



Nativity of Our Lord

Sunday, December 24, 2023

Peace Lutheran Church, ELCA

WELCOME TO PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Whether you are joining us in-person or on-line we are blessed to have you worshiping with us today. We pray that our time of worship together further encourages and strengthens our call to discipleship.

MISSION STATEMENT

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we share God's grace and mercy. We welcome and encourage all to grow with us in God's kingdom through praise, worship, and service.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC (See Page 19)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

GATHERING HYMN

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ELW #283



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
2 The 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!

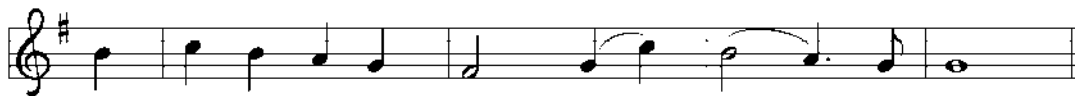


come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:
Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:
Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

Refrain



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2
Music: ADESTE FIDELIS, attr. John Francis Wade

CALL TO WORSHIP

Waiting, watching, hoping against hope, the faithful have looked and longed for a Savior.

We wait for the light that will break the darkness.

Wrapped up in our own lives, in our own struggles, consumed with our own desires and our own sins, still our hope was in God.

He shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

At long last, all generations cry out, “For unto us a child is born.”

Glory to God in the Highest!

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

ELW #289



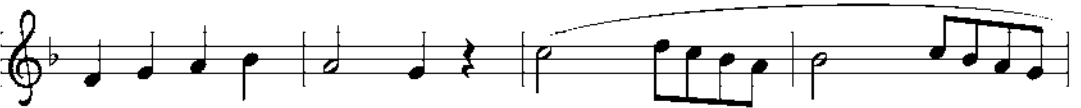
- 1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
- 2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
- 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re-ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad-some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.



Glo - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo -



ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy. *The Crown of Jesus Music*. 1864
Music: GLORIA. French carol

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.

FIRST 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!

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.

Word of God. Word of life.

Thanks be to God.

CHOIR ANTHEM

What a Wonderful Child

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SECOND READING: Titus 2:11-14

The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.

¹¹The 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.

Word of God. Word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice (v. 2 & 3)

ELW #288



- 1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 2 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
- 3 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866
Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.

GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 2:1-20

The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 2nd 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 treas-

ured 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.

SERMON

Reverend Mary E. Zupansic

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ELW #279



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893

Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

APOSTLES' CREED

**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

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.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

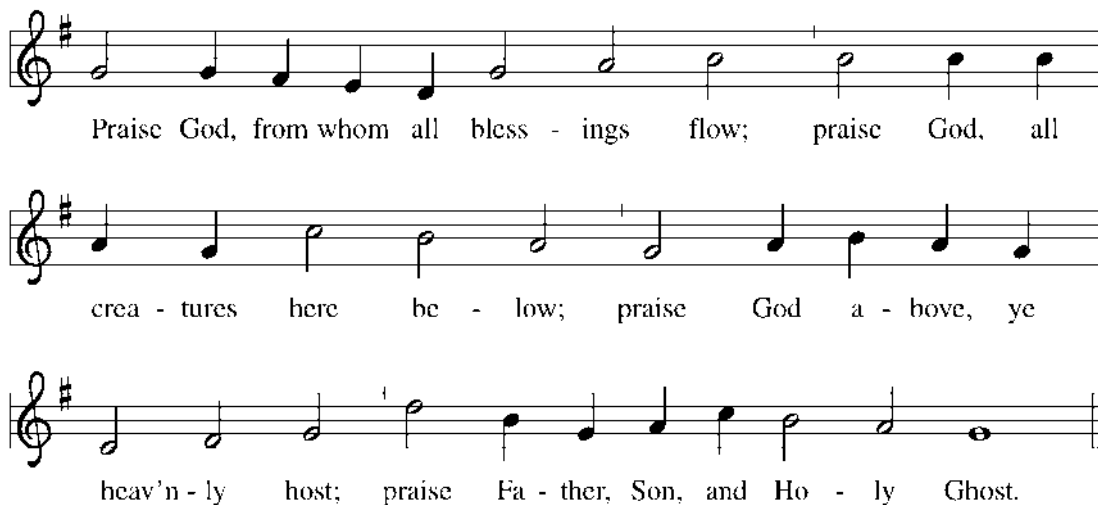
THE SHARING OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

+ THE MEAL +

OFFERING OF TITHES & GIFTS *Thank you for your continued support of the ministry of Peace Lutheran Church. We gladly accept your offerings via US Postal Service, Tithe.ly, or direct deposit from your bank.*



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise God, all
 crea - tures here be - low; praise God a - bove, ye
 heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711. alt.

Music: OLD HUNDREDETH. Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. 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.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our God thanks and praise.

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 in their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW p.190

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, full of your glo-ry. Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high -
est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God,
Creator of all and Source of life,
at the birth of time
your word brought light into the world.

In the fullness of time,
you sent your Word, born of Mary,
to shine in our darkness
and to make us your daughters and sons.

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.

Remembering, therefore,
his birth and life among us,
his death and resurrection,
we await his coming again
when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup,
that, held and nourished by you,
we may live as your children,
shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

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

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

LAMB OF GOD

ELW P. 191



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, Lamb of God.

