

SAINT JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
SANKT JOHANNES GEMEINDE  
ÉGLISE LUTHÉRIENNE ST-JEAN

CHRISTMAS EVE  
December 24, 2023

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PASTOR: Katherine Gohm  
INTERIM ORGANIST: Esther-Ruth Teel  
SOLOIST: Haitham Haidar

*We acknowledge that St. John's Lutheran Church is situated on unceded Indigenous land that was never surrendered by treaty or agreement. We recognize that the Kanien'keha:ka (commonly known as the Mohawk), a nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (commonly known as Iroquois), are the custodians of Tiohtia:ke (the Island of Montreal), which is a traditional meeting place between peoples including the Anishinaabe (commonly known as Algonquin), Abenaki and the Huron-Wendat. As a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and in agreement with its official policies, our church is committed to participating in an ongoing process of finding truth and reconciliation.*

PRELUDE

*Esther-Ruth Teel, Harpist*

**GATHERING SONG *O Come, All Ye Faithful*, ELW 283**

*All are invited to carry and wave ribbons during the gathering song.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 O come, all ye faithful,<br>joyful and triumphant!<br>O come ye, O come ye to<br>Bethlehem;<br>come and behold him,<br>born the king of angels: | Son of the Father<br>now in flesh appearing! <i>Refrain</i>  |
| <i>Refrain</i><br>O come, let us adore him,<br>O come, let us adore him,<br>O come, let us adore him,<br>Christ the Lord!                         | 3 Sing, choirs of angels,<br>sing in exultation,<br>sing, all ye citizens of heaven<br>above!<br>Glory to God<br>in the highest: <i>Refrain</i>            |
| 2 The highest, most holy,<br>light of light eternal,<br>born of a virgin, a mortal he<br>comes;   | 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,<br>born this happy morning;<br>Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!<br>Word of the Father,<br>now in flesh appearing: <i>Refrain</i> |

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2

**AN ADVENT READING: Luke 1: 46b-55**

- <sup>46</sup> And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
<sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
<sup>50</sup> His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
<sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,  
<sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.’

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

#### BLESSING 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 and banish all our fears.  
We pray in the name of Emmanuel,  
your promised child and our Savior.  
**Amen.**

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

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. **Amen.**

#### CHOIR ANTHEM

*Lo, how a rose e’er blooming*, arranged by Esther-Ruth Teel

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming<br>from tender stem hath sprung!<br>Of Jesse's lineage coming<br>as seers of old have sung,<br>it came, a flow'r so bright,<br>amid the cold of winter,<br>when half-spent was the night. | 2 Isaiah had foretold it,<br>the rose I have in mind;<br>with Mary we behold it,<br>the virgin mother kind.<br>To show God's love aright,<br>she bore to us a Savior,<br>when half-spent was the night. |
|--|---|

3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender  
with sweetness fills the air,  
dispels with glorious splendor  
the darkness everywhere.  
True man, yet very God,  
from sin and death he saves us  
and lightens ev'ry load.

4 O Savior, child of Mary,  
who felt our human woe;  
O Savior, king of glory,  
who dost our weakness know:  
bring us at length, we pray,  
to the bright courts of heaven  
and into endless day.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845-1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876-1948, st. 4

### **READING: Isaiah 9:2-7**

<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 Counsellor, 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 onwards and for evermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN *O Little Town of Bethlehem* ELW 279**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1 O little town of Bethlehem,<br/>how still we see thee lie!<br/>Above thy deep and dreamless sleep<br/>the silent stars go by;<br/>yet in thy dark streets shineth<br/>the everlasting light.<br/>The hopes and fears of all the years<br/>are met in thee tonight.</p>   | <p>3 How silently, how silently<br/>the wondrous gift is giv'n!<br/>So God imparts to human hearts<br/>the blessings of his heav'n.<br/>No ear may hear his coming;<br/>but, in this world of sin,<br/>where meek souls will receive him, still<br/>the dear Christ enters in.</p> |
| <p>2 For Christ is born of Mary,<br/>and, gathered all above<br/>while mortals sleep, the angels keep<br/>their watch of wond'ring love.<br/>O morning stars, together<br/>proclaim the holy birth,<br/>and praises sing to God the king,<br/>and peace to all the earth!</p> | <p>4 O holy Child of Bethlehem,<br/>descend to us, we pray;<br/>Cast out our sin, and enter in,<br/>be born in us today.<br/>We hear the Christmas angels<br/>the great glad tidings tell;<br/>oh, come to us, abide with us,<br/>our Lord Immanuel!</p>                           |

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

**READING: Titus 2:11-14**

<sup>11</sup> For 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 Saviour, 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.

