

**Old Testament Reading:
Isaiah 52:7–10**

⁷ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."
⁸ The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion.
⁹ Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem.
¹⁰ The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Epistle: Hebrews 1:1–6

¹ Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.



Christmas

About the Cover: In the mystery of the incarnation, God's power and might have come to us in the form of a vulnerable infant! His holy arm has worked unexpectedly and magnificently by taking on our human flesh in order to save us. For when Christ grew to adulthood, He bared His holy arm in the power of the cross—outstretched for all to see His merciful and unending love.

⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say,
"You are my Son,
today I have begotten you"?
Or again,
"I will be to him a father,
and he shall be to me a son"?
⁶ And again, when he brings the first-born into the world, he says,
"Let all God's angels worship him."

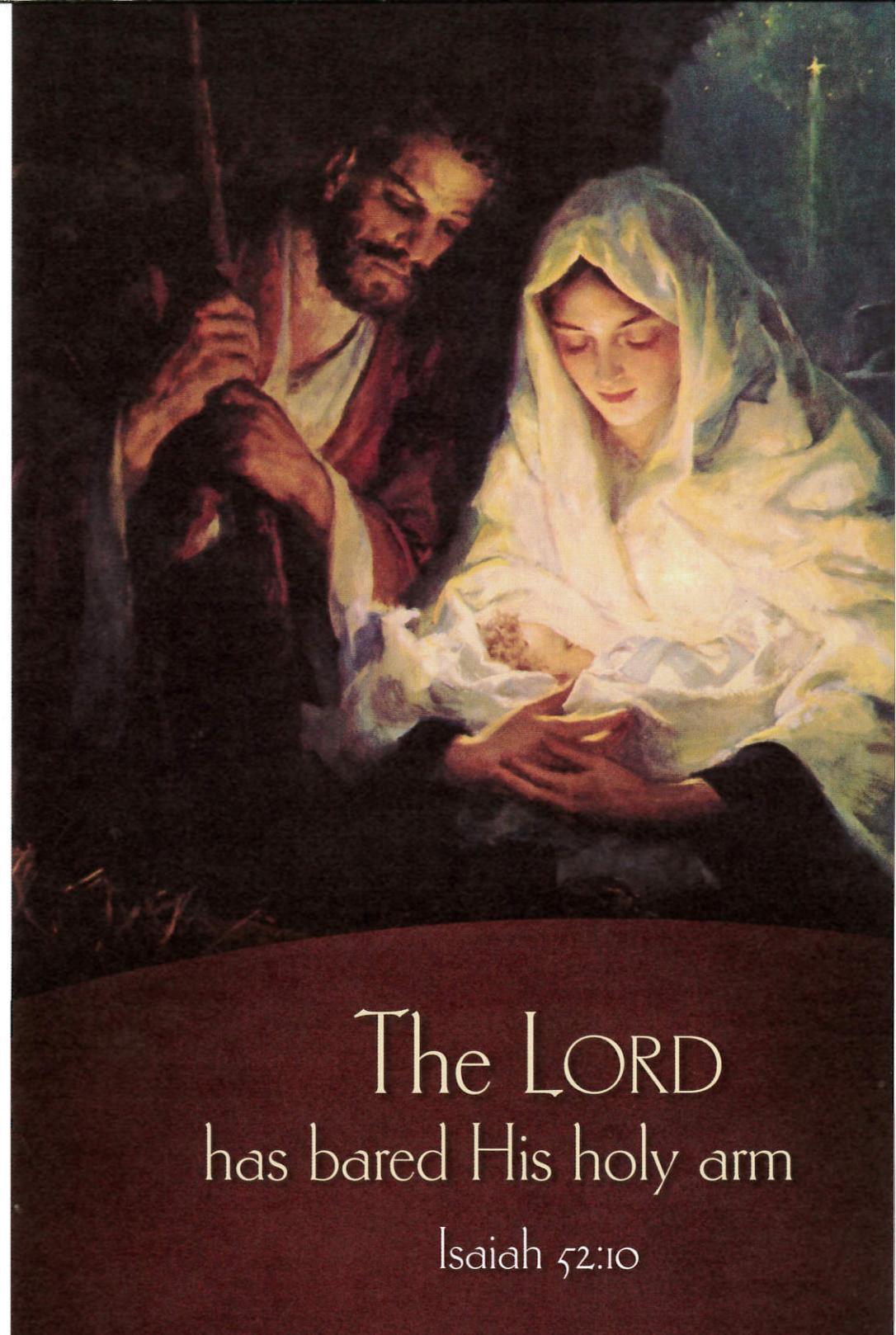
Holy Gospel: John 1:1–14

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.



The LORD
has bared His holy arm
Isaiah 52:10

St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)
8948 N 1900 Ave Geneseo, IL 61254
309-949-2516

December 25, 2022

**The Nativity of our Lord-
Christmas Day**

Divine Service Three (Lutheran Service Book, p. 184)

Hymn of Invocation 379 O Come, All Ye Faithful

Invocation and Versicles (p. 184)

Entrance Hymn 380 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Gloria Patri and Kyrie (p. 186)

Gloria In Excelsis (p. 187)

Collect of the Day

P Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen. (*sung*)

Readings (on back of bulletin)

Gradual

Isaiah 9:6; Psalm 98:1a

To us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

**Sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvelous things!**

Alleluia (p. 190)



A ♫The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.♫



The Nicene Creed (p. 191)

**Hymn of the Day 382 We Praise You, Jesus, at Your Birth
Sermon**

Offertory (p. 192)

Presentation of the Offering

Prayer of the Church

After each petition:

P Lord, in Your mercy,
C hear our prayer.

The prayer concludes:

