

WELCOME:

NEW YEAR OPENING PRAYER:

O Star-flinging God,
whose light dances across eternity,
 dazzle us into your presence
 this new year.
Open our hearts to the mystery of your love.

Awaken us to your presence,
 knit to the ordinary.
Reveal to us what is possible, but not yet present.
Heal us, that we might be healers.

Reconcile us to you and to ourselves,
 that our living might be reconciling.

Stop us often, we pray
 with news that is good
 with hope that holds
 with truth that transforms with a Word
 tailored to this trail we're on.

May the word of your grace guide our steps
 like the sun by day
 and the north star by night,
 as we travel into the gift of a new year. Amen.

— written by Glenn Mitchell, and posted on *MINemergent's Daily Communique*.

GATHERING SONG: "Angels We Have Heard on High"

Verse 1:

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains

Chorus:

Gloria...
In excelsis Deo
Gloria...
In excelsis Deo

Verse 2:

Shepherds why this jubilee
Why your joyous strains prolong
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song **(Chorus)**

Verse 3:

Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing
Come adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord the newborn King **(Chorus)**

CCLI Song # 27721 Edward Shippen Barnes | James Chadwick
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FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:7-14 *Reader Vicki English*

⁷Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
"Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel."

⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
those with child and those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

⁹With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."

¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

¹²They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall become like a watered garden,
and they shall never languish again.

¹³Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
and the young men and the old shall be merry.
I will turn their mourning into joy,
I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

¹⁴I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,
says the LORD



L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: "What Feast of Love"

What feast of love is offered here,
what banquet come from heaven?
What food of everlasting life,
what gracious gift is given?
This, this is Christ the king,
the bread come down from heaven.
Oh, taste and see and sing!
How sweet the manna given!

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939
Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.
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GOSPEL: John 1:1-18

[¹In 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. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON: Pastor Andrea Cain

SERMON SONG: ELW 288 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

- 1 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

- 2 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye hear of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door,
and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this!
Christ was born for this!

- 3 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave;
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!



*Desert Cross Lutheran Church
Tempe, AZ*

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866

PRAYER OF CONFESSION & ASSURANCE:

Great God of all creation,
who are we that you are mindful of us?
You who set the stars in motion,
who launched waves crashing against the shore,
who knows the heights and depths of the world;
Why do you bother with us?
You count the hairs on our heads,
and call us each by name.
You give us your wisdom and you uphold us by your Spirit.
You tend to us and care for us,
and we do not understand why.

We cannot grasp your love for us, O God,
for it is unlike us to be that loving and forgiving.
We become enmeshed
by our own needs and wants and desires
and we fail to see beyond anything but our own little circles.

You turn us around, O God.
And help us to see as you see,
and to reach out as you reach out
and widen our circles.
Remind us once again of the sacredness
of our ordinary, day-to-day lives.
By your Spirit,
We are thankful for the mercy
We have in you, O God,
We embrace the forgiveness
We have in you and the blessing of becoming more like you. **Amen.**

*~ adapted from Beth Merrill Neel, and posted on **Hold Fast to What is Good**. <https://holdfasttowhatisgood.com/liturgy/>*

OFFERING:

SPECIAL MUSIC:

"I Heard on the Bells on Christmas Day" – Christine and James Soll (piano and guitar)

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CHRISTMAS PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Christ, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray.

Jesus Christ, born in a stable,
Be with the poor and homeless this Christmas season,
And with all separated from friends and family.
As we pray, live and give;
shine your everlasting light.
(silent prayer)

Jesus Christ, born of Mary,
Be with young mothers across the world this Christmas time.
As we pray, live and give;
shine your everlasting light.
(silent prayer)

Jesus Christ, visited by Shepherds,
Be with all people in their work
and those who long to work.
As we pray, live and give;
shine your everlasting light.
(silent prayer)

Jesus Christ, sent by God,
Send your healing, love, and mercy
To all those who are suffering, grieving, or are sick,
We pray for the healing of the world
In these pandemic days and in the days ahead.

For all this and whatever else you see that we need,
we lift to you trusting that you hear us. Amen.

*~ adapted from Sam Hargreaves, and posted on the **EngageWorship** website. <http://engageworship.org/>*

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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.



SENDING SONG: ELW 275 Angels From The Realms Of Glory (vs.1,2,4)

- 1 Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

- 2 Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

- 4 All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising
to the eternal Three in One.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771-1854, alt., sts. 1-3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4

BENEDICTION FOR THE NEW YEAR:

Let us look for Christ wherever we go

Let us never stop seeking
Believing that there is a light that shines in the darkness
Which the darkness shall not overcome

And may the love of the Creator
The joy of the Spirit
And the peace of the Christ-child
Be with you this New Year, and evermore.

~ by Cara Heafey, UK. Posted on Worship Words at <http://worshipwords.co.uk/new-year-blessing-cara-heafey-uk/>

Musicians: Daniel Decker (vocalist), Michael Lottes (vocalist),
Christine Soll (piano), and James Soll (guitar)