

**First English Lutheran Church
Butler, Pennsylvania**

**The Nativity of our Lord
Christmas Eve
December 24, 2023**

Welcome to First English Lutheran Church as we celebrate Jesus' birth! First English's mission is to be a welcoming, worshiping community rooted in the city of Butler and making Christ known in words and deeds. Through worship and learning, prayer and feeding hungry people, we seek to honor the image of God in every person. If you have questions about our congregation or about who Lutheran Christians are and what we believe, please know that our pastor would love to talk with you!

The order for tonight's worship service is found in this worship folder. The congregation is invited to participate by praying the parts in bold print and by joining in the hymns, which are found in the red book in your pew.

8:30 p.m.

PRELUDE

"Variations on a Breton Carol"	- Willard I. Nevins, arr.
"Tidings of Comfort and Joy"	- Ellen J. Lorenz
"Cradle Song"	- Herbert Howells
"Caprice"	- Louis-Nicolas Clerambault
"On Christmas Night"	- Kenneth Kosche
"Away in a Manger"	- Setting by Robert Lind
"In dulci jubilo"	- J. S. Bach
"Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her"	- J. S. Bach
"Pastoral – Prelude"	- Jean Langlais

9:00 p.m.

Festival Service of Holy Communion

GATHERING

The congregation may stand.

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“Once in Royal David’s City”

Red Book #269

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

HYMN OF PRAISE

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

Red Book #289

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 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.**

The congregation may sit.

WORD

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7

- 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.

PSALM 96 *read responsively*

1O sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
2**Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.**
3Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.
4**For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.**
5For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
6**Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.**
7Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
8**Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts.**
9Worship the LORD in holy splendor;
tremble before him, all the earth.
10**Say among the nations, "The LORD is king!**

**The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.
He will judge the peoples with equity."**

¹¹Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

¹²**let the field exult, and everything in it.**

Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

¹³before the LORD; for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with his truth.

SECOND LESSON Titus 2:11-14

The 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.

The congregation may stand.

HYMN FOR THE GOSPEL PROCESSION

"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" st. 1

Red Book #282

GOSPEL Luke 2:1-20

The holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke, the second chapter.

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!"

¹⁵When 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." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The 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.

HYMN FOR GOSPEL PROCESSION

"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

st. 4

Red Book #282

The congregation may sit.

SERMON

Silence for reflection.

The congregation may stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Red Book #270

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

Having heard the message of peace brought by the angels, let us bring before God our prayers for the needs of the world.

The congregation may kneel or sit.

Holy God,
On this holy night,
Your son was born in the rubble of our sin and brokenness.
By his presence, ignite our hope, and make us determined to be people of love,
Committed to human unity and community.
That the world around us may still see signs of your favor, we pray,
Let your peace come.

Have mercy on Gaza, Israel, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Yemen, Sudan
And on all people trapped in war:
On the injured, the tortured, the starving,
On parents who cannot save their children from suffering,
On doctors and nurses who do not have the means of healing.
That hope would be born even when all seems hopeless, we pray,
Let your peace come.

Watch over to those who work this night while we celebrate:
Those who guard against disaster,
Those who respond to emergencies,
Those in the armed forces deployed across the globe.
Let their work be competent and just, and when their duties are done, let them find joy in their rest.
Through this night, whatever it brings, we pray:
Let your peace come.

Remember those to whom Your Son is especially near:
All who experience hunger or homelessness,
All in prison or who are tortured,
All who are sick, injured, or hurting in any way.
Through gifts of healing, forgiveness, and justice, we pray:
Let your peace come.

With grateful hearts,
We thank you for those in the circle of love around us;
With prayerful hearts,
We ask your help to mend relationships that are broken,
With solemn hearts,
We remember those whom we love who have died
and now rest in you.
Through the ties that bind us, in joy and sorrow, we pray:
Let your peace come.

The presiding minister concludes:

Pondering the mystery of eternal love made flesh in Christ Jesus, we commend all for whom we pray to the mercy of God. **Amen.**

The congregation may stand.

