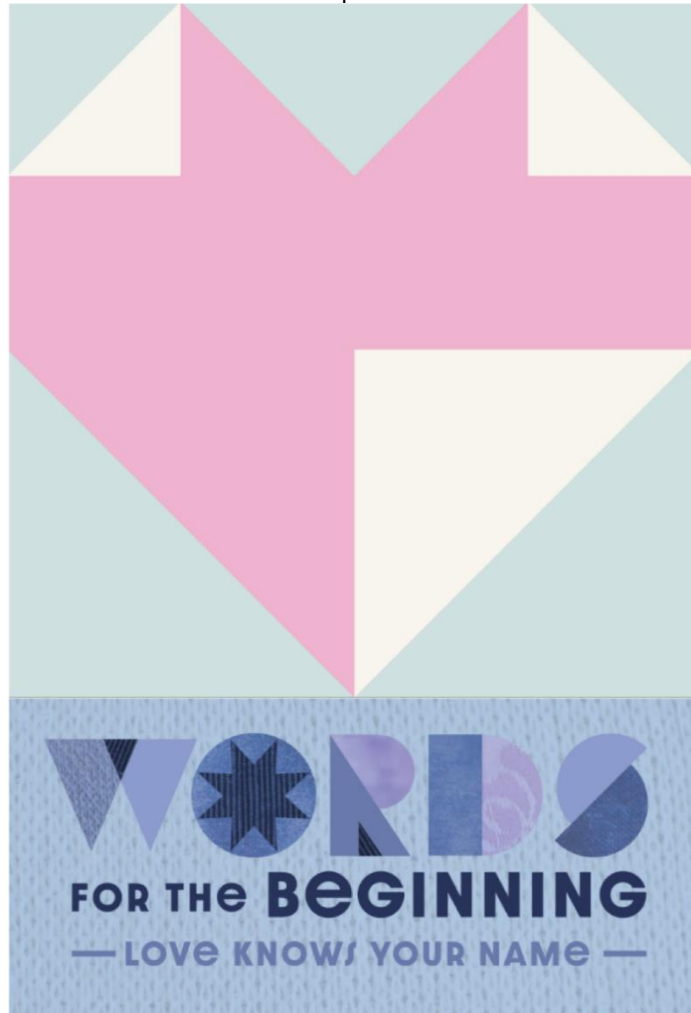


Nativity of Our Lord

December 24, 2024

4pm



Worship Assistants

Assisting Minister: Cindy Michalski

Reader: Roland Christian

Altar Guild: Linda Wery

Communion Assist: Linda Wery & Gayle Peot

Ushers: Carol Wehunt, Marilyn Meister, Julie Juranitch

Video Tech: Doug Hanson

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

GATHERING

Prelude

Tone Chimes

Welcome

Call to Worship & Wreath Lighting

Who are these angels who come to earth,
bearing the news of the Christ child's birth?

Who are these shepherds who run to see,
and worship the babe on bended knee?

Who is the child, so small, so slight,
of whom the angels sang that night?

Who is this king, a manger his throne,
who humbles himself to make us his own?

Who is this God who sends a Son
into our midst, the promised one?

Do not be afraid; for see - I bring you good news of great joy for all people;
to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior,

Who is the Messiah, the Lord.

So let us begin with hope. Let us begin with peace.

Let us begin with joy. Let us begin with love.

Yes, let us begin with love, for surely love knows your name.

Today, in addition to the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, we light the Christ Candle.
For surely God is in this place.

Surely the Spirit is near. Surely love knows our name.

May we rest in that good news. Unto us a child is born.

A light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Glory to God in the highest heaven!

This story is for us.

This love is for us.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
Who sends the word with angels,
Who is made flesh among all peoples,
And who breathes peace on all the earth. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn

O Come, All Ye Faithful

1 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:

Refrain

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

2 The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

3 Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
in the highest: *Refrain*

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing: *Refrain*

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

Prayer of the Day

The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, Word made flesh,
born of Mary, be with you all. **And also with you.**

Let us pray, Living God, on this holy night we gather -
to stand with the shepherds, amazed at your glory;
to sing with the angels, rejoicing in your work;
to wait with Joseph, trusting in your promise;
to sit with Mary, cradling your love.

