



# TREE OF LIFE

Christian Fellowship

“for Healing, Obedience, & Peace on Earth” (H.O.P.E.)



Christmas Eve | 24 Dec 2025

**“The Creator Is With Us”**

**Matthew 1:1—2:23**

# ✠ The Way of Jesus Liturgy ✠

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## Invocation

Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth, ♦ **you created us to serve and protect your creation.** ♦ But we selfishly destroyed the balance of your creation ♦ **by choosing our own “good” and making Civilization.** ♦ So you sent your Son Jesus to embody the Way of the Lamb, ♦ **so we will die with him to Civilization’s Way of arrogance, fear, and violence.** ♦ And also be reborn with him through your Holy Spirit ♦ **to care for all of your creation by following Jesus’s Way of faith, hope, and love.**

## Processional Song — *LSB 379 “O Come, All Ye Faithful”*

- ♫ *O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant! O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem! Come and behold him, born the King of angels; O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord! ♫*
- ♫ *God of God, Light of Light eternal, Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb; Son of the Father, begotten, not created, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord! ♫*
- ♫ *Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above: "Glory to God, all glory in the highest!" O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord! ♫*
- ♫ *Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord! ♫*

## Christmas Litany

We are not alone, ♦ **for our Creator is living among us!**  
Let all creation rejoice, ♦ **for our Creator is living among us!**  
Let every knee bow, ♦ **for our Creator is living among us!**  
Through a baby born in poverty, ♦ **our Creator has come to live among us.**  
He has come to rescue us ♦ **and save us from ourselves.**  
He has come to open our eyes ♦ **and show us how to be truly human.**

## Prayer of the Day

Jesus says, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there with them.”  
(the Christ candle is lit to remind us that Jesus is coming among us)

♫ *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; O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel! ♫ (tune: LSB 361)*

The Lord Jesus be with you. ♦ **And also with you.** ♦ Let us pray. Heavenly Father, help us to see that in Jesus Christ you have come to eternally dwell among us. In the name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord. † **Amen.**

## † Baptism — The Way of Faith †

## Surrendering to the Creator

Jesus says, “If you hold onto your life, ♦ **you will destroy it.** ♦ But if you let go of

your life, ♦ **you will save it.** ♦ You must be born again through water and the Spirit ♦ **to enter the Creator’s Kingdom.”** ♦ Father, Son, & Holy Spirit ♦ **I surrender to you all of my † mind, all of my † heart, and all of my † body and † soul.**

(we make the sign of the cross—touching forehead, heart, and shoulders)

Father, into your hands ♦ **I commit my spirit.** ♦ Father, not my will, ♦ **but your will be done.** ♪ *Take my life and all my heart, take my whole soul ev’ry part. Take my mouth and let it be, filled with your truth and mercy. ♪ Take my hands and let them love, with compassion from above. Take my feet and let them go, on the Way that Jesus showed. ♪ Take my money and fam’ly, give me faith and set me free. Take my life and teach me how to love all creation now. ♪ (LSB 783)*

### Listening to the Creator

Jesus says, “Come to me, all of you who are tired and burdened. Learn from me and practice my teachings and you will find rest for your souls. Those who listen will live.”

♪ *Listen to what Jesus teaches, listen to him every day. Listen as you walk and follow, listen also as you pray. Listen to him every moment, listen with an open mind. Listen to find peace and patience, listen so you will be kind. ♪ (LSB 770)*

### Remembering the Saints & Martyrs — Mary the Mother of Jesus

Father, we give you thanks for the great cloud of saints and witnesses who have gone before us and have embodied the Way of Jesus. Today we remember Mary who faithfully accepted all the shame and rejection of her pregnancy out of wedlock in order to give birth to and raise Jesus our Lord. Help us learn from her faith and example, † **Amen.**

### Chanted Psalm — *Psalm 5*



♪ *Give attention to my prayers | O my Lord.  
\* For in the morning you | hear my voice.  
Because of your love, O Lord, I will live in | your presence.  
\* Lead me, O Lord, in your | way of life.  
Let all who take refuge in you | sing for joy,  
\* and spread your protection | over them.  
You, O Lord, bless the righteous | and faithful  
\* you cover and protect them with | your favor. ♪*

### Law & Prophets — Isaiah 1:21-31

The Prophets reading comes from Isaiah 1. ♦ **Blessed are the ears that listen.**  
We do not live on bread alone, ♦ **but on every word from the Lord.**

### Epistle — 1 Corinthians 4:1-21

The Epistle reading comes from 1 Corinthians 4. ♦ **Blessed are the ears that listen.**  
We do not live on bread alone, ♦ **but on every word from the Lord.**

### † Holy Gospel † Matthew 1:18-25

We stand for the word of Jesus. ♪ *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 us on the earth, born to give us second birth. Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"* ♪ (tune: LSB 380)

The holy Gospel comes from Matthew 1. ♦ **Blessed are those who listen to Jesus.**  
If you have ears to hear, then listen! ♦ **Lord Jesus, help us to practice your Word.**

## Children's Story

### Message

## † Repentance — The Way of Hope †

### Confronting Our Past

Jesus says, "I know everything you do. Pay attention and remove the log from your own eye. I have called you out of Civilization. Repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!"