PEACE

The peace of the Christ child be with you always.
And also with you.

After sharing a sign of peace, the congregation may sit.

OFFERING

ORGAN OFFERTORY

“Quoique Soyez Petit Encore” - Raymond Haan

The ushers present the offerings and gifts of bread and wine for communion.

CHOIR ANTHEM

“A New Noel” - Travis L. Boyd
(Traditional English Carol)

The congregation may stand.

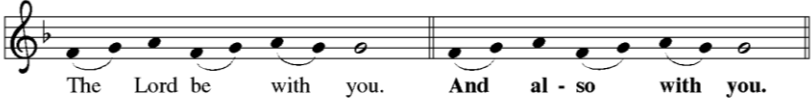
MEAL

OFFERTORY PRAYER *led by the assisting minister*

Gracious God, your Word-made-flesh brings harmony to the earth.

As we offer ourselves and these your gifts, prepare us to receive the grace and truth you offer at this table and renew in us the song of your salvation, in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy....we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



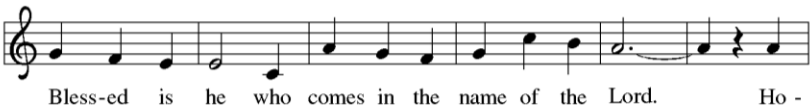
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and



might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -



san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -



san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

We thank you, O God,
At the beginning your Word created light,
And made us and all that exists.
By your Word, you chose a people, Israel, for yourself.
You set them free from slavery in Egypt,
And spoke to them by the prophets.
By your word you lead us into wisdom and create faith in our hearts.
We thank you, O God, for speaking.
We praise you, O God, for your Word.

We thank you, O God,
For sending your Son, Jesus to be born like us,
In a city called Bethlehem,
which means "house of bread."
We thank you that his bed was a manger,
Where animals found their food.
Now crucified and risen, he is for us the bread of life.
We thank you, O God, for feeding us.
We praise you, O God, for bread.

On the night, when he was betrayed,
He took bread, gave thanks, and broke it,
and gave it to his disciples, saying,
"Take, eat, this is my body, given for you.
Do this in 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.
As often as you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

Great, therefore, is the mystery of faith:
Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Therefore, O God,
as we take this bread and cup,
we remember him in the manger;

we remember him on the cross;
we remember him rising from the dead;
we look forward to his coming again!
Come again, Lord Jesus!
Come, Lord Jesus!

We pray for your Spirit,
Who leads us in love and service.
Make our city a house of bread, where no one is hungry.
Make our homes into mangers, filled with forgiveness and love.
Make us one with your people around the world and throughout time,
That we may be one with you in the communion of saints.

Come to us, Holy Spirit!
Come, Holy Spirit!

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in unity with the Holy Spirit,
we praise you O God, now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

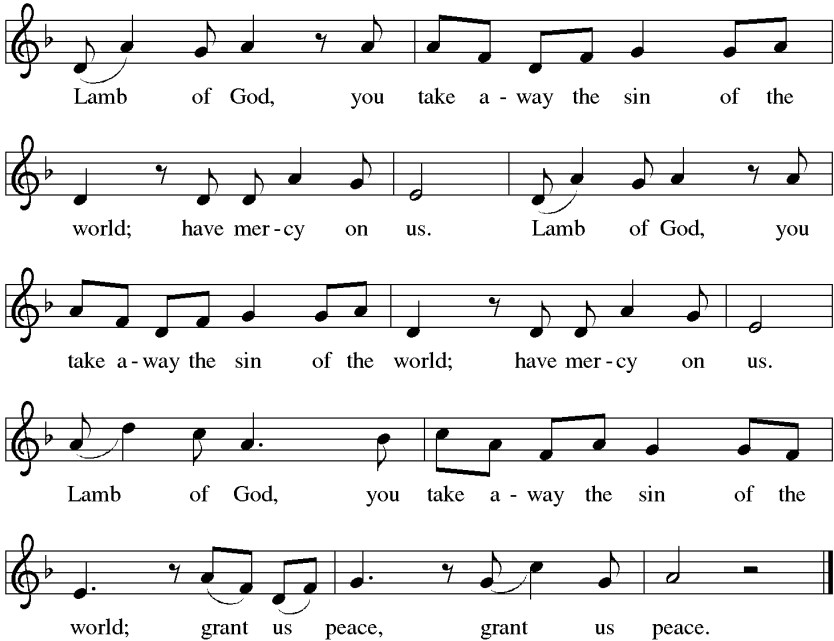
United as members of Christ's family, we pray as he taught us with one heart and voice:

