

CHRISTMAS IN JULY

July 25th, 2021

9:15am - Hybrid Worship



Lutheran Church of the Living Christ

2725 Concord Dr., Florissant, MO 63033

www.lc-livingchrist.org

As on the first day of creation, on Christmas Day, and on this day, the Word illumines the world, shining forth to bring all things into being. Today we celebrate the incarnate Word, God becoming flesh to live among us in the person of Jesus Christ then and now. Emboldened by the good news of Christ's birth, we declare to the world that we have indeed seen and been transformed by the arrival of "the salvation of our God." O come, let us adore!

Notes about our worship service: Guidance and extra information is printed in *italics* throughout the bulletin. "P" indicates the speaking part of the presiding minister; "L" indicates a speaking part of a lay leader; "C" and parts in boldface indicate speaking parts of the whole congregation.

As we ease back into worship in the sanctuary please note the following: Masking is required. You will drop off your offering and pick up prepackaged communion supplies and bulletins on your way in. You may choose to sit where you like (no capacity limitations). Sharing of communion and peace will remain distanced. Group singing will be limited. Finally, please be mindful of others' comfort with touch. Ask before giving a handshake or hug.

PRELUDE “Shepherds” by Wilbur Held

WELCOME

The assembly is invited to stand as worship begins.

CALL TO WORSHIP

P: God is telling a story in our lives.

C: It’s a story of the promises God makes and our struggles to trust;

P: full of mystery and angels with surprising news;

C: full of hard endings and unexpected new beginnings.

P: Come, hear the story!

C: We listen as the Word of God speaks:

P: to peoples ancient and new;

C: in places of old and in the present;

P: in summer and winter;

C: in December and in July.

P: We join all creation in worshipping God,

C: full of grace and truth.

P: We celebrate Jesus, the Word made flesh,

C: who comes to us and makes our story holy.

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 9:2-7

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah’s king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God’s passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

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.
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.

L: Word of God, Word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC - "What Child is This?" preformed by June Spilker

GREETING

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

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: O God of creation, eternal majesty, you preside over land and sea, sunshine and storm. By your strength pilot us, by your power preserve us, by your wisdom instruct us, and by your hand protect us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

PSALM: Psalm 96 (*read responsively*)

L: Sing to the Lord a new song;

 sing to the Lord, all the earth.

**C: Sing to the Lord, bless the name of the Lord;
 proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**

L: Declare God's glory among the nations
 and God's wonders among all peoples.

**C: For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised,
 more to be feared than all gods.**

L: As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;
 but you, O Lord, have made the heavens.

**C: Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;
 power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

L: Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples,
 ascribe to the Lord honor and power.

**C: Ascribe to the Lord the honor due the holy name;
 bring offerings and enter the courts of the Lord.**

L: Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
 tremble before the Lord, all the earth.

**C: 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."**

L: 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.

**C: Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O Lord,
 for you come to give justice to the earth.**

L: You will give justice to the world with righteousness
 and the peoples with your truth.

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 52:7-10

Isaiah proclaims news of great joy: "Your God reigns!" As God saved the people from oppression in Egypt, God delivers Israel from exile. All the earth will witness the saving acts of God.

How beautiful upon the mountains
 are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
 who announces salvation,
 who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."

⁸Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
 together they sing for joy;

for in plain sight they see
the return of the Lord to Zion.
⁹Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
¹⁰The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

L: Word of God, Word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC - Carol of the Bells, performed by LCLC Bell Choir

SCRIPTURE READING - Luke 2:1-14

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

In 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!"

SCRIPTURE READING - John 1:1-14 (performed by [Theodicy Jazz Collective](#))

The prologue to the Gospel of John describes Jesus as the Word of God made flesh, the one who reveals God to be “full of grace and truth.”

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.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

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.

**CHILDREN’S MOMENT - A reading from “Joy to the World: Christmas Stories from
Around the Globe”**

CHRISTMAS HYMN - Love Has Come, ELW #292



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!

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The prayers reflect the wideness of God's mercy—for the church and its ministry; for the well-being of creation; for peace & justice; for the poor, oppressed, & sick; for all who suffer; for the congregation; & for special concerns/occasions.

As heaven and earth rejoice, let us pray for the needs of the church and all the world.
A brief silence.

