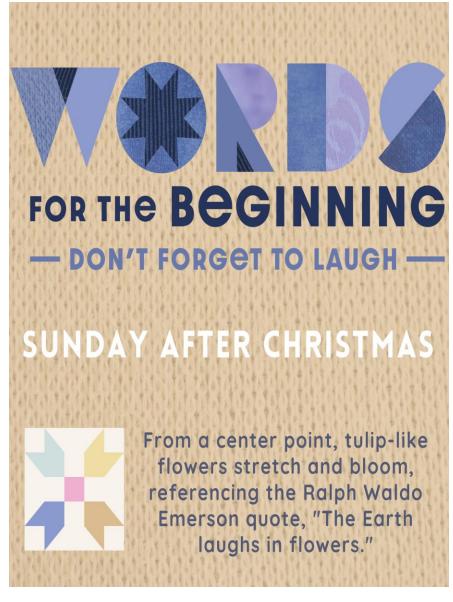
1st Sunday in Christmas | December 29, 2024



Worship Assistants

Assisting Minister: Doug Hanson Reader: Dawn Schroeder Altar Guild: Linda Wery Communion Assist: Sheila Greenwood Ushers: Carol Wehunt and Linda Grunewald Video Tech: Rick Johnson

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GATHERING

Prelude

Welcome

Call to Worship

The angels were clear in their message: the birth of Christ was to bring joy to the whole world.

We know that joy has a contagious ripple effect, so today for our call to worship, we are going to share our joy. I invite you to close your eyes now. Picture the things in your life that bring you joy. It could be something as simple as a warm cup of coffee on a cold morning, or as grand as a person, a place, or an experience. Now take a moment to reflect on this question: What brings you joy?

Now, I invite you to open your eyes and turn and find someone sitting next to you. Share with one another what brings you joy in your life. Talk amongst yourselves for a few minutes.

Family of faith, tell me: what are some of the things that bring you joy? Yell it out!

Friends, having named so many sources of joy in our lives, join me in the opening litany printed in your bulletin: We have named our joy out loud, and it is clear— God is in our joy. God is in this room. We have reason to celebrate. We have a reason to sing. Thanks be to God for the bright hope of this day.

Christ is born! We have reason to celebrate. We have reason to dance. We have reason to laugh. Let us turn our hearts toward God as we worship and celebrate together.

Opening Hymn

Joy to the World

Cranberry 267



Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748 Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

Confession & Forgiveness

Blessed be the Holy One, the Word made flesh, the Power of the Most High, + one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Gathered in the name of Jesus, let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor.

God-with-us,

we confess that we have turned away those seeking shelter, claiming there is no room when we have plenty. We have made power and wealth our idols, while you show us true glory: a baby in a manger. We have overlooked the shepherds, expecting good news in prettier packaging. Too often, we have valued violence instead of your peace. Turn us from our ways to your ways. Grant us the grace to begin again. Free us from all that keeps us bound, and forgive our sin, through Jesus Christ, who gives himself for us. Amen.

Glory



Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809–1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831–1915

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Let us pray, God of angel choruses and contagious laughter, **open our ears and hearts** to hear what it is that you are saying. Meet us in this joy. Meet us in this delight. Meet us in the hope of this Christmas season and reveal the wisdom we need to hear today. With hearts full of gratitude we pray. Amen.

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song. **WORD**

We are ready to celebrate the mystery of Christmas. Let us go to Bethlehem. But who will show us the way? In Bethlehem the Savior has come.

Pulpit: Good News! Lectern: Great Joy! All: Go, tell it!

