

**LIGHT**  
HAS COME INTO THE WORLD



St. David's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Saturday, December 30, 2017  
5:30 pm

Interims: The Reverend Larry Hoover and Bishop Emeritus Gregory Pile  
Church: 479-4110; Fax: 479-2994  
[www.stdavidslutheran.org](http://www.stdavidslutheran.org)



Dear Friends,

May God be with you as we celebrate the Nativity of our Lord this Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

I hope you are blessed to be with family and friends.

I pray that you know the great love of our Lord and Savior Jesus. You matter to God. You are loved by Jesus more than you can ever know. As we gather, we celebrate this great love of God that has come to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It amazes me that with his birth, Jesus came to a place the world would never expect. Holy Scripture said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. But what was Bethlehem? It was a tiny village in the literal backwater of the great Roman Empire—the last place anyone would think to look for the King of kings and Lord of lords. Kings are usually born in palaces, not in a cattle sheds in a town the rest of the world didn't know.

Jesus comes to us exactly where the world wouldn't expect him to show us that God works in ways beyond our expectation. God is in the business of surpassing our expectation and what we think is possible.

That same God in Jesus Christ is with us in the Allegheny Synod. That same Jesus is with us as we go forth in our lives. God has done the unexpected and amazing thing of not just coming into this world but claiming ordinary people like you and me and calling us to be a part of the eternal life of God. This amazing and unexpected God is calling you and me to be instruments of his grace love and mercy.

God is working in and through you and me. I see over and over the ways that the power of the Holy Spirit is at work through you. God is using you to care for the hungry, clothe the needy, send warmth and comfort to the hurting, and reach out to care for those stricken by natural disaster. Jesus is here in the Allegheny Synod.

As we move through this Christmas season, I invite you to take stock of this year and see how God has blessed you to be a blessing for others.

As we look to 2018, I invite you to join me in listening for where the Holy Spirit might be urging us to move forward in love and service. Jesus is alive and at work here in the heart of central Pennsylvania. He will amaze us with what he can and will do with us.

Merry Christmas

+Bishop Michael Rhyne  
Allegheny Synod, ELCA

# ***Welcome to St. David's Lutheran Church!***

We are blessed by your presence and honored that you have chosen to worship with us today. Please take a moment to sign the friendship sheet that is located in the booklet at the end of each pew, near the center aisle. These sheets will be collected with the offering.

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion** is offered to all who are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and who recognize the Sacrament as the true body and blood of our Lord. Baptized children are also welcome to the Lord's table at St. David's with the guidance and consent of their parents or guardians.

**Prayer Requests** may be made by placing the request in the small wooden box at the rear, near the doors through which you entered. The acolyte will collect the requests and they will be included during the prayers of the congregation.

**For your comfort** there is a restroom, equipped with a changing table and supplies and a water fountain located upstairs. Simply exit through the double doors back into the narthex. The restroom is straight ahead in the parlor, beside the grandfather clock, and the water fountain is to the right at the beginning of the hallway.

**Devotional** – The worship folder you are holding is also a weekly devotional booklet. The prayers and Scripture readings are appropriate for use at any time during the week. The liturgy itself is a Scripturally based order for daily prayer and devotion with Scriptural references noted where they apply. Even the hymns are appropriate tools for prayer and praise. Finally, there is a daily lectionary of Scripture readings for the rest of the week on the last printed page.

## INTRODUCTION

In the psalm all the natural world praises God, including all humanity, male and female, young and old. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we speak of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*The assembly stands.*

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*The minister leads the congregation in the invocation. The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Kneel/Stand*

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

*The minister stands and addresses the congregation.*

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*The assembly stands.*

## **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.**

## **KYRIE**

Lord, have mercy:

**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy:

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy:

**Lord, have mercy.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have made yourself known in your Son, Jesus, redeemer of the world. We pray that his birth as a human child will set us free from the old slavery of our sin; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## **FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:10--62:3**

A reading from Isaiah the 61<sup>st</sup> & 62<sup>nd</sup> chapters.