P ...one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

Service of the Sacrament (p. 194)

(Please see the Communion statement in the pew pads for receiving the Sacrament at St. John's.)

Distribution Hymns

**367 Angels from the Realms of Glory
389 Let All Together Praise Our God
392 God Loves Me Dearly**

Nunc Dimittis (p. 199)

Hymn to Depart 387 Joy to the World

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org

Website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org

<https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo>**HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE****Rev. Timothy Nerud**

309-949-2516 (Office), 612-940-8138 (Cell), 309-949-2517 (Home)

Pastor

Elder: Aaron Raschke

Organist: Gail Tutt

Greeter: Janet Bertsos

Videographers: Joel Werling, Nicole Nerud, or Heidi Nerud

Today's Readings: Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 52:7-10

Epistle: Hebrews 1:1-6

Holy Gospel: John 1:1-14

WE PRAY: Excite us to song and praise this birth day of the Christ whose gift of the Holy Spirit brought us to faith, causes us to love, and sustains us by hope of His appearing, dear Heavenly Father, that You may know our gratitude for Your gift; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit are one God with dominion over us forever. Amen

WELCOME TO ALL!

We are anxious to share with you the Christ-centered ministry at St. John's. Our Liturgy follows closely the pattern of Word and Lord's Supper handed down from the ancient Church. It is our hope that you will make the Church's life of prayer your own. If you have difficulty following our order of service, please ask someone sitting near you for assistance. We pray that you will receive rich spiritual blessings from your presence here. May the peace and power of our risen Christ be yours always.

IF YOU DESIRE, a visit or call from Pastor Nerud, please contact the church office (309-949-2516).

OFFICE HOURS

Terri's hours (Monday—Friday)	8 am—12 pm
Pastor's hours (Monday, Pastor's day off) (Tuesday)	9 am—12 pm
(Thursday)	9 am—12 pm & 1 pm—4 pm
(Wednesday & Friday) please call ahead.	

STREAM SERVICES <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> and on the website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org.

ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY

Sunday school—13 Adult Bible Class—13 Worship—61

OFFERING

Offering last Sunday	\$8,064.50
Weekly 2022 Budget income needed	\$4,084.71
Advent Three	\$ 130.00

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT ST JOHN'S

Today	9:45 am	Hymn Sing in Sanctuary
	10:00 am	Divine Worship/Holy Communion

OFFICE CLOSED

Monday	6:00 pm	New Year's Eve Worship @ Concordia, Geneseo
Saturday		Hymn Sing in Sanctuary

Next Sunday	9:45 am	Hymn Sing in Sanctuary
	10:00 am	Divine Worship/Holy Communion
		New Year's Day

*I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."
Psalms 122:1*

JOHN 1:5 – “The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” Through all of our hardships, all of our sorrows, all of our pains and loneliness, Jesus' light shines in the darkness, and we are not overcome. In the face of our sin, in the midst of our pettiness, against all our pride, Jesus' light shines and illuminates our hearts and changes us, day by day, into a greater reflection of His likeness.

ATTENDANCE PADS are at the end of each pew. Each family (members and guests) should sign using only **ONE** box per household, naming all family members present in the one box. **EVERYONE** needs to indicate their intention to receive Holy Communion on a Communion Sunday. Return pad to the right end of your pew. Thanks for your help with this.

SPECIAL MUSIC for CHRISTMAS SEASON: Today and New Year's Day @ 9:45 in the sanctuary, we will have a Hymn Sing with your favorite carols and seasonal hymns. We are asking that you list out your requests (see insert) and drop them in the collection basket (on the table under office window) on your way out after service. This is a great way to joyfully proclaim the message of our Savior's birth and prepare for worship!

NO SS/ADULT & YOUTH BIBLE STUDY next Sunday.

PASTOR NERUD and his family will be on vacation December 26—January 2. If you are in need of pastoral care, please call Rev. Mueller, 309-944-3993 or (989-928-6603 his cell).

2023 CONTRIBUTION ENVELOPES are in your mailboxes. **Please do not use them until January first.**

CHRISTIAN LIVING—Matthew 1: 18-25: At first, Joseph had trouble believing that the Holy Spirit was directly involved with Mary’s pregnancy. He planned to divorce her quietly until an angel of the Lord came to assure him that Mary would bear a Son and he was to give this special Child the name “Jesus” because He will save His people from their sins. What a blessed privilege we have to share the Good News of Jesus for the salvation of many people. By just sharing the truth of His name, you are sharing God’s plan to save us from the slavery of sin, the wretchedness of the devil, the defeat of the grave and the challenges of the sinful flesh. It’s all in a name. It’s all in Jesus - the reason for the season.

THANK YOU to the children, parents, teachers, directors and all who helped with the Children’s program last night. The message of our Savior’s birth never gets old. May we all eagerly proclaim the Gospel story over and over.

We are collecting 2023 calendars for residents of Hillcrest Home.

PRAYER MINISTRY

The Church waits for the Second Coming in repentance, hope and faith. For the following, we pray “Lord, have mercy.”

MISSION—*Rejoice in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.* The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen His glory—glory as the only-begotten of God.

ST JOHN’S—Mrs. Barbara Miller—We offer before You our common request for the well-being of Your church throughout the world that it may be so guided and governed by Your good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace, and the righteousness of life. Specifically, we pray for Barb and ask Your blessings upon her.

ST. JOHN’S FAMILY—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy to Your servants:

Elizabeth Bjork	Betty Firch	Drew Schillinger
Paula Chapa	Arlyn Helke	Carolyn Wildermuth
Jim Dahl	Lynne Johnson	Marilyn Woods
Lois Esterlein	Jessica Johnson	Carter Eastburn

Anthony/Sami Sedotto (2022/2023 Adopted seminary student)

Andrew/Sarah Hill & family (2022/23 seminary student)

Don Eggers (son of friend of Marilyn Woods)

Jodi Martins (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)

Jon/Anita Clausing (missionaries in Kenya)

Marilyn Potts (wife of Cal Potts, former St. John Laborer for Christ)

Rev. Justin Kane (son of Sandra Kane)

