

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**508 Bloom Street, Red Bud, Illinois 618/282-2394**

Rev. Mark A. Nebel, Senior Pastor *The Nativity of Our Lord December 24, 2020 3, 5, 7 and 9 p.m.*

**WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S:** May God bless you this wonderful night as you join together in His house to celebrate the birth of our Savior from sin, Jesus Christ. The Baby in the manger is the Son of God born in human flesh for us. We welcome our visitors. Please introduce yourself to our pastors. We invite you to worship with us again.

**WE CELEBRATE HOLY COMMUNION TONIGHT:** In this Supper of our Lord we receive the true body and blood of our Savior Jesus Christ in, with and under the bread and wine for the forgiveness of our sins and the strengthening of our faith. Since this sacrament is a way that we confess our common Christian faith, we invite to the Lord's Table all those who are confirmed members of congregations of our Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The cups of white non-alcoholic wine in the center of the trays are for those who prefer this.

**SERVICE OF PREPARATION**

**THE PRELUDE:** "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" *arranged by Kevin Hildebrand*

**THE RINGING OF THE BELL** calls us to reverent and joyful worship.

**THE PROCESSIONAL HYMN:** 380 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

*(if able, please stand as the cross enters the sanctuary)*



1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King;  
 2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
 3 Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righ-teous-ness!



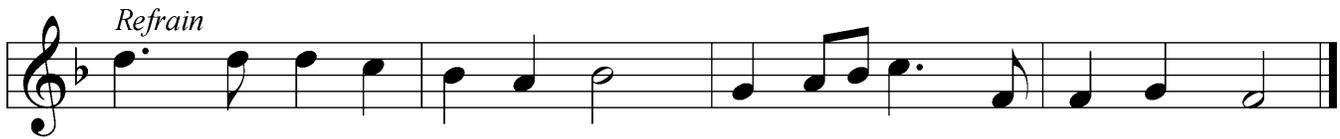
Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"  
 Late in time be - hold Him come, Off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.  
 Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with heal - ing in His wings.



Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, Join the tri - umph of the skies;  
 Veiled in flesh the God - head see, Hail the in - car - nate De - i - ty!  
 Mild He lays His glo - ry by, Born that man no more may die,



With the an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
 Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Je - sus, our Im - man - u - el!  
 Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them sec - ond birth.



Hark! The her-ald an-gels sing, "Glo-ry to the new-born King!"

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### THE INVOCATION, CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION:

Pastor: In the name of our life-giving Father and of His new-born (+) Son and of the faith-creating Holy Spirit. **Congregation: Amen.**

P: We are here to worship in the name of our loving Triune God;

**C: our one God who is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.**

P: In joy this night we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**C: We also confess that our sins made necessary His birth, life and death.**

P: We sadly have separated ourselves from our God by our sins.

**C: Instead of faithfulness to God's will for our lives, we have followed our own evil desires.**

P: There is nothing we can do to make up for our sins in the sight of God.

**C: The destiny we deserve is death. Our proper punishment is condemnation.**

P: We are sorry for our selfish sins. We ask, O God, for Your full forgiveness.

**C: We ask for Your Spirit's strength to help us lead holy lives in Your name.**

P: Jesus Christ was born on earth to save sinners. Upon this your confession of your sins, I, as a called and ordained servant of God's Word, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen. O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray; cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels, the great, glad tidings tell; oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!**

### SERVICE OF THE WORD

#### PSALM 96:

P: Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

**C: Sing to the Lord, praise His name; proclaim His salvation day after day.**

P: Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds among all peoples.

**C: For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; He is to be feared above all gods.**

P: For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.

**C: Splendor and majesty are before Him; strength and glory are in His sanctuary.**

P: Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it;

**C: Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;**

P: they will sing before the Lord, for He comes, He comes to judge the earth.

**C: He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His truth.**

**ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

### THE COLLECT OF THE DAY:

P: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

P: Let us pray: O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven;

**C: through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (please be seated)**

### HYMN: 393 "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"



1 In - fant ho - ly, In - fant low - ly, For His bed a cat - tle stall;  
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, Shep - herds keep - ing Vig - il till the morn - ing new



Ox - en low - ing, Lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.  
Saw the glo - ry, Heard the sto - ry, Tid - ings of a Gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, An - gels sing - ing, Bells are ring - ing, Tid - ings bring - ing:  
Thus re - joic - ing, Free from sor - row, Prais - es voic - ing, Greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!  
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before You as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian's defeat, You have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

P: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

THE EPISTLE READING: Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.