*{To the people who returned to Jerusalem after the exile, the prophet proclaims that the Lord's salvation will fully come to pass. Jerusalem will become a shining light to the nations and righteousness and praise will spring up as surely as the earth puts forth vegetation.}*

<sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

<sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

<sup>62:1</sup>For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,  
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,  
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,  
and her salvation like a burning torch.

<sup>2</sup>The nations shall see your vindication,  
and all the kings your glory;  
and you shall be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the LORD will give.

<sup>3</sup>You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,  
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM 148 (read responsively)**

<sup>1</sup> Hallelujah! Praise the LORD | from the heavens;\*  
praise him | in the heights.

<sup>2</sup> **Praise him, all you an- | gels of his;\***  
**praise him, | all his host.**

<sup>3</sup> Praise him, | sun and moon;\*  
praise him, all you | shining stars.

<sup>4</sup> **Praise him, heav- | en of heavens,\***  
**and you waters a- | bove the heavens.**

<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name | of the LORD;\*  
for he commanded, and they | were created.

<sup>6</sup> **He made them stand fast forev- | er and ever;\***  
**he gave them a law which shall not | pass away.**

<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD | from the earth,\*  
you sea monsters | and all deeps;

<sup>8</sup> **fire and hail, | snow and fog,\***  
**tempestuous wind, do- | ing his will;**

<sup>9</sup> mountains | and all hills,\*  
fruit trees | and all cedars;

<sup>10</sup> **wild beasts | and all cattle,\***  
**creeping things and | winged birds;**

<sup>11</sup> kings of the earth | and all peoples,\*  
princes and all rulers | of the world;

<sup>12</sup> **young | men and maidens,\***  
**old and | young together.**

<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name | of the LORD,\*  
for his name only is exalted, his splendor is over | earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup> **He has raised up strength for his people and praise for all his | loyal**  
**servants,\***

**the children of Israel, a people who are near him. | Hallelujah!**

## **SECOND READING: Galatians 4:4-7**

A reading from Galatians the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter.

*{Paul seeks to show the Galatians that the purpose of Christ's birth was to liberate us from the law's condemnation so that we would be fully adopted into God's family as sons and daughters.}*

<sup>4</sup>When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. <sup>6</sup>And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" <sup>7</sup>So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The assembly stands.*

## **GOSPEL: Luke 2:22-40**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*{Luke's narrative continues with stories that emphasize Jesus' connection to Judaism. His family is devout in its observance of the law, and Jesus himself is recognized as one who will bring glory to Israel.}*

<sup>22</sup>When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), <sup>24</sup>and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

<sup>25</sup>Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. <sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. <sup>27</sup>Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, <sup>28</sup>Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

<sup>29</sup>"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
according to your word;

<sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
<sup>31</sup>which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
<sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel.”

<sup>33</sup>And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup>Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed <sup>35</sup>so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

<sup>36</sup>There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup>then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup>At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup>When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup>The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

*The assembly is seated.*

*Silence for reflection may follow.*

*The assembly stands.*

Together we confess our faith:

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell.**

**On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again 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**

Drawn near to God as children and heirs of Christ's promise, we pray for all people of God, for our nation and our world, and for those in need.

*A brief silence.*

For the faith communities of this *city/town/village* and for faith communities throughout the world. Help us to see ourselves in our neighbors, especially those who differ from us, and draw us together in common service to those who are hungry, poor, and oppressed. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the well-being of the earth as we begin another year entrusted with its care. Give us lively imaginations to see ways to conserve its limited resources, harness its renewable energies, and conform ourselves to its natural goodness. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For peace among nations, for peace in our homes, and for peace in our hearts. Urge us to cry out at injustice and inequality among your people until vindication comes and righteousness prevails. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who wait in the shadow of death, for those who are ill, for those who struggle to see the future, and for all who lack even their basic needs. Transform our love toward them with the vision of eyes that have seen the salvation of God. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who cannot see, for those who cannot hear, for those who have varied use of their limbs, and for those able to exercise all the senses. Help us to appreciate the fullness of God's gift of life in our varied abilities, and to celebrate the diversity that reveals a more complete image of the one who makes us all family. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for those who have gone before us in this year and now rest in you (*especially*). Led by Mary and Joseph, Anna and Simeon, let us live in your praise until the day we depart in your peace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your outstretched arms, O God, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in Jesus Christ, the light and life of the world.  
**Amen.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

*The ministers and congregation may greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

Peace be with you.

