

December 29, 2024  
9:00 a.m.  
Lessons & Laughter



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church  
Neenah, Wisconsin

Ministers  
Pastor

Everyone at Gloria Dei  
Pastor Dan Luett

***Welcome to Gloria Dei Lutheran Church!***  
*So that we may come to know each other better...please fill out the maroon Friendship Pad located at the end of each pew and pass it along for others to do the same. Once completed, return it and note the names of the others seated next to you so you may greet one another after the service.*

Congregational portions are in **Bold** print, \*please stand as you are able



*DON'T FORGET TO LAUGH*

*From a center point, tulip-like flowers stretch and bloom, referencing the Ralph Waldo Emerson quote, "The Earth laughs in flowers."*

**GATHER**

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**Call to Worship -- "What brings you joy?"**

P: We have named our joy out loud, and it is clear -

**C: God is in our joy.**

P: God is in this room.

**C: We have reason to celebrate.**

P: We have a reason to sing.

**C: Thanks be to God for the bright hope of this day.**

**GATHERING HYMN**

**"Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"**

**ELW #836**

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|--|--|
| <p>1 Joyful, joyful we adore thee,<br/>God of glory, Lord of love!<br/>Hearts unfold like flow'rs before thee,<br/>praising thee, their sun above.<br/>Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,<br/>drive the gloom of doubt away.<br/>Giver of immortal gladness,<br/>fill us with the light of day.</p> | <p>2 All thy works with joy surround thee,<br/>earth and heav'n reflect thy rays,<br/>stars and angels sing around thee,<br/>center of unbroken praise.<br/>Field and forest, vale and mountain,<br/>flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,<br/>chanting bird, and flowing fountain<br/>call us to rejoice in thee.</p> |
| <p>3 Thou art giving and forgiving,<br/>ever blessing, ever blest,<br/>wellspring of the joy of living,<br/>ocean-depth of happy rest!<br/>Thou our Father, Christ our brother,<br/>all who live in love are thine;<br/>teach us how to love each other,<br/>lift us to the joy divine!</p>          |  |

**\*Call to Confession**

P: Friends, one of the most inherently joyful and beautiful moments in worship comes through the moment of confession. For when we are honest with God in the prayer of confession, we open ourselves up to receive God's grace and mercy. And that gift--that grace--is full to the brim with good news! So join in this prayer of confession, not out of shame or guilt, but because there is a joy on the other side of this prayer that will take your breath away.

**\*Prayer of Confession**

P: Joyful God, You told us that in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, we must be like children.

**C: Did you mean that like children, we must practice unhindered joy? Did you mean that like children, we should lean into laughter, release our cynicism, and open ourselves to delight?**

P: In a world as broken and battered as ours, we admit,

**C: this often seems easier said than done.**

P: Forgive us, patient God, for the moments when we are so focused on the bad that we miss the good.

**C: Forgive us for hearing the nativity story and staying in our seats instead of jumping for joy.**

P: We know that even now you are sowing delight in our lives.

**c: Open our hearts up to it. With gratitude we pray, Amen.**

**\*Words of Forgiveness**

P: Friends, hear and believe the good news of the Gospel:

**C: We are seen. We are loved. We are forgiven.**

P: That is news worth celebrating! This is news that should make us want to cheer, laugh, cry with relief, dance, and sing all at the same time! So in response to God's goodness, I invite you to rise in body or spirit and join me in the sung response. Let us make a joyful noise for God's abundant mercy.

**\*Song of Response**

**"Angels We Have Heard on High"  
(refrain only)**

**ELW #289**

Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
gloria in excelsis Deo.

## HEARING & RESPONDING TO THE WORD

### Prayer for Illumination

P: God of angel choruses and contagious laughter, we know that you speak to us in the quiet. We know that when we bow our heads and fall to our knees, you are there, hovering close, calling our names. However, we also trust that when we throw our heads back in laughter, when we dance and clap with joy, when we skip and sing with gratitude, that even there, you are speaking. So on this Sunday morning we pray: open our ears and hearts to hear what it is that you are saying. Meet us in this joy. Meet us in this delight. Meet us in the hope of this Christmas season and reveal the wisdom we need to hear today. With hearts full of gratitude we pray. We laugh. We listen. We pray.

C: Amen.

## LESSON ONE

### Listen for Joy

- ♦ **Luke 2:10:** But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.
- ♦ **Isaiah 9:2-3:** The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined. You 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.

### Sing with Joy

### "Joy to the World"

ELW #267

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|---|--|
| 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!<br>Let earth receive her king;<br>let ev'ry heart prepare him room<br>and heav'n and nature sing,<br>and heav'n and nature sing,<br>and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing. | 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!<br>Let all their songs employ<br>while fields and floods, rocks, hills,<br>and plains<br>repeat the sounding joy,<br>repeat the sounding joy,<br>repeat, repeat the sounding joy. |
| 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow<br>nor thorns infest the ground;<br>he comes to make his blessings flow<br>far as the curse is found,<br>far as the curse is found,<br>far as, far as the curse is found.       | 4 He rules the world with truth<br>and grace<br>and makes the nations prove<br>the glories of his righteousness<br>and wonders of his love,<br>and wonders of his love,<br>and wonders, wonders of his love.             |

## Practice Joy: Joy found in Scripture (Children's Sermon)

### LESSON TWO

#### Listen for Joy

- ♦ **Matthew 2:10:** When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.
- ♦ **Psalm 148:** Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host! Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created. He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed. Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command! Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds! Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! Young men and women alike, old and young together! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven. He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel who are close to him. Praise the LORD!