**May the good news of this night inspire us
to tell the world of our great joy:
for unto us is born a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord.
Glory and praise to you forever! Amen.**

The Birth of Jesus is Foretold: Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-4

Everything was ready. The moment God has been waiting for was here at last! God was coming to help God's people, just as promised in the beginning. But how would God come? What would God be like? What would God do?

Mountains would have bowed down. Seas would have roared. Trees would have clapped their hands. But the earth held its breath. As silent as snow falling, God came in. And when no one was looking, in the darkness, God came.

The God who flung planets into space and kept them whirling around, the God who made the universe with just a word, the one who could do anything at all- was making God's self small. And coming down... as a baby.

Wait. God was sending a baby to rescue the world?

"But it's too wonderful!" Mary said and felt her heart beating hard. "How can this be true?"

"Is anything too wonderful for God?" the angel Gabriel asked.

So Mary trusted God more than her eyes could see. And she believed. "I am God's servant," she said. "Whatever God says, I will do. Sure enough, it was just as the angel had said. Nine months later, Mary was almost ready to have her baby.

Now, Mary and Joseph had to take a trip to Bethlehem, the town King David was from. But when they reached the little town, they found every room was full. Every bed was taken.

"Go away!" the innkeepers told them. "There isn't any place for you." Where would they stay? Soon Mary's baby would come. They couldn't find anywhere except an old, tumbledown stable. So they stayed where the cows and donkeys and the horses stayed.

Carol *Once in Royal David's City*

1 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.

2 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.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818-1895

A Child Is Born: Luke 2:5-7

And there, in the stable, among the chickens and the donkeys and the cows, in the quiet of the night, God gave the world a wonderful gift. The baby that would change the world was born. God's own Son.

Mary and Joseph wrapped him up to keep him warm. They made a soft bed of straw and used the animal's feeding trough as his cradle. And they gazed in wonder at God's Great Gift, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

Mary and Joseph named him Jesus, "Emmanuel" - which means "God has come to live with us." Because, of course, God had.

Prayers of the People

Enlivened in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we pray for the life of the church, for those in need, and for all of God's creation.

Carol

Away In the Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

O God, as we sing "Away in a manger," we think of the many people who are away from home - not with their families this Christmas, those who are sick or in the hospital, those who are in prison, those not at home because of work or school, and all those who are traveling this night. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As we sing "no crib for a bed," we pray for the many homeless throughout our world - those who have suffered loss in hurricanes, fires, and earthquakes, as refugees; and those drifting from city to city looking for work. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As we sing "the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head," we think of those needing rest - those fearing what lies ahead, those who cannot sleep because of pain, those who are struggling to make ends meet, and those who work this night looking after the health and safety needs of our community. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As we sing "the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay," we pray for the light of your love to touch all those who have lost faith, those who need their confidence and hope restored, and those who face an uncertain future, the leaders of our church, our country, and for ourselves. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

Hear the prayers of your people, glorious God, for the sake of the one who took on our nature and form to redeem the whole world, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**
Please be seated.

The Shepherds and the Angels: Luke 2:8-14

That same night, among the other stars, suddenly a bright new star appeared. Of all the stars in the dark, vaulted heavens, this one shone clearer. It blazed in the night and made the other stars look pale beside it.

God put it there when God's baby Son was born- to be like a spotlight. Shining on him. Lighting up the darkness. Showing people the way to him.

You see, God was like a new parent- and couldn't keep the good news to God's self. God had been waiting all these long years for this moment, and now God wanted to tell everyone.

So God pulled out all the stops, sent an angel to tell Mary the good news, put a special star in the sky to show where the boy was. And now God was going to send a big choir of angels to sing a happy song to the world: *He's here! He's come! Go and see him. My little boy.*

Now where would you send your splendid choir? To a big concert hall maybe? Or a palace perhaps? God sent them to a little hillside, outside a little town, in the middle of the night. God sent all those angels to sing for a raggedy old bunch of shepherds watching their sheep outside Bethlehem.

In those days, remember, people used to laugh at shepherds and say they were smelly and call them other rude names (which I can't possibly mention here). You see, people thought shepherds were nobodies, just scruffy old riff-raff.

