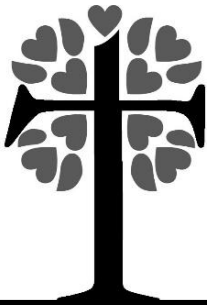


Light *of the* World



Nativity of Our Lord ~ December 24, 2025

Welcome to Tree of Life Lutheran Church



December 24, 2025 ~ The Nativity of Our Lord

Leader in regular type, **congregation in bold type**

↑ means stand as you are able

Restrooms are by the kitchen and by the Wiggle Room

Wiggle Room is available for anyone needing a brief break from worship, at the end of the piano wing of the sanctuary

WiFi is available: Look for TOL-GUEST; password is OdessaTOL1

We Gather as God's People

PRELUDE

↑ **ANCIENT PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST**

On the 25th day of December, according to the teaching of the Church;

many ages after God created the heavens and the earth,
when man and woman were formed in God's own image;
long after the great flood,
when God set the rainbow in the clouds as a sign of the covenant;
21 centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah;
13 centuries after Moses led God's people to freedom;
11 centuries from the time of Ruth and the judges;
1,000 years from the anointing of David as king;
in the 65th week as Daniel's prophecy takes note;
in the 194th Olympiad;
the 752nd year from the founding of the city of Rome;
the 42nd year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;
in the sixth age of the world, all earth being at peace,

Jesus Christ, eternal God, Son of the eternal Father, willing to hallow the world by his coming in mercy, was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea.

Come, now, let us go to Bethlehem, to join with the shepherds and the angels and with the Church from every time and place, as we gather to pray and worship our God. For today is the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh!

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*

↑ CHRISTMAS DIALOG AND GREETING

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

May the grace and truth of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

↑ PRAYER OF THE DAY

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 awaken 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.**

↑ CAROL

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

RED HYMNAL #289

- 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*

We Hear God's Word

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

A reading from Isaiah:

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined. ³You 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.

⁴For 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. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For 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. ⁷His 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

- 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*

SECOND READING: Titus 2:11-14

A reading from Titus:

¹¹The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He 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.**

- 1 Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 2 Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing, yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.

↑ **GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20**

The holy gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

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.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

↑ **CAROL**

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

RED HYMNAL #275

- 3 Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations, you have seen his natal star.
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 4 All creation, join in praising God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One.
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.

↑ CAROL

“Once in Royal David’s City”

RED HYMNAL #269

- 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.
- 3 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav'n above;
and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.
- 4 Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven, set at God's right hand on high;
there his children gather round, bright like stars, with glory crowned.

↑ NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

↑ PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Filled with the Good News of the great joy of Jesus' birth, let us offer our prayers for the Church, the world and all people. *A brief silence.*

Holy God and Father of All, your only begotten Son is born for us. Inspire your Church in all times and places to join the angels in singing your praise, to know your love through Word and Sacrament, and to proclaim the salvation that you have made flesh this night. God of grace... **Receive our prayer.**

The King of Creation is born for us. Inspire us to care for the world that you created, that you loved so much to enter, and that you redeemed through Jesus. God of grace... **Receive our prayer.**

The King of Kings is born for us. Guide the leaders of this and every nation to seek justice, liberty and righteousness. Break the rod of the oppressor in every land, and bring true peace on earth. God of grace... **Receive our prayer.**

The Lord Emmanuel is born for us. Be with those who travel during this holiday season; overcome family tensions; and bring joy to every table. Give strength to those who work during the holidays for our safety and our convenience. God of grace... **Receive our prayer.**

The Light of the World is born for us. Send your light upon any who face times of darkness, sorrow, pain or grief. Draw near to all who are poor, homeless, lonely, sick, or in any need of body, mind or spirit. Be with those whom we now name aloud or in our hearts... *(Time for personal petitions)* God of grace... **Receive our prayer.**

The Word Made Flesh is born for us. Grant that Tree of Life may proclaim your Word of salvation in all we say and all we do. Bless our visitors this night, and help us all to find new joy and peace. Make us into a people zealous for good deeds, sharing your love and mercy with all. God of grace... **Receive our prayer.**

The Savior is born for us. With thanksgiving for Mary, Joseph and all the saints, sustain us in the blessed hope of everlasting life. Make us certain that, in Christ's earthly birth and death and resurrection, we children of Earth are also born anew as children of Heaven. God of grace... **Receive our prayer.**

Rejoicing in Christ's birth, we lift up these prayers to you, O God, through the same Jesus Christ, our newborn Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

↑ PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

We Share God's Holy Meal

OFFERING

"Twas in the Moon of Wintertime"

RED HYMNAL #284

Tree of Life Choir

↑ OFFERTORY

"What Child is This?"

RED HYMNAL #296, vss. 1,3

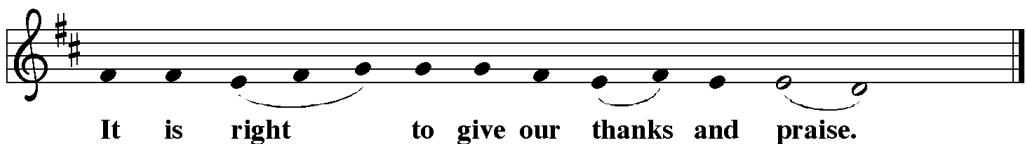
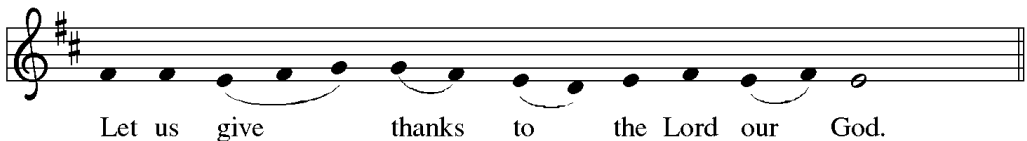
What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

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!