Laurie Sanford (sister of Jan Dahl)

Susan Mayden (sister of Michele Barry)

Russ Klavon (brother of Carolyn Werner)

MILITARY—We pray for those serving in our military and their families:

Mandy/Richard Davila (daughter/son-in-law of Linda Aper)

Luke/Nicole Thompson (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)

Ken Willeford (husband of Alicia Willeford)

Karl Flynn (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)

Zachary/Tiffany Gardner (nephew/wife of Lois Esterlein)

Casey Powers Jr. (step son of Lisa Powers)

Brittany Loenser (daughter of Gabe Loenser)

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

“There is no more clear-pointed, rest-giving demonstration of the love of God for you than the gift of His Son.” *Paul Tripp, pastor, author, and conference speaker – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • lutheransforlife.org*

NOW OPEN, SWADDLING CLOTHES @ Concordia Lutheran Church, Geneseo. This is a mission of Concordia, created as a place for moms and moms-to-be find some help gathering all the items needed for a new bundle of joy. (We are also here to help dads, custodial grandparents, and foster parents). Our free shopping room is open every 2nd Thursday from 4-7 pm and every 4th Saturday from 9 am-noon. Tell anyone who maybe in need of this help. Concordia is at 316 S. Oakwood Ave, Geneseo. For more information call, 309-944-3993 or visit www.swaddlingclothes.org.

CAMP CILCA is already planning for next season’s summer camps. Early Bird registration is underway. Brochures are in the mailbox of families with children. Additional brochures can be found on the counter between the mailboxes. Scholarships are available from both St. John’s and Camp CILCA.

The Nativity of Our Lord—Christmas Day

December 25, 2022

Text: Isaiah 52:7-10 (Old Testament)

Other Texts: Hebrews 1:1-6 (Epistle); John 1:1-14 (Gospel Reading)

“The LORD Has Bared His Arm”

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary. Amen.

When we hear today’s Old Testament Reading from Isaiah 52, we should see it fulfilled in the Christmas account. Angels from heaven on high, like messengers upon the mountains, bring to the shepherds good news of happiness, peace, and salvation, declaring “Your God reigns!”ⁱ And while those might not have been the exact words used, surely that is exactly what the angel means when he says, “Behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”ⁱⁱ

But the good news doesn’t stop there, but only spreads. The shepherds, like faithful watchmen, begin to lift up their voices in joy, their feet becoming beautiful indeed as they transport the shepherds’ voices and the message their voices declare, proclaiming the good news to family and friends and to all who will listen. For they have seen eye to eye the return of the LORD to Zion, seeing the Christ Child wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.ⁱⁱⁱ And so with angels, shepherds, apostles, pastors, and faithful Christians of the past, the Church continues to proclaim the good news of Christmas, of happiness, peace, and salvation, declaring “Your God reigns!” for “The LORD has bared his holy arm.”^{iv}

To understand this rightly so that our true and godly Christmas joy may be increased, this morning let us, under the blessings of the most Holy Spirit of the Father and the Son, begin by considering what “arm” means in Scripture. Besides the obvious meaning, the arm is a symbol for a person’s strength; it is his ability to accomplish deeds and to labor. For consider, the arm is a part of the body, yet is a distinct part with which we do most of our work. Warriors use their arm to fight and laborers use their arm to lift, fix, and produce things. Thus the Psalmist writes of both the people and God, “nor did their own arm save them, but your right hand and your arm.”^v

The Jewish exiles certainly saw God’s strength in action when He brought them out of their captivity in Babylon back to Judah. When this occurred, they knew that “The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations.”^{vi} For before the eyes of the Babylonians, Persians, Edomites, Samaritans, and others God had shown His people His power when they returned to their home just as He had promised even centuries before the Exile began.