But God must have thought shepherds were very important, indeed, because they're the ones God chose to tell the good news first.

That night, some shepherds were out in the open fields, warming themselves by a campfire, when suddenly the sheep darted. They were frightened by something. The olive trees rustled. What was that... A wing beat?

They turned around. Standing in front of them was a huge warrior of light, blazing in the darkness. "Don't be afraid of me!" the bright shining man said. "I haven't come to hurt you. I've come to bring you happy news for everyone everywhere. Today, in David's town, in Bethlehem, God's Son has been born! You can go and see him. He is sleeping in a manger."

Behind the angel they saw a strange glowing cloud- except it wasn't a cloud, it was angels...troops and troops of angels, armed with light! And they were singing a beautiful song: "Glory to God! To God be Fame and Honor and all our Hoorays!"

Word for all Ages

Carol Angels We Have Heard on High

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

Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo;
gloria in excelsis Deo.

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

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

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

The Shepherds Arrive: Luke 2:15-20

Then as quickly as they appeared, the angels left.

The shepherds stamped out their fire, left their sheep, raced down the grassy hill, through the gates of Bethlehem, down the narrow cobbled streets, through a courtyard, down some step, step, steps, past an inn, round a corner, through a hedge, until, at last, they reached... a tumbledown stable.

They caught their breath. Then quietly, they tiptoed inside. They knelt on the dirt floor. They had heard about this Promised Child and now he was here. Heaven's Son. The Maker of the Stars. A baby sleeping in his mother's arms.

This baby would be like that bright star shining in the sky that night. A Light to light up the whole world. Chasing away the darkness. Helping people see. And the darker the night got, the brighter the star would shine.

Christmas Message

Pastor Kim Swenson

Carol

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

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.

A Christmas Affirmation of Faith

**We believe that on a night like this one,
a baby was born and placed in a manger.
We believe that baby was God's love in the flesh,
who grew up to love the outcast and change the world.
We believe that Jesus' love was so big and so personal
that the world will never be the same.
So despite the mystery of this holy night,
we believe that a star shone,
that the shepherds ran,
that the angels sang,
and that love was born.
Yes, we believe it when the prophets say
that unto you,
unto us, a savior is born.
Glory to God in the highest heaven!
We believe.**

Peace

Glory to God in the highest! **And peace to God's people on earth.**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

MEAL

Offering

Digby Meister - Viola

Offertory Carol

What Child is This

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

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God of starry nights - You sent your son into this world to teach us what impossible love looks like. Love without limits, love without hesitation, love without holding back.

Through your love, the Word became flesh and lived among us. As the angels caroled glory to you, so we join with them and with all people to praise your name.

Holy *Angels we have Heard on High*

Refrain

Glo - ri - a
in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo -
ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

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

On that never-to-be-forgotten night, as Jesus sat at the table, gave thanks, and broke bread with his friends, 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.

Send the power of your Holy Spirit upon us, that we may experience the presence of the Word-made-flesh - Jesus Christ. Breathe your Spirit in us that we may be one body with him - faithfully following and serving him, and awaiting with expectation the coming of his kingdom. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

**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

O Little Town of Bethlehem

- 1 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.
- 2 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 the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all the earth!
- 3 How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.
- 4 O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

It Came upon a Midnight Clear

- 1 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.

- 2 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 its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hov'ring wing,
and ever o'er its babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

- 3 And you, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow:
look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing;
oh, rest beside the weary road
and hear the angels sing!

- 4 For lo! The days are hast'ning on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song
which now the angels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876

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

SENDING

Special Music

O Holy Night

Dani Maus

Candle Lighting

The God who said, "Let there be light,"
has caused light to shine in our hearts today.
That light is the glory of God,
reflected in the face of Jesus Christ.
As we light our candles, let them be a sea of light
lit from the one light of Christ.
Let all who are gathered
here reflect Christ's light and love in the world. **Amen.**

Carol

Silent Night

Kristin Welke - Clarinet

- 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!

Instrumental interlude

- 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

Benediction

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, Creator, ✚ Redeemer, and Sustainer bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Carol

Go Tell it On the Mountain

Refrain

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

- 1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. *Refrain*
- 2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*
- 3 Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt.