(silence for reflection)

For For not loving you with our whole hearts and instead placing our self, family, and nation above you, ♦ **Father, forgive us.** ♦ For not loving our neighbors and enemies as ourselves, ♦ **Father, forgive us.** ♦ Father, turn us back to walking in your Spirit. ♪ **Lord Father we have wandered and hidden from your face. Rescue your whole creation with your almighty grace. From trust in wealth and weapons and blindness to your Way, save us and all creation with your own hands, we pray.** ♪ (LSB 449)

Jesus says, "I discipline those I love. If you love your self, family, or nation more than me, you cannot be my disciple. Come out of Civilization, my people, so you will not share in its sicknesses. Not one stone will be left standing, it will all be torn down." Will you turn away from Civilization's Way of arrogance, fear, and violence and reaffirm your Baptism into Jesus's Way of faith, hope, and love? ♦ **Yes, I renounce Civilization's Way and pledge to follow Jesus.** ♦ Jesus says, "Put your sword away. If you live by the sword, you will die by the sword. But if you forgive others, your heavenly Father will forgive you." Will you release all debts and grudges that you hold against anyone—including every member of this church? ♦ **Yes, I forgive all those who have hurt me, frustrated me, or owe me anything.** ♦ Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven. Get up and walk. Go and sin no more." † **Amen.**

### Song of the Day — *LSB 370 "What Child Is This?"*

- ♪ *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 praise, the babe the son of Mary.* ♪
- ♪ *Why lies he in a humble state, where animals are feeding? Good Christians fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. Nails, spear will pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you. Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe the son of Mary.* ♪
- ♪ *So bring him ev'rything you own, come to love and follow him. The King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him. Raise, raise a song on high, for through the Lord we learn to die. Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe the son of*

Mary. ♪

### Waiting on the Creator

♪ *Our Father, bring your Rule and will to earth. Give what we need for worry-free rebirth. Bring peace among us and forgive us too, as we forgive and love in all we do.*

♪ *Protect us from all things that will mislead. Keep us from selfishness, violence, and greed. We place our lives into your hands this day. Teach us to listen and to walk your Way. Amen.* ♪ (LSB 637)

(incense is lit to symbolize our prayers ascending to God and as its smell fills this space we are reminded of his presence among us)

Jesus says, “Learn from the birds. They do not store up for tomorrow and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Do not fear or worry about tomorrow. Seek only your Father’s Kingdom and he will give you everything you need.”

*In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♪ Lord have mercy.* ♪ Father, provide for us, protect us, and be with us always. Father, give us exactly what we need this day and teach us to be content with that. Help us to trust that you are working all things for our good. *In peace, let us pray to the Lord, ♪ Lord have mercy.* ♪ **Our Father in Heaven, may your name be holy, may your Kingdom come, and may your will be done—on Earth as in Heaven. Give us this day what we need for today. Forgive us in the same way that we forgive others. Do not abandon us when we are tempted, but pull us away from what is evil. For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours—now and forever. † Amen.**

### † Communion — The Way of Love †

#### Sharing the Lord’s Peace

Jesus says, “Make peace with each other ♦ **before you come to the Lord’s altar.** By this all people will know that you are my disciples: ♦ **if you love each other.**”

#### Offering & Musical Offering

Jesus says, “Do not store up things on earth. To be my disciple you must give up everything you own. Sell your possessions and give to the poor.” We offer all we have to the Lord, while also offering gifts to support this communion.

#### Pledge of Allegiance

♪ *We come before you, Lord, to bow. We lay our lives at your feet now. All things are yours, we own nothing! Our lives are in your hands this day. Give what we need, O Lord, we pray. Please protect us, provide for us! Watch over us, ever with us, always love us!* ♪ (LSB 816) Jesus says, “If you pledge your allegiance to me before others, then I will pledge my allegiance to you before my heavenly Father.”

♦ **I pledge allegiance to one God, the all-powerful Father, who is the Creator of Heaven and Earth, of all things visible and invisible.**

♦ **I pledge allegiance to one Lord, Jesus Christ, who is God’s only Son. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He loved and he suffered. Under Pontius Pilate, he was crucified, died, and was buried. On the third day he was raised from the dead. He ascended to heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. He is**

coming to judge the living and the dead. His Kingdom will not end.