Yet with God, the use of “arm” also goes beyond symbolism. For in the mystery of the Trinity, the Arm is both one with, yet distinct within God. For the Arm is certainly of one substance with God, for He is, as St. John writes, “at the Father’s side,”^{vii} as an arm is to a man. Yet the Arm is also a distinct person from God the Father. For example, Isaiah declares, “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon?”^{viii} Yes, the Arm of God is the only-

begotten Son of God. And in the fullness of time,^{ix} the Arm of the Lord is “bared” in the most wondrous way, putting on our human nature, bared in the flesh of the little Christ Child.

The Arm is bared, the strength and power of the Lord revealed before the eyes of the nations. At the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem King Solomon asked, “Will God indeed dwell with man on the earth?”^x But then on Christmas the answer is given, as that which the temple foreshadowed has come to pass. God will indeed dwell with man on the earth! For the Arm of the Lord has returned to Zion when “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”^{xi}

And the Arm of the Lord has been bared, for He has returned to work salvation for His people, rescuing us from the evils that afflict us. This began when God brought the Jews back to Jerusalem, reestablishing His gracious and merciful presence among them in the rebuilt temple. Thus this was not just a release from earthly, bodily hardships, but especially from God’s hostility and wrath, for with the restoration of the temple came the restoration of the sacrifices for sin. Sacrifices that foreshadowed the Arm of the Lord’s great deliverance, the sacrifice of the Savior which delivers mankind from slavery to sin and Satan, from death now and forever, for He redeems us from God’s wrath upon sin, our sin.

But salvation is not just negative, that is, it is not just a removal of the bad, of the consequences of sin. Salvation is that, but it is far more. It is the possession of health and wholeness, the enjoyment of all that is truly good. With His salvation, the Arm of the Lord has brought us close to Himself, uniting us with Him in Holy Baptism, feeding us His body and blood in Holy Communion. And so we may now begin to enjoy every truly good gift of body and soul from our God and Father.

“Your God reigns!” we are reminded and so are comforted. The Lord’s Arm has been bared, for in Christ Jesus God restores His kingdom or, more accurately, *restores us* to His kingdom from which we were banished due to our sins. By His Arm, the Lord God destroys the kingdom of Satan, binds the strong man, chains the dragon, and brings us out the kingdom of darkness into His kingdom of light.^{xii} The sign on the cross declared Jesus the “King of the Jews,” a mocking statement which actually proclaims the saving truth. For this prophecy of Isaiah, that “Your God reigns... the LORD has bared his holy arm” is followed by another one.

Isaiah asks, “To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”^{xiii} And the Arm of the Lord is revealed as the One who grew up as a young plant, who was despised and rejected by men, the One whom we esteemed stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. The Arm of the Lord is the One who saved us, overcoming Satan’s hold on us, when he was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities since upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. Yes, the Arm of the Lord is the Suffering Servant, the God who was coronated with a crown of thorns on a cross for a throne. Not because He couldn’t do otherwise, but because He *wouldn’t* do otherwise, for it was His sole intention to save a people for Himself. For the Lord’s Arm, crucified, risen, and ascended, sends the Holy Spirit and so establishes His kingdom in your heart through faith, and among all believers, the Church.

And that last bit reminds us that the Arm of the Lord is not now at rest, but is still working mightily. Doing such through His watchmen, His pastors who proclaim His Word and administer

His Sacraments, and also His faithful people who, like those Bethlehem shepherds, testify of the good news of salvation to others. And so through His Word, the Lord's Arm, Christ Jesus, continues to destroy the kingdom of Satan, bringing more to saving faith in Him and so they are brought into the kingdom of the God who reigns in Christ Jesus.

