

Christmas Day

Divine Service



Our Savior Lutheran Church
Westminster, Massachusetts

1 Hager Park Road
(Junction 140, 2, and 2A)
Westminster, MA 01473

Our Savior Lutheran Church

December 25, 2023

office@oursaviorlcms.com
church: 978-874-2479
www.oursaviorlcms.com

Visitor, you are very welcome here.

If you have questions or spiritual needs, our pastor would be glad to meet with you. May our Lord's Word be a blessing to all who gather in His name.

For those caring for young children or who have difficulty standing for the prayers, hymns, or other parts of the service, please know that you are most welcome to sit as you find need or comfort.

Don't be embarrassed if your children make noise during worship—all children do. We encourage families to worship together but there is a nursery that parents can use in the basement, if needed.

Holy Communion

The coming of Christ in the flesh at Bethlehem was a concrete outward act of God in humble means that was despised by the world. The flesh and blood coming of Christ in the sacrament is also a concrete outward act of God in humble means that can be despised. Rather than despise it, however, God would have us delight in it!

With deep thankfulness for His gifts to us here we also express our deep desire to celebrate it according to God's will. Since this includes oneness in the faith we confess (doctrine), guests who desire to commune are asked to speak with pastor first. Anyone is welcome to come forward with arms crossed to receive a blessing.

Serving in Worship Today

Preacher & Celebrant
Liturgist
Crucifer
Organist
French Horn
Acolytes

Rev. Peter Gregory
Tom Connell
Matt Connell
Judy Greenlees
Tabitha Greenelees
Lazarus Gregory
Liam McGuire

On the Incarnation

Incarnate means "in the flesh."

This word confesses that our Lord Jesus Christ took on human flesh for us and for our salvation.

We believe, teach, and confess that now, since the incarnation, each nature in Christ does not exist by itself. . . . These two natures [divine and human] are so united that they make up one single person, in which the divine and the received human nature are and exist at the same time. So now, since the incarnation, there belongs to the entire person of Christ personally not only His divine nature, but also His received human nature. So without His divinity, and also without His humanity, the person of Christ or the incarnate Son of God is not complete. We meant the Son of God who has received flesh and become man. Therefore, Christ is not two distinct persons, but one single person, even though two distinct natures are found in Him, unconfused in their natural essence and properties.

The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
Article VIII. The Person of Christ, paragraph 11.

Prayers for Worship

Before communion: O Lord, our God, in Holy Baptism You have given us new birth and granted us the remission of sins. Make us ready to receive the most holy body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of all our sins, and grant us grateful hearts that we may give thanks to You, O Father, to Your Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

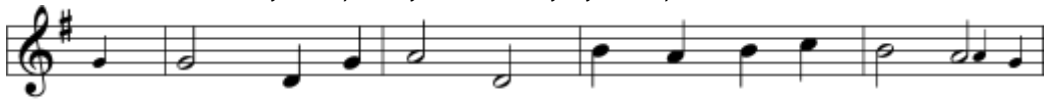
After communion: Almighty and everlasting God, we thank and praise You for feeding us the life-giving body and blood of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Send us Your Holy Spirit, that, having with our mouths received the holy Sacrament, we may by faith obtain and eternally enjoy Your divine grace, the forgiveness of sins, unity with Christ, and life eternal; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Prelude

The Kalends for Christmas

THE PROCESSIONAL HYMN – TUNE & TEXT: LSB 379

> *If able, please face the crucifix for the procession.* <



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
2 High - est, most ho - ly, Light of Light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
4 Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, O come___ ye to Beth - le - hem;
Born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal He comes;
Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!
Je - sus, to Thee___ be___ glo - ry giv'n!



Come and be - hold Him Born the king of an - gels:
Son of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
Glo - ry to God___ In___ the___ high - est:
Word of the Fa - ther Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

Refrain



O come, let us a - dore Him, O come, let us a - dore Him,



O come, let us a - dore Him, Christ the Lord!

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THE INVOCATION

Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS

Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with sincere hearts to confess our sins to God, our Father, and to plead in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ for His forgiveness.