Who Will Show Us the Way? The Prophets

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them. *Isaiah* 9:2

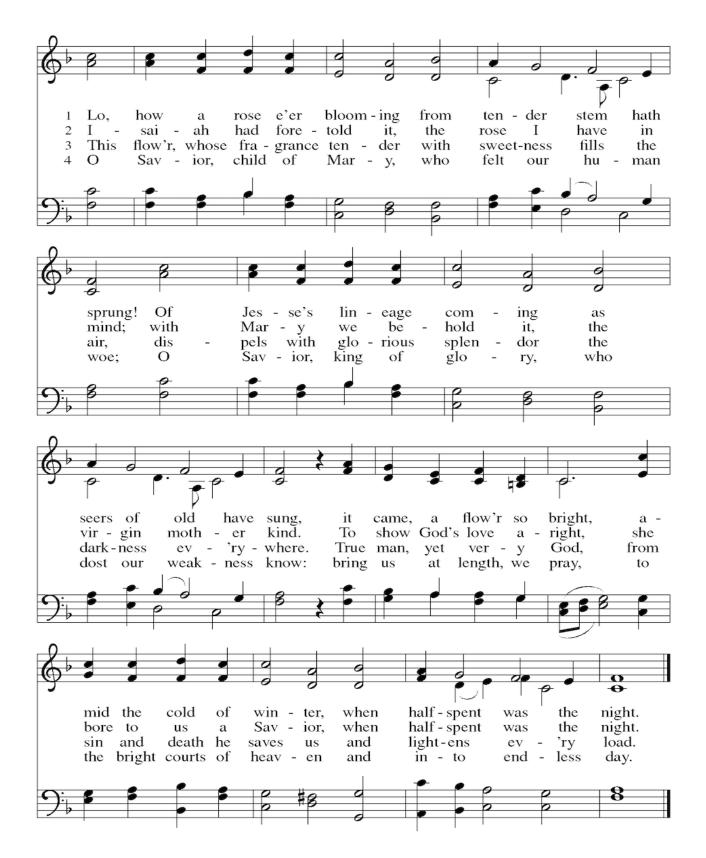
Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. *Isaiah 60:1-2*

But you, Bethlehem, small as you are to be among Judah's clans, out of you shall come forth a governor for Israel, one whose roots are far back in the past, in days gone by. *Micah 5*:2

Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign, Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel. *Isaiah* 7:14

A voice of one calling: in the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight the road for our Lord. *Isaiah 40*:3

Let us go to Bethlehem. The prophets will show us the way. In Bethlehem the Savior has come.



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
Music: ES IST EIN ROS, Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesänge, Köln, 1599; arr. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621

Who Will Show Us the Way? The Psalmists: Psalm 148

Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise God in the heights.

Praise the Lord, all you angels; sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.

Praise the Lord, sun and moon; sing praise, all you shining stars.

Praise the Lord, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of the Lord, who commanded, and they

were created, who made them stand fast forever and ever,

giving them a law that shall not pass away.

Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;

fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, doing God's will;

mountains and all hills,

fruit trees and all cedars;

wild beasts and all cattle,

creeping things and flying birds;

sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,

princes and all rulers of the world;

young men and maidens,

old and young together.

Let them praise the name of the Lord, whose name only is exalted,

whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

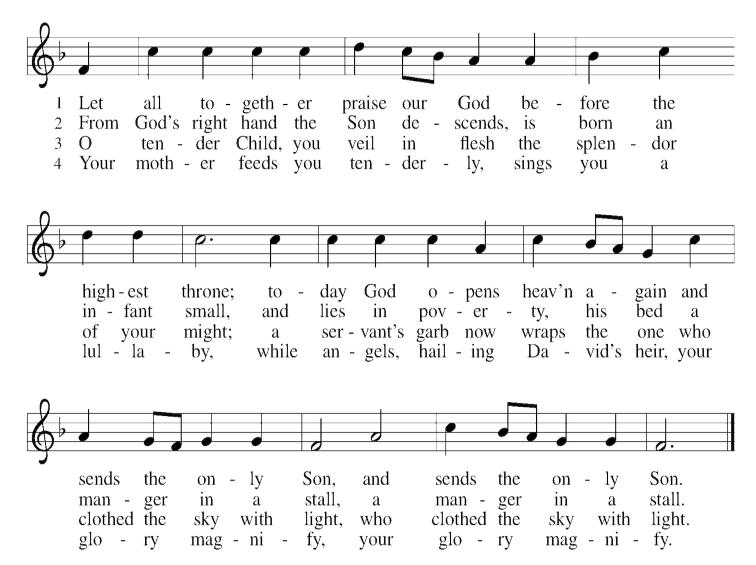
The Lord has raised up strength for the people

and praise for all faithful servants, the children of Israel,

a people who are near the Lord. Praise the Lord!

Let us go to Bethlehem. The psalmists will show us the way. In Bethlehem the Savior has come.





Who Will Show Us the Way? Mary and Joseph: Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; ¹⁹ and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; ²¹ she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

²² All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

Let us go to Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph will show us the way. In Bethlehem the Savior has come.

Pulpit: Good News! Lectern: Great Joy! All: Go, tell it!



Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893 Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

Who Will Show Us the Way? The Manger: Luke 2: 1-7

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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.

Let us go to Bethlehem. The manger will show us the way. In Bethlehem the Savior has come.