SOLO

O Holy Night

Adam Miller

COMMUNION HYMN

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

ELW #282

TABLE BLESSING

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

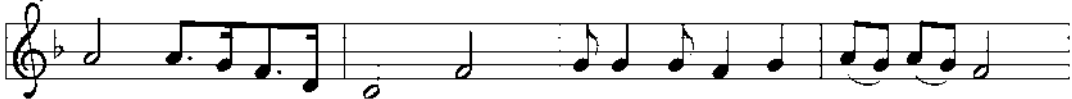
Amen.

POST COMMUNION CANTICLE

Go Tell It on the Mountain (v.1 & 3)

ELW #290

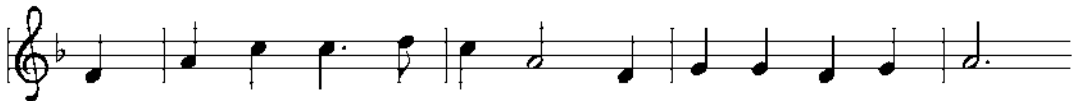
Refrain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

Refrain



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

Text: African American spiritual, refrain: John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.
Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. 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 peace. Make shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

LIGHTING OF INDIVIDUAL CANDLES AND READING FROM SCRIPTURE

Scripture is read from the Book of Genesis and the Gospel of John. Individual candles are lit during the reading.

AFTER the reading of scripture—all join in singing “Silent Night”.



HYMN

Silent Night

ELW #281



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace. Je - sus, Lord, at your



Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885
 Music: STILLE NACHT. Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

BLESSING

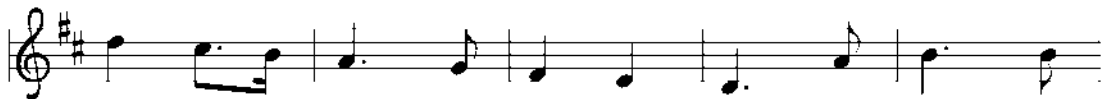
God bless you and keep you,
 ✚ Jesus grant you grace and truth,
 and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts,
 now and forever.

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.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

DISMISSAL

Christ the Savior is born!

Go in peace. Proclaim the good news.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE — "For Unto Us a Child is Born". George Frederick Handel, Mark Hayes, arr., © 2001 Word Music, LLC

Brenda Peck, piano - Jeremy Peck, trumpet - Mike Barker, drums

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ABOUT THIS WEEK'S TEXT

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.

THOSE WHO HAVE ASKED FOR OUR PRAYERS:

PETE ELLERTSEN, DEBI ELLERTSEN, PAULA TONELLATO,
NORM KOEFOED, IVY KOEFOED, RON WEBER,
GENE WALKER, MARK HENDERSON, BILL SPINDEL

If you would like to be added to the prayer list, or know someone who would like to be added to our list, please fill out a Prayer Request Card, send an email to peace.lutheran@comcast.net OR call the Office at (217)546-7646. Please note—for privacy reasons, we must have an individual's permission to add their name.

ASSISTING THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 24:

PRESIDING AND PREACHING: PASTOR MARY E. ZUPANSIC

ASSISTING: LOIS MOORMAN

USHERS: ELIZABETH MITCHELL, CHERYL SCHNIRRING

CAMERA: AMANDA KIM

POWERPOINT: VALERIE SPURGEON

MUSICIAN: BRENDA PECK

REFRESHMENTS: EVANGELISM COMMITTEE, PAULA TONELLATO

FLOWERS: ELAINE UREKAR — **IN MEMORY OF HER MOM VERLENE, DAD JOSEPH, & BROTHER FLORIJAN DURING THIS BLESSED SEASON OF JOY & HOPE**

ZOOM MEETINGS/EVENTS THIS WEEK

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 NO MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE — 4:30PM

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED DECEMBER 25 AND 26 IN OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS

NO CHOIR PRACTICE THIS WEEK

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 IN PERSON WORSHIP/LIVESTREAM — 9:30AM

DWELLING IN THE WORD — 10:45AM

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC, DECEMBER 24

1. Coventry Carol Jean Tweet & Andy Spiro
Craig Duncan, © 1996 By Mel Bay Publications, Inc., Pacific, Mo 63069
2. In The Bleak Midwinter Jean Tweet & Andy Spiro
Craig Duncan, © 1996 By Mel Bay Publications, Inc., Pacific, Mo 63069
3. Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine Jean Tweet & Andy Spiro
Craig Duncan, © 1996 By Mel Bay Publications, Inc., Pacific, Mo 63069
4. Gesu' Bambino Brenda Peck & Jean Tweet
Pietro A. Yon Arr. Bill Wolaver, © 1998 Word Music
5. Mary, Did You Know? Patti Christell & Brenda Peck
Jack Schrader, © 1991 and this Arr. 1998 by Word Music
6. Do You Hear What I Hear? Adam Miller
© MCMLXII, Regent Music Corporation
7. Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming Jean Tweet & Andy Spiro
Craig Duncan, © 1996 By Mel Bay Publications, Inc., Pacific, Mo 63069
8. The First Nowell Jean Tweet & Andy Spiro
Craig Duncan, © 1996 By Mel Bay Publications, Inc., Pacific, Mo 63069
9. The Angels Came to Sing Patti Christell & Brenda Peck
Sally DeFord – www.defordmusic.com
10. Carol of the Bells Brenda Peck
Leontovich, arr. Hark Hayes, © 1936 by Carl Fischer, Inc.



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CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

From Peace Lutheran Church Staff

Rev. Mary Zupansic, Pastor
Yvonne Nass, Office Manager
Jan Ambrose, Worship Coordinator
Brenda Peck, Organist
Laura Denk, Custodian