We give you thanks for the body of Christ in every land. Your people stand for peace and joy, like sentinels on the mountain. We pray for continued wisdom to live your will. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for this beautiful world—for waterways, deserts, forests, and prairies; for creatures large and small; for plants that feed and offer shelter. We pray for continued good care of our earth, our home. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for the many nations on earth – for people who teach us new ways to dance and to sing; for languages that help us learn new names; for unfamiliar foods and spices. We pray for a sense of adventure. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give you thanks for those who see the struggles of neighbors and offer help. We pray for newborns and the aged; for those who are in mourning and those who fight depression; for refugees and homeless people; for those with no one to accompany them in their final days; and for those we name before you now: (*names*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We thank you for our siblings in faith – for all people of the book; for seekers and questioners; for skeptics and the resolute. We pray that your generous Spirit will comfort and challenge us throughout the coming year. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

With thanksgiving, we remember those who have died (*especially*). As you cradle your people in your merciful arms, bring us at last with all the saints into life eternal. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of the risen Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

*Please share a sign of peace by waving, flashing a peace sign, or other form of **distanced** greeting. If you are joining us online, type a message or share a brief word of peace.*

OFFERING AND PRAYER

We continue to be the church together during this time through prayer and financial support. Your giving ensures that the ministries of this congregation continue now and into the future.

P: Holy God, your beauty shines forth from the manger and your love flows from the cross. As you gather us around these signs of your love come among us, warm us to extend your care among the hungry and all in need. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

The assembly is invited to stand.

COMMUNION LITURGY

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 God thanks and praise**

Almighty God, you shape your very life around your beloved creation. We gather today like those who gathered at the manger, the place where your divinity and our humanity meet. Through a fragile, vulnerable, defenseless baby we come to know the fullness of your love. In your presence is such joy and peace that our hearts join the hosts of heaven in the Christmas sky and around your eternal throne proclaiming never-ending praise:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

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

Hosanna in the highest.

Life-giving God, through the covenant you bound yourself to your people and promised to be with them. Through promise and pardon, slavery and exile, you journeyed with your people in justice, solidarity, and love. Your prophets promised that life with you would be a blessing for all creation. In the fullness of time, the Word became flesh and lived among us through your Son Jesus the Christ, who came that we may have life and life abundant.

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.

Embodied and enfleshed God, be born in us this day. Come among us now in the fullness of grace and truth. Send your Holy Spirit upon this bread and cup we share. In this meal shared together across space and time, gather us together as your body. Restore us in your image. Prepare us for your justice and freedom. To you be all glory, praise, and honor, Triune God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us.

C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION FOR COMMUNION

P: Here in this place, Christ meets us where we are. Eat, rejoice, and be glad! The body and blood of Christ given and shed for you.

C: Amen.

The assembly is seated. Time is given for the sharing of elements among households.

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION - "Songs of Holy Night" by Lani Smith

BLESSING

P: May this sign of God's presence, this shared bread between us, strengthen us and give us peace.

C: Amen.

PRAYER

P: God of wonder, in Jesus we behold the divine come near. As you have come among us now, send us out in joy, hastening to share the good news of your love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit dwelling among us now and forever.

C: Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (see last page)

The assembly is invited to stand for the end of the service.

BENEDICTION

P: God the Creator who delights in you,
Jesus the Incarnate who is born for you,
and the lifegiving Spirit who shines on you,
✠ bless you and keep you in hope and peace.

C: Amen.

SENDING HYMN - Joy to the World, ELW #267



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace; share the joy of Christ.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE "He Whom Shepherd Men Came Praising" by Paul Manz

Announcements for the week of 7/25/21

1. Please take an angel ornament from the tree on your way out!
 2. Children's Activity Bag Giveaway with Wedgwood HOA - Saturday 7/31, 11am-1pm in the lower lot.
 3. God's Helping Hand ministry is requesting donations of cleaning and paper products for their Pantry. Donation boxes and list of items needed are in the coat room. Contact Bob Fayman with questions: (314) 707-7550
 4. Save the Date - Congregational Meeting and Fellowship following worship on August 29th.
 5. Tuesday Bible Study meets at 9am and 7pm via Zoom. We are exploring questions of faith, so come with your questions and be ready for lively discussion!
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Worship Leadership

July 25, 2021

Preaching/Presiding: Pastor Melissa
Assisting Minister: Elizabeth Carr
Lector: Jeanne Calderwood
Zoom and Slides: Laurie/Gary Brown
Musician: David Eggers
Ushers: Cathie Lehr and Marilyn Wiley
Greeter: Mark Beins

August 1, 2021

Preaching/Presiding: Pastor Melissa
Assisting Minister: Randy Henning
Lector: Laurie Brown
Zoom and Slides: Erle Craig
Musician: David Eggers
Ushers: Ann Schultz and Cora Wallace
Greeter: Cathie Lehr

August 8, 2021

Preaching/Presiding: Pastor Melissa
Assisting Minister: Angela Bennett
Lector: Gary Brown
Zoom and Slides: Elizabeth Carr
Musician: David Eggers
Ushers: Glenn and Jann Mueller
Greeter: David Sebastian

August 15, 2021

Preaching/Presiding: Pastor Melissa
Assisting Minister: Elizabeth Carr
Lector: Sharon Perko Davis
Zoom and Slides: Bryan Miles
Musician: David Eggers
Ushers: Dave Endorf and Randy Henning
Greeter: Jann Mueller