Dismissal

Glory to God! The angels are singing, the animals are bellowing, the shepherds are shouting their praises.

Glory to God in the highest! We will go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere, that Jesus Christ is born.



**Wishing You All
A Very Blessed
Christmas**

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Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

Poinsettias In Memory of ...

Wife, Diane Andrews by Carlton Andrews Jr.

Carlton Sr & Josephine Andrews Sr. by Carlton Andrews Jr.

Dad, Lyle Andrews by Laurie Andrews

Don & Beulah & Don Jr. Ashley by Mike Ashley

Evan & Viola Hansen and Bertha Hansen by Mike Ashley

All of our loved ones, by Pegi BeDell and Ray Sylvester

*Our Parents, Donna and Edgar (Bud) Clarkieu by Your Girls **

*Our Parents, Mary & Eli Dessart, Loretta & Walter Boettcher
by Gerald & Nancy Boettcher*

Our Parents, Ilse and Otto Krehl by Roland & Johanna Christian

Our Parents, John and Marliese Christian by Roland & Johanna Christian

*Parents, Mel & Donna Hansen, brother Steve Hansen and Sister Alice Pendl
by Peggy Hansen & Gayle Peot, Forever in our hearts*

Family members who have passed, by Doug Hanson

Loved ones, by Jane Heise

Our Parents, John & Marie Hilla by Charlie & Sharon Hilla

Husband, Eugene Huth by Pat Huth family

Mother-in-law, Luella Younk by Pat Huth family

Parents, Alice & Walter Jeske by Deena Jepson and Jodi Jonet

Husband, Lynn & Son Jeff Johnson by Nancy Johnson

Parents and Grandparents, Otto & Emily Klug by Nancy Johnson

Parents, Ralph & Edna Kasulke by Debbie Kasulke

Donna Hansen by Tom Kaye

Joni Keckhaver, Cindy Anderson & loved ones by the Keckhaver Family

Loved ones, by Pat Larson

Husband, Larry Madsen & Son, Eric Madsen by Bonnie Madsen

Husband, Kenneth Martin by Linda Martin

Wife, Florence Niemuth by Ron Niemuth

Our Wedding Anniversary, 50 years ago at Bethel by Peter & Julie Poh Thurlow

Nelson & Rehder Families, by Carol & Jon Poppy

Poppy Family, by Carol & Jon Poppy

Ronald, Traci & Ryker by Shirley Rasmussen

Cody Siolka, by Tori Russett

Alyssa Burch by Jennifer Scholes

Aunt Eva by Marsha Scholes

Nephew, Keith Rogers by Marsha Scholes

*Parents, Fred & Sharon Seeger by Dar Schuurmans
Larry Smith, husband, father and grandfather by Kay Smith
William Treptow, Joel Lauscher and Leonard & Gertrude Mertens
by Gloria Treptow
Our Parents, by Linda & Ray Wery*

In Honor of...

*Mother, June Andrews, by Laurie Andrews
Our six Grandchildren and their parents, by Gerald & Nancy Boettcher
Our Bethel Family current and past! by Tim Carlson & family
Children, Their Spouses and Grandchildren, by Doug Hanson
Our Parents, Virgil & Shirley Johnson by Charlie & Sharon Hilla
Our Children & Grandchildren, by Charlie & Sharon Hilla
Our At Home Ministry members, by Charlie & Sharon Hilla
Grandson, Wesley Roush by Debbie Kasulke*

To the Glory of God!

*Marilyn & Marv Meister
Patricia Stilp*

Thank you to:

- “ **Bonnie Madsen, Doug Hanson, Howard & Dawn Schroeder and Todd & Sue Keckhaver** for the wreaths that adorn our entry doors.
- “ **Bonnie Madsen, Linda Wery, Deena Jepson, Doug & Marsha Scholes and Terri Hilbert** for decorating the sanctuary for the season.
- “ **Linda Martin, Hayden Skrobel and Zachary Krech** for putting up and decorating the tree.
- “ **Todd & Sue Keckhaver** thank you for setting up the outside Nativity.
- “ All **Special Music Participants** for performing in tonight's worship services.