Text: North American, 19th cent. Music: CRADLE SONG, William J. Kirkpatrick, 1838-1921

Who Will Show Us the Way? The Shepherds: Luke 2:8-18

⁸ And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great

joy which will come to all the people; ¹¹ for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" ¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told were astonished.

Let us go to Bethlehem. The shepherds will show us the way. In Bethlehem the Savior has come.

Carol

Cranberry 289



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

Prayers of the People

Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people.

For those who teach and those who learn, we pray. Bless the education ministries of your church. Guide Sunday school teachers, college and seminary professors, and Bible study leaders in our ongoing faith formation and curiosity. God of grace, **receive our prayer**.

For the thriving of creation, we pray. Protect the habitats of pangolins and porcupines, penguins and parrots, and all wild animals and creeping things. Increase our knowledge of the natural world and the care of its inhabitants. God of grace, **receive our prayer**.

For the nations of the world, we pray. Raise up rulers who lead with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Let your peace rule in their hearts and in all lands. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

For the well-being of your people, we pray. Keep watch over all who travel this holiday season. Accompany those who are alone or ill. Console parents and children whose relationships are strained or severed. God of grace, **receive our prayer**.

For the ministry of this place, we pray. Let the word of Christ dwell among us. In times of conflict, clothe us in love and move us to forgiveness. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

For what else do the people of God pray?

For your holy, beloved, and chosen ones of every time and place, we give thanks. Draw us all into everlasting praise and joy. God of grace, **receive our prayer**.

We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Who Will Show Us the Way? The Angels

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, **and peace to God's people on earth.**"

Let us go to Bethlehem. The angels will show us the way. In Bethlehem the Savior has come.

Pulpit: Good News! Lectern: Great Joy! **All: Go, tell it!** Please share a sign of Christ's peace with those around you.

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

MEAL

Who Will Show Us the Way? The Wise Men: Matthew 2:1-12

¹ Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ² "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶ 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel."⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; ⁸ and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." ⁹ When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was.

¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; ¹¹ and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Let us go to Bethlehem. The Wise Men will show us the way. In Bethlehem the Savior has come.

Offertory Carol

What Child is This

Cranberry 296

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, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

We bring gifts to our newborn King -For how could we come to the manger of the Lord Without our hearts bursting with the joy of giving? How could we look upon the face of God And not be moved to share what we have? As we celebrate his birth, and wait in hope for his coming again, Let us bring the offerings of our lives before him.

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him. The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him. Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby; joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

The Great Thanksgiving Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all people on earth.

We give you thanks and praise, O God, for the promise of your saving love to all. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. The chains of the oppressed are broken. For a child has been born for us -Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all people on earth.

We give you thanks and praise for Jesus Christ, born to Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem. As the angels proclaimed to the shepherds, Jesus is good news of great joy for all people a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord.

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.

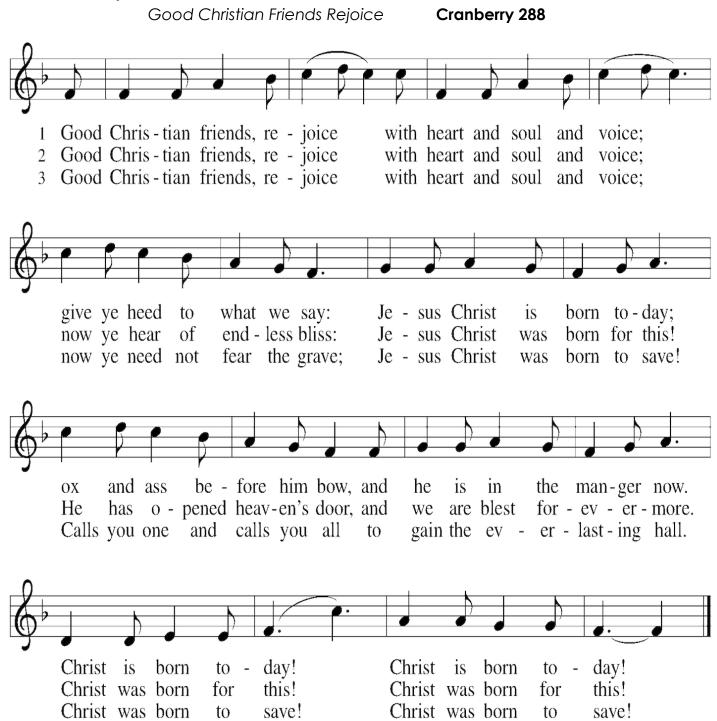
After they had eaten, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. We give you thanks and praise for the Holy Spirit, poured out for us in this heavenly banquet. Fill us with faith, like your servant Mary. Nourish us with hope, like the prophets of old. Bless us with love, like adoring magi. And send us forth with joy, like the shepherds, sharing the good news we have received.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all people on earth. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

With joy in our hearts, we unite our voices once more to pray the words your Son 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. **Communion Hymns**



Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866 Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.

