

GATHERING

Note: Congregational responses in bold type.

WELCOME TO THIS WORSHIP CELEBRATION of the living Christ's presence in our midst. Christ comes to us with new life and strength for Christian living in daily life through the hearing of the Word, preaching, prayer, song, and community.

PRELUDE

Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light
Tom Olson, Tuba & Ken McLauchlan, Trombone

Schop

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
who was in the beginning,
who makes a dwelling among us,
who covers us with justice and mercy.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of goodness and lovingkindness,
**we confess that we have sinned against you
and our neighbors.**

We have turned away from your invitation to new life.

We have turned away from the lowly and downtrodden.

**In your abundant mercy, forgive us our sins,
those we know and those known only to you,
for the sake of the one who came to live among us,
Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

Hear the good news of peace and salvation!

God forgives us all our sins,
not through our own work,
but through ✠ Jesus Christ, made known to all people.

With all who come to the manger,
rejoice in this amazing gift of grace.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG

Angels We Have Heard on High

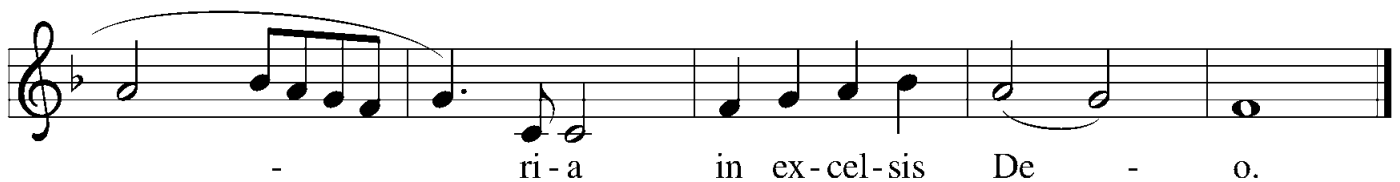
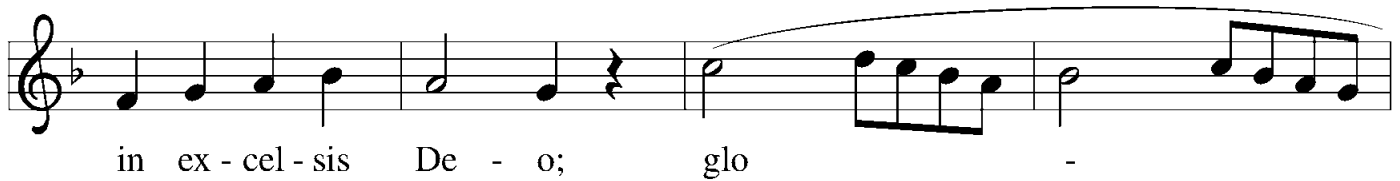
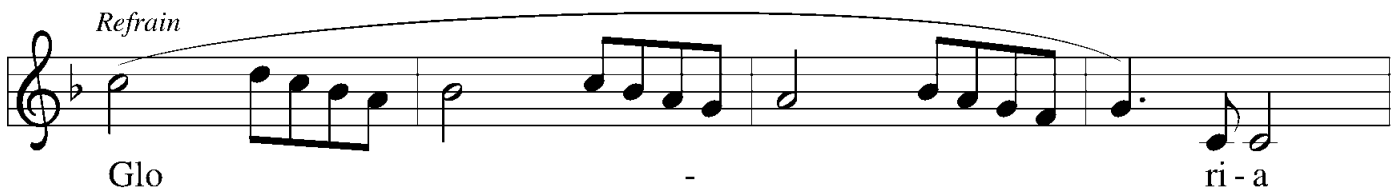
Hymn 289
v. 1 & 2



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.



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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Please be seated.

WORD

FIRST READING: JEREMIAH 31:7-14

OT 692

God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gifts of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.

⁷Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
“Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel.”

⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
those with child and those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

⁹With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."
¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.
¹²They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall become like a watered garden,
and they shall never languish again.
¹³Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
and the young men and the old shall be merry.
I will turn their mourning into joy,
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.
¹⁴I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: PSALM 147:12-20

Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion. (Ps. 147:12)

¹²Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem;
praise your God, O Zion,
¹³**who has strengthened the bars of your gates
and has blessed your children within you.**
¹⁴God has established peace on your borders
and satisfies you with the finest wheat.
¹⁵**God sends out a command to the earth,
a word that runs very swiftly.**
¹⁶God gives snow like wool,

scattering frost like ashes.

¹⁷**God scatters hail like bread crumbs.**

Who can stand against God's cold?

¹⁸The LORD sends forth the word and melts them;
the wind blows, and the waters flow.

¹⁹**God declares the word to Jacob,
statutes and judgments to Israel.**

²⁰The LORD has not done so to any other nation;
they do not know God's judgments. Hallelujah!

SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 1:3-14

NT 169

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

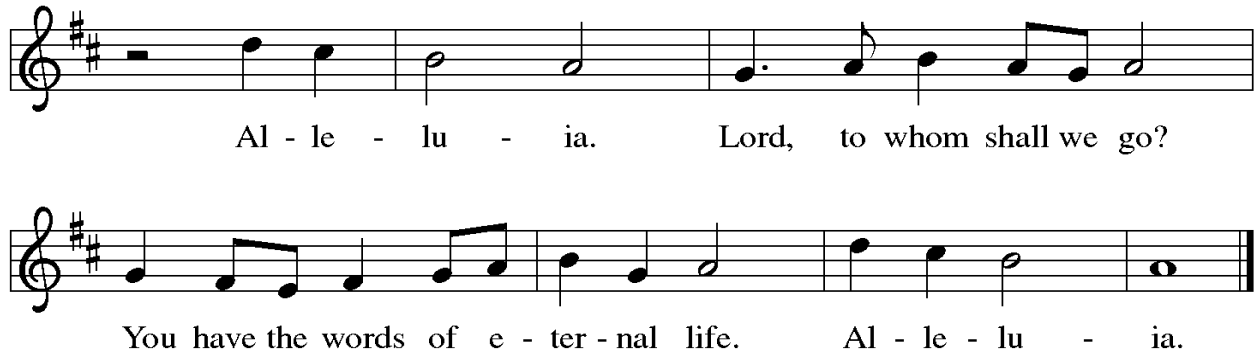
³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: JOHN 1: 10-18

NT 79

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

The Holy Gospel according John
Glory to you, O Lord.

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. 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.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

Please stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Love Has Come

HYMN 292

Follows on the next page.

v. 1 & 3



1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the
 2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -
 3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav-en has come to pro - claim it;
 sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;
 last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to
 what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the
 Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
 name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.
 gift of Christ-mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950

Music: UN FLAMBEAU, F. Seguin, *Recueil de noëls composés en langue provençale*, 1856

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APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Response after each prayer: Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Response at end: God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these
and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

MEAL

DIALOGUE

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.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise...we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

Lord God of pow'r and might,

Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

LORD'S PRAYER

Page 154

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

God's love is poured out in Christ for you.

Please be seated.

COMMUNION

(Communion will be distributed by Pastor Talsness. See the Announcements section for details about the process. For those who prefer grape juice, please indicate that to Pastor when he approaches your row.)

Please stand.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious and abundant God,

you have done great things for us, and we rejoice.

In this bread and cup you give us life forever.

In your boundless mercy, strengthen us

and open our hearts to the world's needs,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

PASTORAL BENEDICTION

Almighty God,
who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary,
proclaimed joy through the angels,
sent the shepherds with good news,
and led the magi by a star,
bless you this day ☩ through the Word made flesh.

Amen.

SENDING SONG

Follows on the next page.

The Bells Of Christmas

Hymn 298

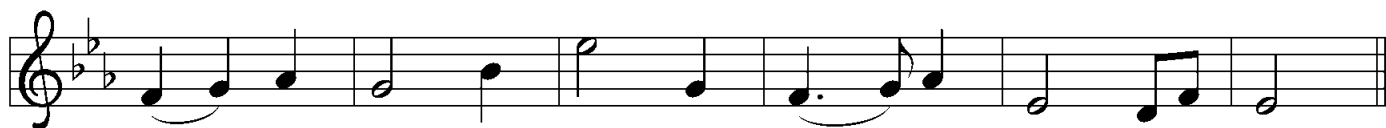
v. 1 & 4



Det ki - mer nu til ju - le - fest, det ki - mer
1 The bells of Christ - mas chime once more; the heav'n - ly
2 This world, though wide and far out - spread, could scarce - ly
3 Now let us go with qui - et mind, the swad - dled
4 Oh, join with me, in glad - ness sing, to keep our



for den høj - e gæst, som steg til la - ve
guest is at the door. He comes to earth - ly
find for you a bed. Your cra - dle was a
babe with shep - herds find, to gaze on him who
Christ - mas with our king, un - til our song, from



hyt - ter ned med nyt - års - ga - ver: fryd og fred.
dwell - ings still with new year gifts of peace, good will.
man - ger stall, no pearl nor silk nor king - ly hall.
glad - dens them, the love - liest flow'r of Jes - se's stem.
lov - ing souls, like rush - ing might - y wa - ter rolls!

5 O patriarchs' Joy, O prophets' Song,
O Dayspring bright, awaited long,
O Son of Man, incarnate Word,
great David's Son, great David's Lord:

6 Come, Jesus, glorious heav'nly guest,
and keep your Christmas in our breast;
then David's harpstrings, hushed so long,
shall swell our jubilee of song.

Text: Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig, 1783–1872; tr. Charles Porterfield Krauth, 1823–1883, alt.