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.*

Psalm 124:8

*I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,
and You forgave the guilt of my sin.*

Psalm 32:5

All-Powerful God, merciful Father, I, a poor, pitiful sinner, confess to You all my sins and unrighteousness. By them I have continually offended You and fairly deserved Your punishment, both now and eternally. But from my heart I am sorry for them, and I sincerely repent of them, and I pray You, in Your limitless mercy for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

The Absolution

[John 20:19–23]

Amen.

THE INTROIT

*For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given;
and the government shall be upon His shoulder,
and His name shall be called "Wonderful, Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace!"*

Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1–4

*Oh sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done marvelous things!
His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him.*

*The Lord has made known His salvation;
He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations.*

*He has remembered His steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*

*Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!*

THE GLORIA PATRI

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Luke 2:14; John 1:29

Glory to God on high:

**and on earth peace, good will toward men.
We praise You, we bless You, we worship You, we glorify You,
we give thanks to You for Your great glory.
O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
You take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
You take away the sin of the world, receive our prayer.
You sit at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy on us.
For You only are holy; You only are the Lord.
You only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, are most high
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

THE SALUTATION

2 Timothy 4:22

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

THE COLLECT

Let us pray. Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Christmas Readings

from the Old Testament: Isaiah 52:7–10

After the reading:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE PSALM

Psalm 2; antiphon v. 7

I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to Me, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You.

Why do the nations rage

and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,

“Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.

He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the LORD holds them in derision.

Then He will speak to them in His wrath,
and terrify them in His fury, saying,

“As for Me, I have set my King
on Zion, My holy hill.”

I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to Me, “You are My Son; today I have begotten You.

Ask of Me, and I will make the nations Your heritage,
and the ends of the earth Your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.

Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessèd are all who take refuge in Him.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

I will tell of the decree:

The LORD said to Me, “You are My Son; today I have begotten You.

from the Letters: Hebrews 1:1–6

After the reading:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

> *Stand and face the crucifix as it enters the nave. The reading of the Gospel in the midst of the congregation is a visual reminder that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). >*



1 A great and mighty wonder, A full and holy cure:
 2 The Word becomes incarnate And yet remains on high,
 4 Since all He comes to ransom, By all be He adored,



The virgin bears the infant With virgin honor pure!
 And cherubim sing anthems To shepherds from the sky.
 The infant born in Bethlehem, The Savior and the Lord.

Refrain



Proclaim the Savior's birth: "To God on high be



glory And peace to all the earth!"

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from the Gospels: John 1:1-18

Before the reading: **Glory be to You, O Lord!**

After: **Praise be to You, O Christ!**

THE NICENE CREED

Having heard the Word, what do you believe?

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. And I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.

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| <p>1 Of the Father's love begotten
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore.</p> <p>2 Oh, that birth forever blessed,
When the virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,
Bore the Savior of our race,
And the babe, the world's Redeemer,
First revealed His sacred face
Evermore and evermore.</p> | <p>3 This is He whom seers in old time
Chanted of with one accord,
Whom the voices of the prophets
Promised in their faithful word.
Now He shines, the long-expected;
Let creation praise its Lord
Evermore and evermore.</p> <p>4 O ye heights of heav'n, adore Him;
Angel hosts, His praises sing.
Pow'rs, dominions, bow before Him
And extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Ev'ry voice in concert ring
Evermore and evermore.</p> |
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△ 5 Christ, to Thee, with God the Father,
And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving
And unending praises be,
Honor, glory, and dominion,
And eternal victory
Evermore and evermore. Amen.

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The Sermon

OFFERTORY HYMN – TUNE & TEXT: LSB 389, STANZAS 1, 3

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| <p>1 Let all together praise our God
Before His glorious throne;
Today He opens heav'n again
To give us His own Son,
To give us His own Son.</p> | <p>2 Within an earthborn form He hides
His all-creating light;
To serve us all He humbly cloaks
The splendor of His might,
The splendor of His might.</p> |
|--|---|

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The Presentation of the Offering

I will offer the thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD.

