



*You are welcome here!*  
**We are disciples of Jesus, growing in  
Faith, Hope, and Love**

Address  
4729 S. Carrier Parkway  
Grand Prairie, TX 75052



Phone  
972-642-5683



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Worship Times  
Sunday 10:15 am  
Wednesday 7:00 pm



Pastor  
Rev. Julio Cruz-Natal



*December 24, 2023*  
*The Nativity of Our Lord*

# Gathering

## ✘ INTRODUCTION

*In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.*

## ✘ CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, the Word made flesh,  
our life and our salvation.

C **Amen.**

P Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P God of life,

C **you promise good news of great joy for all people, and call us to be messengers of your peace. We confess that too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security. We nurture conflict and build barriers. We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation. Have mercy on us.**

**Where we are self-centered, open our hearts. Where we are reluctant, give us courage. Where we are cynical, restore our trust. Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you.**

**Amen.**

P Hear the good news: We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In ✚ Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God.

C **Amen.**

## ✘ GATHERING HYMN – Joy to the World! (ELW#267) vs. 1, 3

**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!

**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.

## ✠ LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH and CHRISTMAS CANDLE

P Tonight we light all of the Advent candles along with the Christmas candle.  
We wait no more; Christ has come. Arise, shine, for your light has come.

**C Oh, come let us adore him!**

P Unto us a Child is born!

**C Oh, come let us adore him!**

P And the authority shall be upon his shoulders.

**C Oh, come let us adore him!**

P And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Almighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**C Oh, come let us adore him!**

P The light of Christ shines in the darkness.

**C And the darkness did not overcome it.**

## ✠ HYMN of GLORY - O Come, All Ye Faithful (ELW#283) vs. 1-3

**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*

## ✠ GREETING and OPENING PRAYER

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

**C Jesus Christ is the light of the world.**

A May the light of peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**C And also with you.**

A 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.

**C Amen.**

# Word

## ✘ FIRST LESSON – Isaiah 9:2-7

- <sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.
- <sup>3</sup>You 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.
- <sup>4</sup>For 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.
- <sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
- <sup>6</sup>For 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.
- <sup>7</sup>His 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.

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## ✘ RESPONSIVE READING – Psalm 96

- <sup>1</sup>Sing to the LORD a new song;  
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
- <sup>2</sup>**Sing to the LORD, bless the name of the LORD;  
proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**
- <sup>3</sup>Declare God's glory among the nations  
and God's wonders among all peoples.
- <sup>4</sup>**For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised,  
more to be feared than all gods.**
- <sup>5</sup>As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;  
but you, O LORD, have made the heavens.
- <sup>6</sup>**Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;  
power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**
- <sup>7</sup>Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples,  
ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

<sup>8</sup>**Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the holy name;  
bring offerings and enter the courts of the LORD.**

<sup>9</sup>Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness;  
tremble before the LORD, all the earth.

<sup>10</sup>**Tell it out among the nations: “The LORD is king!  
The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved  
will judge the peoples with equity.”**

<sup>11</sup>Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;  
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful  
and all that is therein.

<sup>12</sup>**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O LORD,  
for you come to judge the earth.**

<sup>13</sup>You will judge the world with righteousness  
and the peoples with your truth.

## ✘ **SECOND LESSON – Titus 2:11-14**

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

L The Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand as you are able for the reading of the Gospel*

## ✘ **ACCLAMATION HYMN - Hark! the Herald Angels Sing (ELW#270)**

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!”  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
Glory to the newborn king!”

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.  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
Glory to the newborn king!”