Once in Royal David's City Cranberry 269 roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood low - ly cat - tle shed. 1 Once in а 2 He came down to earth from heav-en who is God and Lord of all. see him, through his own re-deem-ing 3 And our eyes at last shall love; sta-ble, with ox - en stand-ing that poor low - ly the 4 Not in by, where a laid his moth-er her man - ger for bed: ba - by in а and his shel-ter sta - ble, and his cra - dle was stall: was а а for that child so dear and gen - tle is our Lord in heav'n a bove; shall see him: but heav - en, set at God's right hand we in on high: child. Mar - y that moth - er mild. Christ. her lit - tle was Je - sus and meek and low-ly, lived on with the our Sav-ior ho-ly. poor earth and he leads his chil - dren on the place where he gone. to is chil - dren gath - er round, bright like stars, with glo-ry there his crowned.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818–1895 Music: IRBY, Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805–1876

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

SENDING

Announcements

Blessing

Family of faith, in a hurting and lonely world,

there is good news: Jesus Christ is born!

So as you leave this place,

may you be quick to laugh and quick to hope.

May you look for reasons to be grateful.

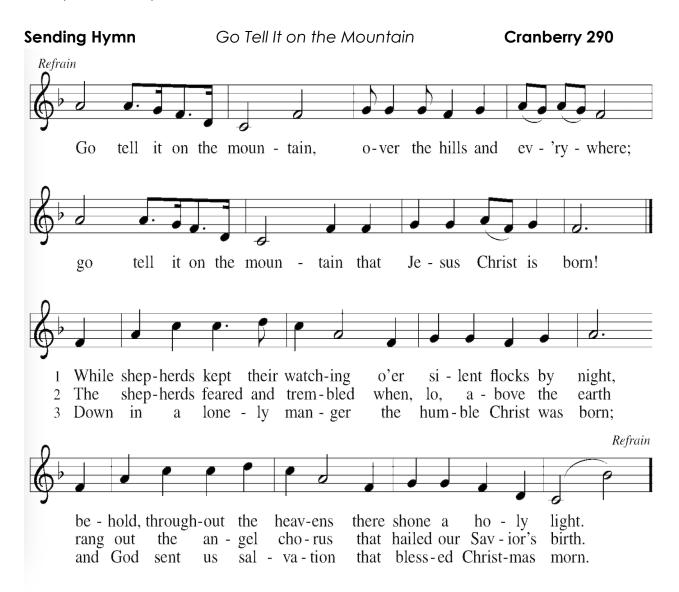
May you not hesitate to join in the dance, or join in the song.

May you extend a hand to your neighbor,

and find God in every moment of joy.

For unto you a child is born. That is good news!

The God of love, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, lavish you with grace, illumine your path, and increase your joy, today and always. **Amen.**



Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt. Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

Dismissal

Let us go to Bethlehem. We can show the way. In Bethlehem the Savior has come.

Funding for Mission & Budget

Monthly Receipts through 12/24/24	\$21,188.10
Monthly Budget Expenses:	\$18,743.00

The Bethel Weekly

Fellowship Hour: Please, if you are able to help on a future date in January, sign up in the hallway.

2025 Offering Envelopes: Are available for pick-up in the lounge. Please do not start using until January 1st.

Annual Reports: Are due by January 16th.

<u>Salvation Army Senior Meal:</u> Is January 20th. Please see the sign-up sheet in the hallway for needed items.

Newsletter Articles: Are due January 22nd.

<u>Aebleskiver 2025:</u> It's never too early to start looking for sales on ingredients and basket items.

Handbags for Hope: In conjunction with the Resurrection Food Pantry, we are asking all the ladies to bring in any unwanted purses. Donations are also needed of travel size hygiene items such as toothbrushes, shampoo, lip balm, etc. to fill the purses prior to distribution. Suggestions can be found on the front of the bin in the lounge.

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Great Thanksgiving adapted from Connections: Worship Companion Yr C Vol1 edited by David Gambell.