#### Sing with Joy

#### “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

ELW #283

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|---|--|
| 1 O come, all ye faithful,<br>joyful and triumphant!<br>O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;<br>comes;<br>come and behold him,<br>born the king of angels: <i>Refrain</i> | 2 The highest, most holy,<br>light of light eternal,<br>born of a virgin, a mortal he<br>Son of the Father<br>now in flesh appearing! <i>Refrain</i>       |
| 3 Sing, choirs of angels,<br>sing in exultation,<br>sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!<br>Glory to God<br><i>in the highest: Refrain</i>                            | 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,<br>born this happy morning;<br>Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!<br>Word of the Father,<br>now in flesh appearing: <i>Refrain</i> |

#### Refrain:

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

**\*Practice Joy - Joy Found in Community**

P: Friends, the peace and joy of Christ be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pass joy and peace to one another.

**LESSON THREE**

**Listen for Joy**

- ♦ **Psalm 126:1-3** - When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." The LORD has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.
- ♦ **Isaiah 55:12-13** - For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

**Sing with Joy**

**"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"**

**ELW #270**


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|---|--|
| 1 Hark! The herald angels sing,<br>"Glory to the newborn king;<br>peace on earth, and mercy mild,<br>God and sinners reconciled."<br>Joyful, all you nations, rise;<br>join the triumph of the skies;<br>with angelic hosts proclaim,<br>"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"         | <i>Refrain</i><br>Hark! The herald angels sing,<br>"Glory to the newborn king!"  |
| 2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,<br>Christ, the everlasting Lord,<br>late in time behold him come,<br>offspring of a virgin's womb.<br>Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!<br>Hail, incarnate deity!<br>Pleased as man with us to dwell,<br>Jesus, our Emmanuel! <i>Refrain</i> | 3 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace!<br>Hail the Sun of righteousness!<br>Light and life to all he brings,<br>ris'n with healing in his wings.<br>Mild he lays his glory by,<br>born that we no more may die,<br>born to raise each child of earth,<br>born to give us second birth. <i>Refrain</i> |

**Practice Joy: Joy Found in Prayer and Giving**

P: Friends, so far this morning we have leaned into the good news and the cheer of this season through music, fellowship, connection, and scripture. To that list, we will now add prayer.

Let us use this time to write down our prayers of gratitude and post them.

(As you come forward, you can also place your offerings in the offering plates on the Altar Rail so that in this act we not only give our prayers to God, but our offerings as well. If it is more graceful to you to remain seated, raise your hand and an usher will collect your prayers and offerings.)

<p><i>We joyfully offer financial gifts to God’s ministry through Gloria Dei in a variety of ways. Either place gifts in offering baskets as they are distributed or go to <a href="http://www.gloriadeilc.org/give">www.gloriadeilc.org/give</a> (or scan QR code) or text your gift to 1-877-952-9422 this morning. If you are giving electronically or at a frequency other than weekly, please place a blue card (located in the pew rack) in the offering basket to signify your gifts. Thank you for your generous response to God’s blessings!</i></p>	
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P: Let us pray together:

**C: Holy God, when our joy becomes scarce, remind us of these prayers we have offered here this morning. When hope becomes dim, grant us laughter. When love seems absent, help us remember that we have much to be grateful for. Here, we can see it all so clearly. You are near and that is good news of great joy for all people. In your many names we pray, Amen.**

**SENDING**

**Closing Hymn**

**“Good Christian Friends Rejoice”**

**ELW #288**

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!

Verse 3 on next page

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!

**\*Benediction**

P Family of faith, in a hurting and lonely world, in a battered and bruised society, there is good news: Jesus Christ is born! So as you leave this place, may you be quick to laugh and quick to hope. May you look for reasons to be grateful. May you not hesitate to join in the dance, or join in the song. May you extend a hand to your neighbor, and find God in every moment of joy. For unto you a child is born. That is good news! So go in peace trusting in that promise. Go in peace, and go with joy.

**C: Amen.**

**Postlude**

THANK YOU TO THOSE SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

	<b>9:00 a.m.</b>
MINISTERS	All God's people at Gloria Dei
PRESIDING MINISTER	Pastor Dan Luett
MINISTER OF MUSIC	Dr. Myron Jones
CHILDREN'S CHOIR DIRECTOR	Jill Kruger
CHOIR ACCOMPANIST	Sherry Klitz
LITURGY ASSISTANT	Christine Olsen
LECTOR	Christine Olsen
COMMUNION ASSISTANTS	
USHERS	
GREETERS	
ACOLYTE	
ALTAR GUILD	

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