Music: DET KIMER NU TIL JULEFEST, Carl C. N. Balle, 1806–1855

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALTAR FLOWERS are given by Pam & Steve Allen *in celebration of our 24th wedding anniversary on January 3* and by Connie Squibb *given to the Glory of God in celebration of the New Year!*

THE ETERNAL CANDLE is given this month by Argerie Martin *with wishes for a healthier and safer year for everyone.*

GREETERS WANTED

As we all know, Messiah is known for being a friendly congregation, and that begins every Sunday morning when we arrive for worship and are welcomed by one or two of our greeters. A new Greeter roster for 2021 is being prepared. If you would like to be a part of this important ministry, please contact Randi VenHuizen at randiv1026@gmail.com or 403-216-3067.

DENOMINATION-WIDE EPIPHANY SERVICE ONLINE

The thirteen bishops of the class of 2019 will be leading a joint synodical Epiphany of Our Lord service. This service will be streamed on all the synod social media platforms and on the Southeastern Synod's Facebook and YouTube channel. Join in as we confess, lament, lean into the light of God shining brightly in Holy Scripture, proclamation of the Word, and musical offerings from across the church. Tune in on Wednesday, January 6 at 8 pm on the ELCA Southeastern Synod's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SoutheasternSynod>

SERMON SERIES "WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS..."

Beginning January 10th and into part of February, we will do a sermon series entitled "When Life Gives You Lemons," which aims to address common struggles in the faith: Why does God allow us such hardship? For example, why is there suffering? Why is life unfair? Why do I have feelings of insignificance? "Why does God allow such terrible things like a virus?" We will examine what the bible says about these things and seek to

find God in the midst of hardship. The series will conclude on Sunday, February 14th, Transfiguration Sunday.

WOMEN & MEN & CHILDREN OF MESSIAH!

Please mark your calendars to join the Men's Club to take down the Messiah Christmas Tree on **Saturday**, January 9, 2020, at 8:30 am.

If you can help take down the remaining Christmas decorations, please be at the Church on **Friday**, January 8, 2020, at 8:30 am. The Nativity scene in the Sanctuary and the decorations on the window ledges and in the Narthex all need to be taken down, packed away, and labeled for easy access next year. Questions? Call Jill Poole 912-441-7170.

IT'S TEA TIME!



Ladies...we are GO for the Epiphany Tea. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, January 9, 2021 at 10 am. There will be round tables with 2-3 people per table. We will have tea and our usual assortment of “goodies”!

Our special “entertainment” this year will be Making Mats for the Homeless. We ask that you bring a pair of scissors. We will do our Secret Pal reveal and assign another year of pal sharing. If there are ladies who would like to “Zoom”, please let the office know; and we will see that you get link information. Let’s welcome the New Year together.

DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS MIA

Many of you enjoy the devotionals in the booklets *The Word in Season* and *Christ in Our Home*. *The Word in Season* publications for the first quarter of 2021 have yet to arrive. A call to the publisher Augsburg Fortress revealed that the shipments are still somewhere in the U.S. Postal Service system. If they still have not arrived by January 4, Augsburg Fortress will reprint them and ship them again.

While you wait, you can sign up to receive a daily devotional in your email inbox beginning January 1. Following is the link for individuals to sign-up for a temporary email delivery of the devotionals until your booklets arrive:

The Word in Season: <https://go.augsburgfortress.org/temporary-word-in-season-emails>

JANUARY 2021 FLOWER DONATIONS AVAILABLE

There is still an opportunity to donate flowers for January 24 (one vase).

Now is the time to sign up to donate flowers and the eternal candle next year—there are lots of open slots! Call or email the office to reserve a vase if you are unable to sign up in person (598-1188 or messiahsk@gmail.com).

SECOND HARVEST

January's food is Mac & Cheese.



THIS WEEK AT MESSIAH

Ministers	The People of Messiah
Pastor	Jason Talsness
Pastor Emeritus	James Peper
Presiding Bishop ELCA	Elizabeth A. Eaton
Bishop, SE Synod ELCA	Kevin Strickland
Organist	Diane Boyd
Choral Director	Mary Maner
Altar Guild	Janet Reardon
Reader	Connie Squibb

MILESTONES THIS WEEK

Birthdays: None

Anniversaries: Pam & Steve Allen 01/03, Kathy & Rob Fritz 01/08

WELCOME to WORSHIP

REMINDERS FOR THIS TIME OF COVID-19

If you are ill, have a fever, or have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 in the past two weeks, please stay home. If you cannot follow these requirements, enjoy the taped worship service at home.

- Please always wear a mask.
- Hand sanitizer will be available outside, in the Narthex and in the pews.
- Keep your physical distance:
 - Follow the markers outside.
 - Greet people outside. No handshakes or hugs.
 - No socializing inside.
- Place your offering in the offering plates on stands as you enter the Sanctuary.
- Sit in your reserved seat. An usher will accompany to your seat, and your bulletin will be in your seat.
- Pew materials have been removed.
- Although there will be music, please do not sing.
- Speak the responses softly.
- If Holy Communion is served, there will be a special process for distribution.
- We will not pass the peace.
- Pastor Jason will coordinate dismissal by rows beginning at the rear of the Sanctuary.
- You are welcome to bring a water bottle.
- There is no coffee social, and all meeting rooms are closed.
- Restrooms are open, but please use them one person or family at a time.