P: This is the Word of our Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

HYMN OF JOY: 386 "Now Sing We, Now Rejoice"

1 Now sing we, now re - joice,	Now raise to heav'n our voice;
2 Come from on high to me;	I can - not rise to Thee.
3 Now through His Son doth shine	The Fa - ther's grace di - vine.
4 Oh, where shall joy be found?	Where but on heav'n - ly ground?



He from whom joy stream - eth	Poor in a man - ger lies;
Cheer my wea - ried spir - it,	O pure and ho - ly Child;
Death was reign - ing o'er us	Through sin and van - i - ty
Where the an - gels sing - ing	With all His saints u - nite,



Not so bright - ly beam - eth The sun in yon - der skies.  
 Through Thy grace and mer - it, Blest Je - sus, Lord most mild,  
 Till He o - pened for us A bright e - ter - ni - ty.  
 Sweet - est prais - es bring - ing In heav'n - ly joy and light.



Thou my Sav - ior art!	Thou my Sav - ior art!
Draw me un - to Thee!	Draw me un - to Thee!
May we praise Him there!	May we praise Him there!
Oh, that we were there!	Oh, that we were there!

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*(please stand if you are able)* THE GOSPEL READING:

(read from the center of the sanctuary accompanied by the cross)

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

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.** (*Luke 2:1-20 is read.*)

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord. **C: Praise to You, O Christ.**

THE CHRISTMAS CREED: (*spoken in unison*)

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, who sent His Son as my Savior on Christmas Day.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, announced by the angels, worshipped by the shepherds, adored by the wise men; who lived to suffer, die and rise from the dead to free us from our sin, from death and from the power of the devil.**

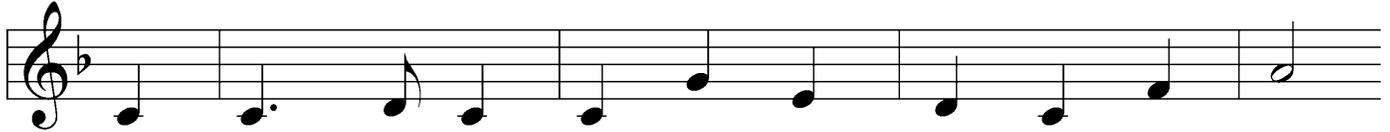
**I believe in the Holy Spirit who has brought me to faith in the Christ of Christmas, and by whose work in my heart I am strengthened to lay before the feet of Jesus the treasures of my life and to love and serve Him as my King now and forevermore. Amen.**

*(please be seated)*

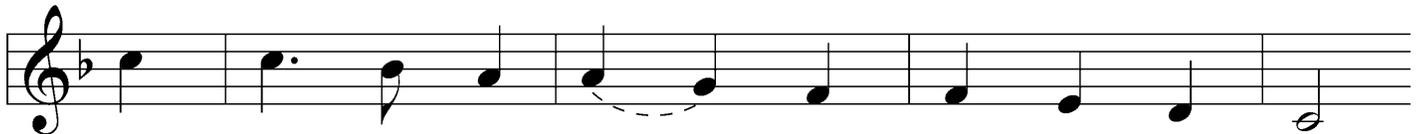
HYMN OF THE DAY: 364 "Away in a Manger"



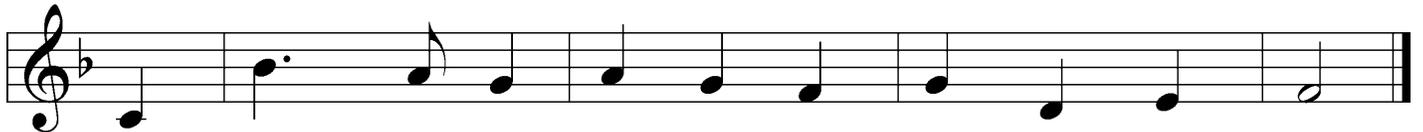
1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed,  
 2 The cat - tle are low - ing, the ba - by a - wakes,  
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask Thee to stay



The lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head.  
 But lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes.  
 Close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.



The stars in the sky \_\_\_\_\_ looked down where He lay,  
 I love Thee, Lord Je - sus! Look down from the sky,  
 Bless all the dear chil - dren in Thy ten - der care,



The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.  
 And stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.  
 And take us to heav - en to live with Thee there.

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SERMON: "There Went Out a Decree" Luke 2:1

## THE SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

THE PREFACE: *(please stand if you are able)*

P: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts in praise to God. **C: We lift them up to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

P: It is good, right, and proper that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, Lord God, Almighty Father, especially that You humbled Yourself and took up our human nature in Your only Son, through whom You created the universe and who is the Light of the world and at whose cradle we

bow and worship; therefore with the Christmas angels and all Your people we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

THE SANCTUS: (*sung to the tune of "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"*)

**Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly Lord! God of hosts by all a-dored!  
Heav'n and earth can-not con-tain all the glo-ry of Your name!  
Hail, ho-san-na, God most high! Blest is He who now draws nigh  
In the name of God the King! Hal-le-lu-jahs glad we sing:  
Hail, ho-san-na! Prais-es due, be for-ev-er, Lord, to You!**

P: Assembled now in Your name, Lord Jesus, and in the fellowship of all who worship You as King of the Ages and the Light of life, we join together in prayer as You have taught us:

**C: 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:

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

THE AGNUS DEI: (*sung to tune of "O Little Town of Bethlehem"*)

**O Lamb of God who takes a-way the sin of all the world,  
Up-on us all have mer-cy, too, ac-cord-ing to Your word.  
O Lamb of God, may e-ver our love for You in-crease,  
and may You grant to us a-gain the pro-mise of Your peace.**

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS: (*please be seated*)

392 "God Loves Me Dearly"



1	God	loves	me	dear	-	ly,	Grants	me	sal -
2	I	was	in	slav	-	'ry,	Sin,	death,	and
3	He	sent	forth	Je	-	sus,	My	dear	Re -
4	Je -	sus,	my	Sav	-	ior,	Him	-	self
5	Now	I	will	praise		You,	O	Love	E -



va - tion, God loves me dear - ly, Loves e - ven me.  
 dark - ness; God's love was work - ing To make me free.  
 deem - er, He sent forth Je - sus And set me free.  
 of - fer; Je - sus, my Sav - ior, Paid all I owed.  
 ter - nal; Now I will praise You All my life long.

*Refrain:* There-fore I'll say a-gain: God loves me dear-ly, God love me dear-ly, Loves e-ven me.

### 377 "On Christmas Night All Christians Sing"



1 On Christ-mas night all Chris - tians sing To hear the news the  
 2 Then why should men on earth be so sad, Since our Re - deem - er  
 3 When sin de - parts be - fore His grace, Then life and health come  
 4 All out of dark-ness we have light, Which made the an - gels



an - gels bring, On Christ - mas night all Chris - tians sing To  
 made us glad, Then why should men on earth be so sad, Since  
 in its place, When sin de - parts be - fore His grace, Then  
 sing this night, All out of dark - ness we have light, Which



hear the news the an - gels bring, News of great joy, news of great  
 our Re - deem - er made us glad, When from our sin He set us  
 life and health come in its place; An - gels and men with joy may  
 made the an - gels sing this night: "Glo - ry to God and peace to



mirth, News of our mer - ci - ful King's birth.  
 free, All for to gain our lib - er - ty?  
 sing, All for to see the new - born King.  
 men Now and for - ev - er - more. A - men."

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### 366 "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"



1 It came up-on the mid-night clear, That glo - rious song of old,  
 2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come With peace-ful wings un - furled,  
 3 All you, be - neath your heav - y load, By care and guilt bent low,  
 4 For lo, the days have come to pass By proph-ets seen of old,



From an - gels bend - ing near the earth To touch their harps of gold:  
 And still their heav'n-ly mu - sic floats O'er all the wea - ry world.  
 Who toil a - long a drea - ry way With pain - ful steps and slow:  
 When down in - to the cir - cling years Came Christ as was fore - told.



“Peace on the earth, good-will to all, From heav’n’s all - gra - cious king.”  
 A - bove its sad and low-ly plains They bend on hov - ’ring wing,  
 Look up, for gold - en is the hour, Come swift - ly on the wing,  
 His word of peace shall to the earth God’s an - cient prom - ise bring,



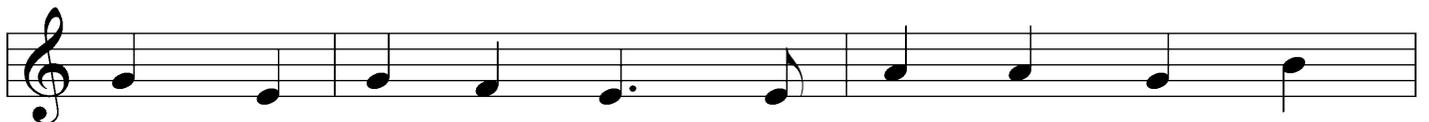
The world in sol - emn still - ness lay To hear the an - gels sing.  
 And ev - er o’er its ba - bel sounds The bless - ed an - gels sing.  
 The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the an - gels sing.  
 And all who take this gift will hear The song the an - gels sing.

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### 358 “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come”



1 “From heav’n a - bove to earth I come To bear good  
 2 “To you this night is born a child Of Mar - y,  
 3 “This is the Christ, our God Most High, Who hears your  
 4 “He will on you the gifts be - stow Pre - pared by  
 5 “These are the signs that you shall mark: The swad - dling



news to ev - ’ry home; Glad tid - ings of great  
 cho - sen vir - gin mild; This lit - tle child of  
 sad and bit - ter cry; He will Him - self your  
 God for all be - low, That in His king - dom,  
 clothes and man - ger dark. There you will find the



joy I bring, Where - of I now will say and sing:  
 low - ly birth Shall be the joy of all the earth.  
 Sav - ior be From all your sins to set you free.  
 bright and fair, You may with us His glo - ry share.  
 in - fant laid By whom the heav'ns and earth were made."

- 6 How glad we'll be to find it so! Then with the shepherds let us go  
 To see what God for us has done In sending us His own dear Son.
- 7 Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes, And see what in the manger lies.  
 Who is this child, so young and fair? It is the Christ Child lying there.
- 8 Welcome to earth, O noble Guest, Through whom the sinful world is blest!  
 You came to share my misery That You might share Your joy with me.
- 9 Ah, Lord, though You created all, How weak You are, so poor and small,  
 That You should choose to lay Your head Where lowly cattle lately fed!
- 10 Were earth a thousand times as fair And set with gold and jewels rare,  
 It would be far too poor and small A cradle for the Lord of all.
- 11 Instead of soft and silken stuff You have but hay and straw so rough  
 On which as King, so rich and great, To be enthroned in royal state.
- 12 And so it pleases You to see This simple truth revealed to me:  
 That worldly honor, wealth, and might Are weak and worthless in Your sight.
- 13 Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,  
 A quiet chamber set apart For You to dwell within my heart.
- 14 My heart for very joy must leap; My lips no more can silence keep.  
 I, too, must sing with joyful tongue That sweetest ancient cradlesong:
- 15 Glory to God in highest heav'n, Who unto us His Son has giv'n!  
 While angels sing with pious mirth A glad new year to all the earth.

THE THANKSGIVING: *(please stand if you are able)**(tune: "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen")***Oh, thank the Lord and sing His praise, What He has done pro-claim!****Let all who seek the Lord re-joyce And proud-ly bear His name****Who leads His thank-ful people forth His pro-mis-es to claim****O, tid-ings of com-fort and joy, com-fort and joy, O, tid-ings of com-fort and joy.****Lord, let Your ser-vant go in peace, Your word has been ful-filled.****My eyes have seen the sav-ing work Which for the world You willed:****The glo-ry of Your chos-en race As Light for all re-vealed.****O, tid-ings of com-fort and joy, com-fort and joy, O, tid-ings of com-fort and joy.****O, praise to God the Fa-ther, And praise to God the Son,****And praise to God the Spir-it, Most bless-ed Three in One,****As was, is now, and e'er shall be While end-less a-ges run!****O, tid-ings of com-fort and joy, com-fort and joy, O, tid-ings of com-fort and joy.**

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**(9 p.m.) SERVICE OF CANDLES** *(remain standing as the church darkens)**(Pastor lights his candle from the white Christ candle on the Advent wreath because Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. This light is then passed on to the ushers in the center aisle who then share it with the first worshippers in each pew. Please pass the light on to those next to you. Tip only the unlit candle when sharing the light!)*

Pastor: Our God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all. Arise, shine for your light has come! The glory of the Lord has risen upon you! People of all nations of the world shall come to this light. Jesus says, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." If we walk in that light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, God's Son, purifies us from all our sins.

**ALL: 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 Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*(After the closing hymn is over please extinguish your candles. Return them to an usher. When the lights come on you may exit in hope and joy.)*

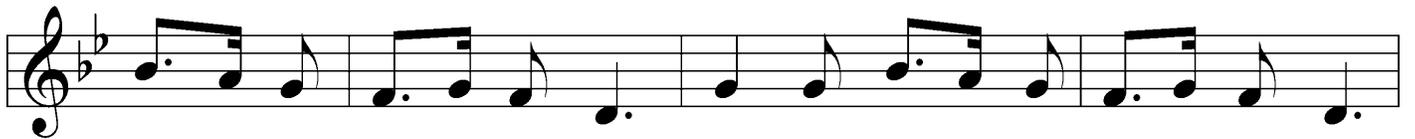
(3, 5, 7 and 9 p.m.) THE BENEDICTION:

P: May the good Lord bless and keep, cause His face on you to shine,  
Look on you with favor deep, granting you His peace divine.

**C: Glory to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit! The Savior close beside us;  
God's love from harm to hide us; the Spirit's power to guide us forevermore!**

THE CLOSING HYMN: 363 "Silent Night"

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright Round you  
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep-herds quake at the sight; Glo - ries  
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light Ra - diant



vir - gin moth-er and child. Ho - ly In-fant, so ten-der and mild,  
stream from heav-en a - far, Heav'n-ly hosts sing, Al - le - lu - ia!  
beams from Thy ho - ly face With the dawn of re-deem - ing grace,



Sleep in heav - en - ly peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!  
Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.

THE POSTLUDE: "Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"*arranged by J. Wayne Kerr*

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SERVING US IN WORSHIP TONIGHT

Preacher/Celebrant: Pastor Mark Nebel Organist: Mrs. Lindsey Hudak

Lectors: Seminarian Wade Waterstreet and DCE Bill Becker

Instrumentalists: (9 p.m.): David Snyder and Brandon Nehrt

Acolyte: (3 p.m.) Barrett Wagner; (5 p.m.) Kendall Crafton; (7 p.m.) Lucas McCarthy

(9 p.m.) Greeters, Ushers and Acolytes: St. John's High School Youth

A MERRY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO ALL OF YOU

from Pastor Mark, Cindy, and the Nebel family

REMAINING SPECIAL HOLIDAY WORSHIP SERVICES

Tomorrow, 9 a.m., Christmas Day Holy Communion Worship

Tuesday, December 31, 6 p.m., New Year's Eve Holy Communion Service

Wednesday, January 1, 2021, 10 a.m., New Year's Day Matins Service

OFFERING ENVELOPES for the year 2021 are on the table in the Fellowship Hall. If you did not get any, but want some, please call the church office at 282-2394 for a box.

PORTALS OF PRAYER for the first quarter of 2021 are available in the entryway.

### **God's Great Gift of Love**

A mansion or palace would be a more appropriate place  
for God's Son to be laid on a soft pillow adorned with lace.

The story unfolds with love so great and a manger so crude  
when God the Father gave up His Son Jesus for me and for you.  
Through His Holy Spirit's power, a virgin conceived and gave birth  
to Jesus who left heaven for a servant's life here on earth.

He came to suffer and die and showed us His great compassion  
when He paid our sin-debt with his blood for all our transgressions.  
Our hearts glow with the angel's news, "Christ is born for you this day!"

"Glory to God in the highest!" the angels praise and say.

Come, join the angels, the shepherds and the heavenly throng  
in worshipping our Savior and praising Him in song.

"Believe that Jesus is Lord and Savior," the message for your life.

"Share your blessings with the poor and forgive in every strife."

May God's holy peace be yours through Jesus, His beloved Son.

Praise God for His great Gift of love, for heaven has been won! By Joan Voges, 2008