**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

Here with bread and wine is the Word made flesh. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

The congregation may sit.

SHARING OF THE SACRAMENT

You are invited to receive Holy Communion tonight. Lutherans believe that the body and blood of Christ are present with the bread and wine. Gluten-free wafers are available for those who cannot consume wheat; please let the pastor know. If you do not wish to receive communion, you may still come forward and kneel for a blessing from the pastor.

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

“What Child is This?”

Red Book #296

“Away in a Manger”

Red Book #278

CANDLE-LIGHTING AT THE MANGER

CHOIR ANTHEM

“Your Little Ones, Dear Lord”

- Hans A. Brorson

HYMN

“Silent Night”

Red Book #281

PRAYER *led by the assisting minister*

Almighty God and Father of light, a child is born for us and a son is given to us. Your eternal Word leaped down from heaven in the silent watches of the night, and now your Church is filled with wonder and light at the nearness of our God. Open our hearts to receive his life and increase our vision with the rising of the dawn, that our lives may be filled with his glory and his peace; who lives and reigns forever and ever. **Amen.**

The congregation may stand.

SENDING

BLESSING

May the God of the angels, who heralded Christ's birth, bring joy to your hearts this day and always. **Amen.**

May the God of love, who gave his only Son to be born for you, fill your life with love and peace. **Amen.**

May Emmanuel, God with us, be with you in all your doings and all your celebrations, until he brings you into his eternal kingdom. **Amen.**

And may almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

RECESSIONAL HYMN

“Joy to the World”

Red Book #267

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Fantasy – “He is Born, the Infant King”

- Richard Hudson

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

The Rev. Kimberly van Driel	Presiding Minister
Sue Morrow	Assisting Minister
Chuck McMichael	Reader
Claudia van Driel and Christiaan van Driel	Torchbearers
Andrew O'Rourke	Crucifer
Amelia O'Rourke	Acolyte
Signe Mitchell	Organist
Jim Cunningham	Trumpeter
Harry Cunningham	Sr. Choir Director
Marlin Boltz	AV Assisting Minister
Karen Boltz	PowerPoint Minister
Bill and Judy Vilcheck	Ushers
Roxanne Glagola	Altar Guild

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALTAR FLOWERS and POINSETTIAS are given to the glory of God by: George Schaney, in memory of Zema; Jessie and Josh Kamerer; Brandi and Brandon Stein; Sandy Lefebvre; Larry Hamil; Myrna Hamil; Pr. Kimberly and Edwin van Driel; Susan Farrell; Marilyn Shoup; Sandy Radziwon; Judy and Bill Vilcheck; Kirsten Schaney; Signe Mitchell

CHRISTMAS TREE contributions made by: Brenda Ihlenfeld; Karen and Bob Domanski; Laura and Brent Warmbrod; Pat and Joe Zupancic; Larry Hamil; Myrna Hamil; Grace Shields; Sandy Lefebvre; Merab Drennan; Amy and Jack Beiler; Jeanette and Jim Cunningham; Yvonne and John Thickey; Kirsten Schaney and Jill Chambers; Tracy Gullickson; Susan Farrell; Marilyn Shoup; Linda and Kevin Mathias; Lea, Jolene, and Jack Pelgrin; Helen and Larry Christy; Danna Drescher; Susan and Vaughn Badger; Signe Mitchell; Elaine Cavanaugh; Barb Westley; Thelma Cross

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS to support First English's ministry may be made in the offering plates or online at www.firstenglishbutler.org.

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