↑ OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together: **God of glory, great are your wonders among us, and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, and gather us with all people around your table, through Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.**

↑ GREAT THANKSGIVING



The thanksgiving continues with the preface for the day. The congregation responds:

↑ **SANCTUS**

Tune: "Angels We Have Heard on High"



Ho - ly ho - ly ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and mi - - ght.
Bles - sed is the One who comes, the in - car - nate Chri - - st.



Heav'n and earth de - clare your praise: "Ho - san - a on hi - - gh!"
Bles - sed is the new - born King. Ho - san - a on hi - - gh!



Glo

ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo



- ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

↑ **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER AND WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

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.

Again, after supper, 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.

↑ 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.

↑ INVITATION TO COMMUNION

God is now in flesh appearing! Come to the feast of joy!

Thanks be to God!

COMMUNION

All baptized Christians are welcome to commune. At the direction of the usher, please come forward and kneel or stand at the rail. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. Wine and white grape juice are in the individual cups. Those not wishing to receive Communion may receive an individual blessing. Indicate this by crossing your hands in front of you at the rail.

“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

“O Holy Night”

RED HYMNAL #282

RED HYMNAL #279

BLACK BINDER #31

↑ PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together: **God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth and life. Gather us always in the light of your love, and let us shine with the Good News of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

We Praise the Light of Christ

↑ LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

The pastor lights a candle from the Paschal Candle, which symbolizes the resurrection of Christ, the Light of the world. The ushers light their candles from the pastor's candle, then light the candle of each worshiper nearest the aisle. Please tip only the unlit candle when spreading the light.

↑ CAROL

“Away in a Manger”

RED HYMNAL #277

- 1 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.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.

↑ GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION: John 1:1-5, 10-14

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

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And 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.

↑ **CAROL**

“Silent Night, Holy Night”

RED HYMNAL #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.

↑ **BLESSING**

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the devotion of the Magi, and the peace of the Christ child. May Almighty God – Father, +Son and Holy Spirit – bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Please extinguish your candle.

↑ **CAROL**

“Joy to the World”

RED HYMNAL #267

- 1 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.
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior 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.
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow, far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found; far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 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.

↑ **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace to bring a merry Christmas to all! **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

You may listen to the music or depart to do God's work.

+ + +

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Presiding Minister: Rev. Robbie Ketcham

Assisting Minister: Janet Adams

Music Minister: Duane Dillard

Usher: Michelle Brill

Altar Care: Gene Zaiser

Livestream: Gail Russell

CHRISTMAS LESSONS & CAROLS: Our Christmas celebration continues on Sunday, as we hear the story of Jesus' birth interspersed with more Christmas carols and reflections from Martin Luther's writings. Join as we continue celebrating Christmas in Word and song, share Communion, and rejoice at our salvation through the Christ Child!

PR. ROBBIE ON VACATION: Pr. Robbie will be on vacation from tomorrow through Dec. 31. For any urgent pastoral needs, you can call the Rev. Linda Ray, pastor of St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Odessa, at (540) 207-1787.

COVER ART: "The Adoration of the Shepherds," Matthias Stom, c. 1635-1637, in public domain, held at the North Carolina Museum of Art.

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Welcome to Tree of Life Lutheran Church!

We serve the Middletown, Odessa and Townsend area and are part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA). In a friendly atmosphere, we teach the Gospel of the Lord and share a living confidence in God's grace. We embrace you as a whole person – questions, complexities and all. **Our mission is to be faithful children of God, called by grace through Christ, and sharing this gift with Middletown, Odessa, Townsend and the world.**

Worship

We gather for **worship with Holy Communion at 10:30 a.m. every Sunday.** We follow a traditional order of worship, with both traditional and more contemporary music. People wear everything from suits to T-shirts, so no matter how you look, you'll fit right in!

Youth

Kingdom Kids is our youth group, which meets two Sundays a month after worship during the school year. Youth from preschool through high school are welcome for lunch, fun and faith formation!

Seniors

Our "Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors" (OWLS) get together every month for a meal or a special outing. And even if you don't consider yourself "older," you can still join the fun!

Service

We work with Neighborhood House and Our Daily Bread in Middletown to help those in need in our area. Our 'Knot-Quilters' prepare quilts for people worldwide.

To Learn More

Find us online at *TreeOfLifeChurchDE.com*

Find us on Facebook at *Tree of Life Lutheran Church*

Call us at (302) 378-3345

Or come and join us this Sunday! We'd love to meet you!

Christmas at Tree of Life



Celebrate the 12 Days of Christmas

Find resources at the sanctuary entryway

December 28 Service of Lessons and Carols

10:30 a.m. – Praise the newborn Savior through Scripture and song,
and pray for blessings in the New Year

January 5: Epiphany Sunday

10:30 a.m. – Hear how Christ was revealed to the Magi
and is revealed to all.