O LORD, my strength, I love You.

The Prayer for Christmas Day

[1 Timothy 2:1-4]

after each petition:

*Lord, in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.*

THE PREFACE

*The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.*

2 Timothy 4:22

Lift up your hearts.

[Colossians 3:1]

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

[Psalm 136]

It is good and right that we do.

THE PROPER PREFACE

It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; for in the mystery of the Word made flesh You have given us a new revelation of Your glory that, seeing You in the person of Your Son, we may know and love those things which are not seen. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name, forever praising You and saying:

THE SANCTUS

Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 21:9

**Holy, holy, holy LORD God of Sabaoth;
heav'n and earth are full of Your glory.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He
who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9-13

**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.**

The Words of Institution

Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25

THE PAX DOMINI

John 20:19

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

THE AGNUS DEI

John 1:29

O Christ, Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

O Christ, Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

**O Christ, Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,
grant us Your peace. Amen.**

Christmas Communion

The coming of Christ in the flesh at Bethlehem was a concrete outward act of God in humble means that was despised by the world. The flesh and blood coming of Christ in the sacrament is also a concrete outward act of God in humble means that can be despised. Rather than despise it, however, God would have us delight in it!

With deep thankfulness for His gifts to us here we also express our deep desire to celebrate it according to God's will. Since this includes oneness in the faith we confess (doctrine), guests who desire to commune are asked to speak with pastor first. Anyone is welcome to come forward with arms crossed to receive a blessing.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN – TUNE & TEXT: LSB 386

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| <p>1 Now sing we, now rejoice,
Now raise to heav'n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth
Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth
The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art!
Thou my Savior art!</p> | <p>3 Now through His Son doth shine
The Father's grace divine.
Death was reigning o'er us
Through sin and vanity
Till He opened for us
A bright eternity.
May we praise Him there!
May we praise Him there!</p> |
| <p>2 Come from on high to me;
I cannot rise to Thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit,
O pure and holy Child;
Through Thy grace and merit,
Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto Thee!
Draw me unto Thee!</p> | <p>4 Oh, where shall joy be found?
Where but on heav'nly ground?
Where the angels singing
With all His saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing
In heav'nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there!
Oh, that we were there!</p> |

DISTRIBUTION HYMN – TUNE & TEXT: LSB 356, ST. 4 RMH

- 1 Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains:
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?
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!
- 3 Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King!
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!
- △ 4 Glory to the Father be! Glory, Virgin-born, to Thee!
Glory to the Holy Ghost, praised by men and heav'nly host!
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

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THE NUNC DIMITTIS

Luke 2:29–32

Now, Lord, You dismiss Your servant in peace, as You have promised,
for my eyes have seen the Salvation You prepared before the face of all people,
a Light to enlighten the Gentiles and the Glory of Your people Israel!
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

THE THANKSGIVING

Psalms 107:1

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,
And His mercy endures forever.

THE THANKSGIVING COLLECT

Let us pray. Lord God, Heavenly Father, we thank and praise You for sending Your Only Son into the world that we might become Your children, and for giving us now the very body and blood born of Mary in Bethlehem to set us free from sin, death, Satan, and hell. By Your Holy Spirit, keep us to the end with our Lord Jesus, that as we rejoice with angels in His birth, we may rejoice with angels in His glory, and behold Him with You and the Spirit in the kingdom of the Triune Majesty, which has no end. Amen.

THE SALUTATION

2 Timothy 4:22

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

THE BENEDICAMUS
Bless we the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

[Psalm 103:1]

THE BENEDICTION
The LORD bless you and keep you.
The LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you and ☩ give you peace.
Amen. Amen. Amen.

Numbers 6:24–26

HYMN TO DEPART—TUNE & TEXT: LSB 387

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| <p>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!</p> <p>2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.</p> | <p>3 No more let sins and sorrows 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.</p> <p>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.</p> |
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French Horn & Organ Postlude

Christmas Medley for Brass and Organ.....arr. Charles J. Torian, Jr.

To one and all, Merry Christmas!