohio 43605
Phone: 419-691-7222 - www.firststjohn.com
Rev. Jerald K. Rayl, Pastor

December 24, 2023

Christmas Eve

* 7:00 pm

ORDER OF WORSHIP

** 11:00 pm

Prelude

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician
Emily Lipper, Trumpet

Ringling of the Bell

(Please stand)

Gathering Song

"Joy to the World"

No. 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 Savor 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!**

(Please be seated)

* **Musical Solo**

"Gesu Bambino"

Dr. Joan Walldorf,
FSJ Music Director

** **Hand Bell Solo**

"Christmas Angel Medley"

Cheri Sergent, Bell Choir Director

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.**

* **Children's Message**

Pastor Rayl

* **Hymn**

"Your Little Ones, Dear Lord"

Your little ones dear Lord, are we,
And come your lowly bed to see;
Enlighten ev'ry soul and mind, that we the way to you may find.

With songs we hasten you to greet,
And kiss the ground before your feet. Oh, blessed hour,
Oh, sweetest night that gave you birth, our soul's delight.

Chancel Choir *"Five Days Journey to Bethlehem"*

Dr. Joan Walldorf, Director

The Christmas Gospel in Word and Song

Scripture Readings

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

Once in Royal David's City

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

Luke 2:1-7

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 holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to m the all the earth.

Scripture Readings

Luke 2:8-14

Musical Solo

"What Child is This?" Emily Lipper, trumpet

Scripture Readings

Luke 2:15-20

It Came Upon the 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 heav'nly music floats o'er all the weary world.
Above the sad and lowly plains they bend on hov'ring wing,
And ever o'er its babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

Christmas Message

Pastor Jerald K. Rayl

Message Hymn

O Come All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him, born the king of angels:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes!
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Offering

Musical Offertory "Christmas Fantasy/Medley"

Dr. Anthony Pattin, Church Musician

(Please stand)

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 Lord's Prayer

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

**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**

**** Musical Solo**

"O Holy Night"

Aubrey Hess

Christmas Gospel

John 1:1-5 & 14-18

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Hymn

Silent Night, Holy Night

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, Church Musician
Emily Lipper, Trumpet

*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.*

ELDERS

7:00 pm: Darold Henninger, Mike Winslow

11:00 pm: Dave Wilbarger, Tom Gaskins, Terry Ruedy

READERS

7:00 pm: Bob Haar

11:00 pm: Carol Haar

POINSETTIA PICK UP: You can pick up your poinsettias after the 11:00 pm service this evening, or next week Wednesday-Friday 9am-3pm.

REMINDER: 2023 Year-end contributions must be placed in the offering plate by next Sunday the 31st, or dropped in the mail to arrive by Friday, December 29th. Offerings received after January 1st (including those mailed in) will be attributed to your 2024 statement.

2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES are available in the lounge. Even if you give online, there are some special envelopes for tithing throughout the year. If you do not have envelopes and would like some assigned to you, please contact Jennifer in the church office at (419) 691-7222.

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.



Allow Christmas to continue for you and your family by joining us next Sunday, December 31st at 8:00 am or 10:30 am for worship. Adult and Children's Sunday School offered at 9:15 am.

December 24, 2023

CHRISTMAS EVE

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!