The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**WELCOMING THE GOSPEL**

Angels We Have Heard on High, ELW # 289 verses 1 & 2

*Children are invited to ring bells each time "Gloria in excelsis Deo" is sung.*

1 Angels we have heard on high,  
sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply,  
echoing their joyous strains.

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
which inspire your heav'nly  
song? *Refrain*

*Refrain*

Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
gloria in excelsis Deo.

### **GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20**

Our Christmas Eve story comes from the Gospel of Luke.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

To us is born a Savior. **Jesus Christ our Lord.**

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 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. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

To us is born a Savior. **Jesus Christ our Lord.**

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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

To us is born a Savior. **Jesus Christ our Lord.**

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

To us is born a Savior. **Jesus Christ our Lord.**

### **CELEBRATING THE GOSPEL**

Angels We Have Heard on High, ELW # 289 verse 3

3 Come to Bethlehem and see  
him whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn king. *Refrain*

*Refrain*

Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
gloria in excelsis Deo.

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864

### **REFLECTION** *Pastor Katherine*

*Children are invited to gather at the manger/nativity set.*

HYMN *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* ELW # 270

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn 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!"

*Refrain*

Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn king!"

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,

offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!  
Hail, incarnate deity!  
Pleased as man with us to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*

3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of  
peace!  
Hail the Sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
ris'n with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
born that we no more may die,  
born to raise each child of earth,  
born to give us second birth.  
*Refrain*

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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.

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. **Your mercy is great.**

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. **Your mercy is great.**

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. **Your mercy is great.**



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. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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. **Your mercy is great.**

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. **Your mercy is great.**

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

**SOLO** *Haitham Haidar*

*O Holy Night* by Adolphe Adams (1803-1856)

Minuit ! Chrétiens, c'est l'heure solennelle  
Où l'homme Dieu descendit jusqu'à nous,  
Pour effacer la tache originelle  
Et de son père arrêter le courroux:  
Le monde entier tressaille d'espérance  
A cette nuit qui lui donne un sauveur  
Peuple à genoux, attends ta délivrance  
Noël ! Noël ! Voici le Rédempteur !  
Noël ! Noël ! Voici le Rédempteur !

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining;  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!  
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!

OFFERING *Concurrent with solo. Ways to give an offering are at the end of this worship guide.*

## **PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*Share a gesture of peace with one another as you are comfortable.*

## **LORD'S PRAYER (New Zealand Prayer Book, Maori)**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray:

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,**

**Source of all that is and that shall be,**

**Father and Mother of us all,**

**Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

**The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!**

**The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world.**

**Your heavenly will be done by all created beings.**

**Your communion of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on Earth.**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.**

**In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.**

**In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.**

**From trials too great to endure, spare us.**

**From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,  
now and forever. Amen.**

## **SHARING THE LIGHT / GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION**

**John 1:1-5, 14**

*The light is passed from one to another. When lighting candles please keep the lit candle upright.*

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

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.

SENDING HYMN *Silent Night, Holy Night!* ELW # 281

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.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885

#### BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

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

Christ the Savior is born!  
Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.  
**Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE  
*Esther-Ruth Teel*

## Thank you for worshipping with us!

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

#### **Get to know Pastor Katherine!**

**Pastor Katherine would LOVE to get to know you!** Please be in touch via a phone call to the church or email: [pastor@SaintJohnsLutheranMontreal.org](mailto:pastor@SaintJohnsLutheranMontreal.org)

Pastor Katherine **would be honoured to pray for you and with you.** Please be in touch for all pastoral care via the pastor's email address or by calling the church office (contact info below).

**Regular office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am-2pm.**

#### **Upcoming Events**

- **December 25: English Christmas Day, 11am**
- **December 31: New Year's Eve, 11am**

**We are thankful for your donations!** Donations in person are welcome as well as:

- Cheque, payable to St John's Lutheran
- [CanadaHelps](http://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/119180826RR0001-st-johns-lutheran-church/) [www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/119180826RR0001-st-johns-lutheran-church/](http://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/119180826RR0001-st-johns-lutheran-church/)
- Interac transfer: [secretary@saintjohnslutheranmontreal.org](mailto:secretary@saintjohnslutheranmontreal.org)

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