◆ I pledge allegiance to the Holy Spirit, who is the giver of life, the holy universal Church, the communion of saints, the baptism for forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life in the age to come. † Amen.

### Thanksgiving — Εὐχαριστία

Let us give thanks to our Creator! ◆ **It is right to give him thanks and praise!**

Father, we praise and thank you, ◆ **for you provide, protect, love, and renew us and all creation!** ◆ We are grateful for all that you give, especially for... Father, we thank you for marrying yourself to us and uniting Heaven and Earth, Spirit and Flesh, and Christ and the Church through your Son Jesus! ♪ **Let all creation be humble and rejoice in awe and fear. We give thanks to our Lord Jesus who brings heaven to us here. He is giving himself to us and his presence has come near.** ♪ (tune: LSB 621)

### † Words of Our Lord Jesus †

On the night before our Lord Jesus was crucified, he revealed his Way of rescuing all creation from the Way of Civilization. Before supper, Jesus humbly washed the feet of his students and enemies. Jesus said, ◆ **“Follow my example. Love each other, even your enemies, in the same way I have loved you.”** ◆ During supper, Jesus then took the bread and broke it. He gave it to them, saying, “This is my body which is being given for you. Do the same for each other in my memory.” After supper, Jesus then took the cup and gave thanks. He said, “This is my blood of the covenant which is being shed for you, for the forgiveness of your sin. Do the same for each other in my memory.” ♪ **Oh come Lord Jesus come and dine and give yourself through bread and wine. Feed us so we may have new birth, and bring your rule ov’r all the earth. Come now, come now! Our Lord Jesus and bring your healing love to us!** ♪ (LSB 357)

### Sharing the Bread & Wine

Jesus says, “I am the bread of life. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood is united with me and will be raised from the dead.” As we feed on the Bread of Heaven ◆ **we are made members of Christ’s Body.** ◆ We no longer live for ourselves ◆ **but Christ lives within us.** ◆ We invite all Baptized members of the holy universal Church, who give their undivided allegiance to Jesus and are at peace with their brothers and sisters in Christ, to join us ◆ **as the Creator’s Lamb mysteriously gives himself to us in, with, and under this bread, wine, and communion.** ♪ **Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing; Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King. Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.** ♪ (tune: LSB 368)

### Sent to “Do the Same in My Memory”

Christ Jesus, you are the Lamb, who has laid down your body and blood for us, ◆ **help us to be lambs who do the same for each other in your memory.** † Amen.

Jesus says, “Go and live this truth: ◆ **The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!** ◆ Heal the sick, raise the dead, ◆ **cleanse the unclean, and cast out evil spirits.** ◆ Freely you have received from the Creator, ◆ **now freely you must give.** ◆ I am sending you like lambs among wolves, ◆ **but do not fear, take up your cross and follow me.”**

♪ **Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; let ev’ry heart**

*prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing. ♪ He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, and wonders of his love. ♪ (tune: LSB 387)*

### Candle Lighting

We light our candles, signifying that Christ Jesus, the Light of all creation has come among us and now shines his light through us and our lives of peace and love.

### Song — *LSB 366 “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”*

- ♪ *It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold: "Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all-gracious King." The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing. ♪*
- ♪ *All you, beneath your heavy load, by care and guilt bent low, who toil along a dreary way with painful steps and slow: Look up, for golden is the hour, come swiftly on the wing, the Prince was born to bring you peace; of Him the angels sing. ♪*
- ♪ *For lo, the days have come to pass by prophets seen of old, when down into the circling years came Christ as was foretold. His word of peace will to the earth God's ancient promise bring, and all who take this gift will hear the song the angels sing. ♪*

### Blessing

Jesus says, “Blessed are you in your poverty and suffering, for you are in the Creator’s Kingdom. Blessed are you in your humility, for you will inherit the earth. Blessed are you when you are merciful and peaceful, for you will find mercy and peace.” † **Amen.**

### Choir — “Peace, Peace”

While the choir sings “Peace, Peace” for the third time, the congregation will sing the first verse of “Silent Night.”

### Recessional Song — *LSB 363 “Silent Night, Holy Night”*

- ♪ *Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright. The virgin gives birth to a child, holy infant so tender and mild. He brings heavenly peace! He brings heavenly peace! ♪*
- ♪ *Silent night! Holy night! This child gives us true sight. He opens our blind eyes to see, he’s the one to set us free. Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born! ♪*
- ♪ *Silent night! Holy night! Jesus is love’s pure light. Truth is seen in his holy face, he’s the dawn of redeeming grace. Jesus, