



*The
Greatest Gift
of All*

**Welcome to St. Luke's Church
Sunday, December 31, 2023**

The First Sunday after Christmas

**Our Vision:
To Know God and To Make Him Known**

*Visitors are not expected to participate in the offering.
We hope you enjoy visiting with us today. Please come again soon.*

www.stlukesakron.com

Processional Hymn

"Angels We Have Heard On High"

Angels we have heard on high,
Singing sweetly through the night,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their brave delight.

Refrain: Glo.....ria in excelsis Deo
Glo.....ria in excelsis Deo

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why these songs of happy cheer?
What great brightness did you see?
What glad tidings did you hear?

Come to Bethlehem and see,
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.

See him in a manger laid,
Whom the angels praise above;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
While we raise our hearts in love.

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Welcome and Call to Worship

Celebrant: For unto us a child is born.

All: To us a son is given.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Celebrant: As we light these candles today, we thank God for the Hope He gives us, for the Peace He bestows, for the Joy He pours into our hearts and for the Love that redeems us and shows us the way. We thank God for His gift of Jesus.

Lighting of the First, Second, Third, Fourth and Christ Candle

We thank Him that through Christ His light has come into the world and made it possible for us to see, and in seeing, to rejoice. His truth, His love, His very self, transforms all who receive Him.

Collect for Purity

All: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you 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 Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collect of the Day

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Celebrant: Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, kindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

All: Amen.

Praise and Worship

"Hark The Herald Angels Sing"

Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations, rise
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem!

Refrain: Hark the herald angels sing,
Glory to the newborn King!

Christ, by highest heav'n adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of the Virgin's womb.

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as Man with man to dwell;
Jesus, our Emmanuel!

Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings
Ris'n with healing in His wings,
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

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“We Worship and Adore Thee”

We worship and adore Thee, bowing down before Thee,
Songs of praises singing, hallelujahs ringing.

Hallelujah, hallelujah , hallelujah, amen.

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“Behold Him”

He who was before there was light
Walked across the pages of time
He who made every living thing
Behold Him
He who heard humanity's cry
Left His throne to wake as a child
He became like the least of us
Behold Him

Chorus 1: Jesus Son of God Messiah
The Lamb the roaring Lion
Oh be still and behold Him

He who dined with sinners and saints
Healed the blind the lost and the lame
Even now He is in our midst
Behold Him
He who chose a criminal's end
Paid with blood to settle our debt
Buried death as He rose to life
Behold Him

Chorus 2: Jesus Son of God Messiah
The Lamb the roaring Lion
Oh be still and behold Him
Jesus Alpha and Omega
Our God the risen Savior
Oh be still and behold Him

Bridge: Holy holy holy is the Lord God Almighty
Worthy worthy worthy to receive all praise

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“Goodness Of God”

I love You, Lord, for Your mercy never fails me
All my days I've been held in Your hands
From the moment that I wake up until I lay my head
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God

Chorus: And all my life You have been faithful
And all my life You have been so, so good
With every breath that I am able
Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God

I love Your voice, You have led me through the fire
In the darkest night You are close like no other
I've known You as a Father, I've known You as a Friend
And I have lived in the goodness of God

Bridge: 'Cause Your goodness is running after
It's running after me
Your goodness is running after
It's running after me

With my life laid down I'm surrendered now
I give You everything
'Cause Your goodness is running after
It's running after me

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The Lessons

Isaiah 61:10-62:5
Psalm 147:13-21
Galatians 3:23-4:7

At the end of each reading the lector says:

Lector: This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

The Gospel

Sung: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.

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Lector: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Deacon: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to
John 1:1-18.

All: Glory to You, Lord Christ.

At the end of the reading:

Deacon: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Message

The Nicene Creed

Celebrant: Let us confess our faith in the words of the Nicene
Creed:

All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son, he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Officiant: O Lord, show your mercy upon us;

All: And grant us your salvation.

Officiant: O Lord, guide those who govern us;

All: And lead us in the way of justice and truth.

Officiant: Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

All: And let your people sing with joy.

Officiant: O Lord, save your people;

All: And bless your inheritance.

Officiant: Give peace in our time, O Lord;

All: And defend us by your mighty power.

Officiant: Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

All: Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Officiant: Create in us clean hearts, O God;

All: And take not your Holy Spirit from us.

The Confession and Absolution of Sin

Celebrant: Let us humbly confess our sins to the Lord.

All: Most merciful God, we confess that 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. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Celebrant: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who in his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all those who sincerely repent and with true faith turn to him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The Comfortable Words

Celebrant: Hear the Word of God to all who truly turn to him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15)

If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:1-2)

The Peace

Deacon: The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Deacon: Exchange with one another the Lord's Peace.

The Offertory: (Tithes and offerings are collected at this time)

Officiant: Our offertory sentences are from scripture. "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:16

"Adore Him"

Love incarnate wrapped in flesh
Heaven bent to dwell with us
Oh what a mystery oh what a mystery

The sacred gift to break the curse
The Father's heart revealed to us
Oh what a joyous thing oh what a joyous thing

Chorus: O come let us adore Him
O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord
For He alone is worthy
For He alone is worthy

Behold the Lamb of Righteousness
Let every heart and tongue confess
Let all the Earth rejoice let all the Earth rejoice

Remaining no accusing voice
His resurrection power in us
Triumphant in Jesus' name
Triumphant in Jesus' name

Bridge: Oh sing sing of the good news
The Heavens have opened
Let all creation praise You
(Oh) sing sing of His goodness oh God of Salvation
Let all creation praise You

Celebrant: All things come of you O Lord
All: And of Your own have we given You.

The Great Thanksgiving

[We invite all baptized Christians to join us at the Lord's table. We offer communion in the form of bread, wafer, gluten-free wafer, or individually packaged juice and wafer. Once received, step left to drink from the communal cup, or step to the right to intinct (dip) the wafer.]

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.
All: And with your spirit.

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.
All: We lift them up to the Lord.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Celebrant: It is right, our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Because you gave Jesus Christ, your only Son, to be born for us; who, by the working of the Holy Spirit, was made truly man, taking on the flesh of the Virgin Mary his mother; and yet without the stain of sin, to make us clean from sin.

Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

**Sung: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are filled with your glory.
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are filled with your glory.
Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.
Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,
Hosanna in the highest!**

The Prayer of Consecration

Celebrant: Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and when we had sinned against you and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent your only Son into the world for our salvation.

By the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary he became flesh and dwelt among us. In obedience to your will, he stretched out his arms upon the cross and offered himself once for all, that by his suffering and death we might be saved.

By his resurrection he broke the bonds of death, trampling Hell and Satan under his feet. As our great high priest, he ascended to your right hand in glory; that we might come with confidence before the throne of grace.

On the night that he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my Body which is given for you: Do this in remembrance of me."

Likewise, after supper, Jesus took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink this, all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you, and for many, for the forgiveness of sins: Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

Mystery of Faith

Celebrant or Deacon: Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:
All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Celebrant: We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and we offer you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Word and Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Sanctify us also, that we may worthily receive this holy sacrament, and be made one body with him, so that he may dwell in us and we in him. And bring us with all your saints into the fullness of your heavenly kingdom, where we shall see our Lord:

All: Face to Face.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray

**All: Our Father Who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth as 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 the power and the glory
Forever and ever. Amen**

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us.

All: Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The Prayer of Humble Access

All: We do not presume to come to this, your table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your abundant and great mercies.

We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table; but you are the same Lord, whose character is always to have mercy.

Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

The Agnus Dei

Celebrant: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world

All: Have mercy on us.

Celebrant: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world
All: Have mercy on us.

Celebrant: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world
All: Grant us your peace.

Celebrant: The gifts of God, for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

Music During Communion:

"In The Bleak Midwinter"

In the bleak midwinter, Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him, Give my heart.

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"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

Harriet Krauth Spaeth | Michael Praetorius | Roger C. Wilson | Theodore Baker© Words & Music: Public Domain CCLI License # 73146

"The First Noel"

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Post Communion Prayer

All: Heavenly Father, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out into the world to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

Celebrant: All our problems

All: We send to the cross of Christ

Celebrant: All our difficulties

All: We send to the cross of Christ

Celebrant: All the devil's works

All: We send to the cross of Christ

Celebrant: And all of hopes

All: We set on the risen Christ

The Blessing

The Recessional

"Angels From The Realms Of Glory / Emmanuel"

Angels, from the realms of glory
Wing your flight o'er all the earth
Ye, who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth

Refrain: Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new-born King.

Shepherds in the field abiding
Watching o'er your flocks by night
God with man is now residing
Yonder shines the infant Light

Chorus:

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, You are the God who saves us
Worthy of all our praises
Emmanuel, Emmanuel, come have Your way among us
We welcome You here Lord Jesus

Sages, leave your contemplations
Brighter visions beam afar
Seek the great Desire of nations
Ye have seen his natal star

Saints before the altar bending
Watching long in hope and fear
Suddenly the Lord, descending
In his temple shall appear

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The Dismissal

Deacon: Let us go forth in the Name of Christ.

All: Thanks be to God

This Week at St. Luke's Church, January 1st – January 7th

Monday

New Year's Day, *Church Offices CLOSED*

Tuesday

Worship With the Word, 6:30-8:30 PM (Sanctuary)

Stage 4 Ministry, 6:30-8:30 PM (Lower Conference Room)

Women's Group, 7:00-8:30 PM (Common Room)

Wednesday

Thursday

Morning Intercession, 9:30-11:30 AM (Sanctuary)

Stage 4 Ministry, 9:30 AM-12:30 PM (Lower Conference Room)

Friday

Saturday

Men's Group, 9:30-11:00 AM (Lower Kitchenette)

Sunday

Sunday Morning Worship, 10:00 AM (Sanctuary)

Bethel Akron Worship, 5:00-7:00 PM (Sanctuary & Upper Level)

Youth Group, 6:30-8:30 PM (The Harbor)

Upcoming:

Jan. 19th thru 21st – 'Journey to Wholeness' Healing Seminar

**Readings for January 7: Isaiah 60:1-9,
Psalm 72, Ephesians 3:1-13, Matthew 2:1-12**