"The LORD has bared his holy arm" for He has revealed His Son, Jesus, as it was told to Mary by the angel Gabriel, "the child to be borne will be called holy—the Son of God."^{xiv} So dear Christians, take heart! For God's Arm is not the sheer, unpredictable power of divinity which would condemn and destroy us for our sins, but is His Incarnate Son, your brother in the flesh, Your Savior for all eternity. For have no doubt, the blessings that already now pour upon you in Christ, whether of body or soul, are but a taste, an appetizer, of the blessings of heaven that He will give to you in His kingdom of glory, when you will see His reign with your own resurrected eyes even as you reign in majesty with Him as kings and priests forever.^{xv}

Therefore my fellow believers, hearing this good news of joy, peace, and salvation, let us greatly rejoice! But not merely by means of leisure, pleasures, and diversions, which are but temporary gifts. No. Let us rejoice in the Gift who is also the Giver, Christ our Lord, the Son of our Heavenly Father, for He is the true source of our happiness.

Therefore, may our dear Savior Jesus grant us His Spirit that we would rejoice in Him by living in His peace which fills us, in love for Him which overflows as a bubbling fountain to become love for others, in great joy by sharing the good news of *Christmas* with others, and in the hope of eternal life when all His people will finally experience the fullness of the salvation He, the Lord's mighty and holy Arm, has won for us. Amen!

ⁱ Isaiah 52:7. Luke 2:9-14.

ⁱⁱ Luke 2:10-11. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

ⁱⁱⁱ Isaiah 52:7-8; Luke 2:15-20.

^{iv} Isaiah 52:10.

^v Psalm 44:3.

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} John 1:18.

^{viii} Isaiah 51:9.

^{ix} Galatians 4:4.

^x 2 Chronicles 6:18.

^{xi} John 1:14.

^{xii} Matthew 12:29; Revelation 20:1-3; Colossians 1:12-13; 1 Peter 2:9.

^{xiii} Isaiah 53:1. See Isaiah 52:12-53:12 for the full prophecy of the Arm of the Lord who is the Suffering Servant and to recall His saving work.

^{xiv} Luke 1:35.

^{xv} 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:5b; 22:5.

Christmas Day
25 December 2022

Collect of the Day

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Presentation of the Offering

Keep us Yours forever, O Christchild sweet and dear; Uphold us with Your mercy and remain forever near./ From You we gladly all receive, And what is ours to You we give,/ Our hearts, our souls, and all we own. Let these be Yours alone. Amen.

Prayer of the Church—Responsive Form

Heavenly Father, we give You thanks that Your Son, the eternal Word, has become flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Extend His praise into all the world, that with us many would come to hope in His steadfast love. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Send forth men to publish Your peace and bring us Your good news of happiness. Keep them faithful to declare Your gracious reign in Christ. Bless the work of missionaries at home and abroad, that all the ends of the earth may see Your salvation. Grant us all to faithfully speak the truth of Your nativity wherever You call us to. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As our families gather in this holy season, give us patience, that we may be slow to judge and quick to forgive. Comfort the sorrowful and lonely with Your presence, and help us extend the welcome of our homes and the friendship of Your grace. Make us mindful of those less fortunate, who celebrate this blessed feast in poverty and want, and teach us to be generous. Accept with our offerings the living sacrifice of our bodies to Your service and our voices in praise and thanksgiving. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your Son upholds the universe by the word of His power. Grant our nation to walk humbly before You. Bless our soldiers who stand watch this day. Keep them in safety as they serve us, and uphold their families while they are apart. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, guard and keep all who are sick, lonely, overwhelmed by grief or poor in spirit, especially Elizabeth, Bruce, Debbie, Jim, Carter, Don, Lois, Betty, Arlyn, Jessica, Lynne, Justin, Russ, Jodi, Susan, Marilyn, Laurie, Drew, Carolyn, and Marilyn, that they may be comforted and healed according to Your good and gracious will. Let them look to Jesus Christ and be reminded that He is the light no darkness can overcome. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious Father, remember Barb Miller. Bless her in body and soul with all things needful for this life and eternity. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant that we may come worthily to receive the body and blood of Jesus with faith in His bodily presence for us, that we may depart with grace upon grace from His fullness. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We thank You, Lord God, for all Your people who have gone before us and now rest in Your presence. Keep us faithful with them until that day when You make all things new; for You live and reign with Christ and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**