

# **Christmas Eve 2021 Ante Communion Service**



St. John's Episcopal-Lutheran Church  
202 W. Grant Avenue  
Williams, Arizona

The Rev. Cheryl Fox, Pastor and Vicar

*Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King;  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
With th'angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"*

*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.  
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see; hail, th'incarnate Deity,  
Pleased as man with men to dwell; Jesus, our Emmanuel!*

*Hail, the heaven born Prince of peace! Hail, the Sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings, ris'n with healing in His wings.  
Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ the everlasting Lord  
Come, Desire of nations, come, fix in us Thy humble home;*

*Celebrant* Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave birth, our light and our salvation. **Amen.**

*Celebrant* Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom 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 Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*A moment of silence for self-reflection*

*Celebrant* Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*People* **Gracious God, have mercy on us.  
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* Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*Celebrant* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

*People* **And also with you.**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Amen.**

*Celebrant* Let us pray: **O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.**

**First Reading**

**Isaiah 9:2-7**

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.  
For 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.  
For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For 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. His 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.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 96**

***Cantate Domino***

Sing to the Lord a new song; \*

**sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.**

Sing to the Lord and bless his Name; \*

**proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.**

Declare his glory among the nations \*

**and his wonders among all peoples.**

For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; \*

**he is more to be feared than all gods.**

As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; \*

**but it is the Lord who made the heavens.**

Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence! \*

**Oh, the power and the splendor of his sanctuary!**

Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; \*

**ascribe to the Lord honor and power.**

Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his Name; \*

**bring offerings and come into his courts.**

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; \*

**let the whole earth tremble before him.**

Tell it out among the nations: "The Lord is King! \*

**he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity."**

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea thunder and all that is in it; \*

**let the field be joyful and all that is therein.**

Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord when he comes, \*

**when he comes to judge the earth.**

He will judge the world with righteousness \*

**and the peoples with his truth.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. World without end. Amen.**

**Second Reading**

**Titus 2:11-14**

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He 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.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Sequence Hymn**

**The First Noel**

*Acapeldridge*

*The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.*

*Refrain: Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.*

*They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far;  
and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night. [Refrain]*

*And by the light of that same star the Wise Men came from country far;  
to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went. [Refrain]*

*Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord,  
who hath made heaven and earth of naught, and with his blood our life hath bought. [Refrain]*

**Gospel**

**Luke 2:1-20**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

**Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.

This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And 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.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When 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."

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The 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, Lord Christ.**

### **Sermon**

### **Hymn**

### **What Child is This**

*Acapeldridge*

*What child is this who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the Son of Mary!*

*Why lies he in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the Son of Mary!*

*So bring him incense, gold and myrrh, come rich and poor, to own him.  
The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the Son of Mary!*

### **Nicene Creed**

*Said by all.*

**We believe in one God, the Father 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  
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 worshipped 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

*Celebrant:* Let us pray to God, who came among us in the birth of Jesus:

*Reader:* Gracious God, as a star rose, and drew people from great distances to Bethlehem that they might greet the Christ-child; draw us, your church, and all of your people to you – that we might be the church and the people who you call us to be. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

As you gave Mary your Holy Spirit, filling her with the delight of your presence; fill us with your Spirit, and renew our lives. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

As Gentiles streamed to Jesus' light, and kings to the brightness of his rising; Draw our nation, our president, and all in authority, to his brightness. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

As angels sang 'glorias' to you and proclaimed peace on earth, and goodwill among all peoples; bring us your peace, and bring an end to and terror and strife.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

As shepherds were drawn away from their flocks by night; draw those who do not know you yet to the knowledge and love of you.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

As Jesus was born in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn; be especially present with those who have nowhere to lay their head, those who are vulnerable, and those who are hungry.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

As the holy family gathered together in Bethlehem, and traveled together to far off lands; bless all families, especially the families of our parish, and protect those who travel.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

As your son came to proclaim the forgiveness of sins, and the gift of life eternal; give to the departed eternal rest and let light perpetual shine on them.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

For those who are sick, especially \_\_\_\_\_.

For all those who suffer from Covid19.

For those who have died especially \_\_\_\_\_.

O Lord our God, may the light and hope of this night, and of your Son's incarnation, reassure our hearts that you are among us, that you hear our prayer, and that you will be with us always, even to the end of the age. In the name of Jesus our Christ we pray. **Amen.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we pray together:

**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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

We pray together for Christ's presence:

**My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the bread and wine.  
I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you.  
Amen.**

*Celebrant:* While we long to receive the sacrament of Christ's Body,

*People:* **We become the sacrament of Christ's Body.**

*Celebrant:* Let your lives be manna to feed our hunger for communion.

*People:* **The love we share becomes bread for the world.**

### **Blessing**

May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of his holiness. **Amen.**

May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel. **Amen.**

May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you, among you, and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

### **Hymn**

#### **Silent Night**

*Acapeldridge*

*Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright 'round yon virgin mother and child.  
Holy Infant so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.*

*Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight; glories stream from heaven afar;  
Heav'nly hosts sing "alleluia! Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!"*

*Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light, radiant beams from thy holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.*

### **Dismissal**