## ✠ GOSPEL – Luke 2:1-20

A The Holy Gospel, according to Luke, the second chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

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

<sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

<sup>15</sup>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.” <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

P The gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## ✠ SERMON

✠ **HYMN OF THE DAY – Go Tell It on the Mountain (ELW#290)**

*(please stand as you are able)*

**Refrain:** Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;  
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 lowly manger the humble Christ was born;  
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. **Refrain**

✠ **APOSTLES' CREED (ELW p. 105)**

P With the whole Church, let us confess our faith:

**C 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**

A Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

*A brief silence.*

A Glory to you, God, for the song of the angels, proclaiming to the world Christ's holy birth. Give your church a joyful song to sing, that we bring the good news of peace and salvation to all people. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A Glory to you, God, for the stars that shine in the depth of the night. Provoke awe in our hearts at the expansive mystery of the cosmos. Open us to find beauty in the clear darkness of night and in the first glimmers of dawn. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A Glory to you, God, for the child born to us who establishes a kingdom of justice and righteousness. Break bonds of oppression, bring reconciliation to warring lands, and establish peace from this time onward and forevermore. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A Glory to you, God, for Mary's loving care. Lead us to tend to one another in time of need. Share the comfort of your presence with all people tonight who are alone or separated from loved ones due to estrangement, incarceration, or illness. We pray especially for those we now bring before you, either silently or aloud. (*pause*) Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A Glory to you, God, for the faithfulness of the shepherds in their vocation. Grant rest to any who feel exhausted from their work during this season: retail and restaurant workers, church musicians, administrative staff, and clergy, organizers of charitable-giving events, and service workers doing essential tasks. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

A Glory to you, God, for the multitude of the heavenly host. We rejoice in the zeal of all your saints who have witnessed the appearing of your grace, and who reveal to us your salvation for all. Hear us, O God.

**C Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

P Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

**C Amen.**

## ✠ PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you all.

**C And also with you.**

## ✠ OFFERING

*You may be seated during the offering. An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, here and around the world. After the offering is gathered, the gifts are brought forward. At that time, please stand as you are able.*

## ✠ OFFERING PRAYER

A God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

**C Amen.**



# Meal

## ✠ GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

**C And also with you.**

P Lift up your hearts.

**C We lift them to the Lord.**

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## ✠ HOLY, HOLY, HOLY – Angels We Have Heard on High (ELW#289)

1. Angels we have heard on high,  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains.  
And the mountains in reply,  
Echoing their joyous strains.  
GLO - - - ria, in excelsis Deo.  
GLO - - - ria, in excelsis Deo.

3. Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing.  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, our newborn king.  
GLO - - - ria, in excelsis Deo.  
GLO - - - ria, in excelsis Deo.

## ✠ EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life...

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**C Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P With this bread and cup...

We look with hope for his coming.

**C Come, Lord Jesus.**

P Holy God, we long for your Spirit....

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**C Come, Holy Spirit.**

P All praise and glory are yours...

one God, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

## ✘ LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**C 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

P Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace.

## ✘ DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

## ✘ COMMUNION HYMN – O Little Town of Bethlehem (ELW#279)

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 wondering 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!

## ✘ PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C Amen.**

## ✘ BLESSING

P God bless you and keep you, † Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever.

C Amen.

## ✘ LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

### Silent Night (ELW #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,  
Heavenly hosts sing allelujah!  
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.

## ✘ ANNOUNCEMENTS *(please be seated)*

### ✘ SENDING HYMN – Joy to the World! (ELW#267) vs. 2, 4

*(please stand as you are able)*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!<br>Let all their songs employ,<br>while fields and floods,<br>rocks, hills, and plains<br>repeat the sounding joy,<br>repeat the sounding joy,<br>repeat, repeat the sounding joy. | 4 He rules the world with truth and grace<br>and makes the nations prove<br>the glories of his righteousness<br>and wonders of his love,<br>and wonders of his love,<br>and wonders, wonders of his love. |
|---|---|

## ✘ DISMISSAL

P Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

C Thanks be to God.

## ✠ **SERVING TODAY**

Presiding Minister:	The Rev. Julio Cruz-Natal
Music Director:	John Zacharias
Assisting Minister:	Julie Schmidt
Lay Readers:	Jeff Adix, Nina Wallace-Martinez
Communion Cup Holder:	Maleah Zapata
Usher:	Adix Family
Videographer:	Mel Hammer
Altar Care:	Leah Adix

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