**Peace be with you.**

*Please be seated after the Peace is shared.*

*The assembly is seated.*

## **OFFERING**

## **OFFERTORY HYMN**

*The assembly stands.*

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

Blessed are you,

**O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

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.**

## **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

Born in humility, he came to rule over all.

Helpless as an infant, he showed the power of your love.

Poor in things of the world, he brought the wealth of your grace.

Rejected by many, he welcomed all who sought him.

In his dying and rising, you gave birth to your church,

delivered us from slavery to sin and death,

and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

We give you thanks that on the night before he died,  
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 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.

Do this in remembrance of me.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died,**

**Christ is risen,**

**Christ will come again.**

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us  
and upon these your gifts of bread and wine,  
that the bread we break and the cup we bless  
may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ.

Empower us by your Spirit, O God, to be Christ's presence in the world  
even as Jesus was and is and ever will be God-with-us.

Give us courage to speak Jesus' truth, to seek his justice, and love with his love;  
until Christ comes in final victory and we shall feast with all your saints  
in the joy of your eternal realm.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

[Adapted and reprinted by permission from *Book of Common Worship*, 1993 Westminster/John Knox Press]

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

## **LAMB OF GOD**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
grant us peace, grant us peace.**

*The assembly is seated.*

*The Holy Communion is distributed with these or similar words:*

The body of Christ, given for you  
The blood of Christ, shed for you

## **COMMUNION HYMN**

*Following the Holy Communion the congregation stands:*

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

Pour out upon us the spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of those whom you have fed with one heavenly food; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

May Christ, who by his incarnation has filled us with grace and truth, give you peace this Christmas season and always.

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen**

## **QUIET MEDITATION**

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS**

### **Hope Fulfilled**

The mothers and young children filled the room with song, dancing, scarves, bubbles, and bouncing balls. Most of the participants knew the songs well and would get really excited when their favorite song began. It looked like any other young children's music and play group, except for the circle surrounding the circle. This play group was taking place in a retirement home, and the little ones would toddle back and forth to their "grandfriends," giving and receiving a mutual blessing, along with a ball or scarf.

We are hard-wired to be in relationship and in community, and yet we can easily organize systems that keep us apart and distanced from one another. Like the gardener who awaits a new shoot of green in the garden, older generations await new ones to come along in their place, bringing new life. Young ones eagerly long to be accepted and received, indeed adopted into the belonging that comes in extended family.

So it is with Anna and Simeon. Their well-being is wrapped up in this baby being presented. Today's story invites us to look back to the distant past, be present in their longing, and cast our hope with them into the future.

Simeon conveys a sense of relief and completion, indeed a sense of peace after a long wait for the Messiah. It sounds as if it has been a long, arduous wait. The rhythm of Simeon's song helps the Christian people along the liturgical path of endings and beginnings: hope fulfilled and hope still longed for. The church sings Simeon's song (Nunc dimittis) daily in its night prayer (*ELW*, p. 324). We can sing Simeon's song weekly after communion (*ELW*, pp. 113, 135, #200–203, 313, 440). The assembly hears this story every year on the Presentation of Our Lord (February 2) and, including today, on the first Sunday of Christmas every three years.

## ***Daily Readings for the Week December 31-January 6***

<b><i>Sunday</i></b>	Psalm 148 1 Kings 3:5-14 John 8:12-19
<b><i>Monday</i></b>	<i>Name of Jesus</i> Numbers 6:22-27 Psalm 8 Galatians 4:4-7 <i>or</i> Philippians 2:5-11 Luke 2:15-21
<b><i>Tuesday</i></b>	Psalm 148 Proverbs 1:1-7 James 3:13-18
<b><i>Wednesday</i></b>	Psalm 110 Proverbs 1:20-33 James 4:1-10
<b><i>Thursday</i></b>	Psalm 110 Proverbs 3:1-12 James 4:11-17
<b><i>Friday</i></b>	Psalm 110 Proverbs 22:1-9 Luke 6:27-31
<b><i>Saturday</i></b>	<i>Epiphany of Our Lord</i> Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12

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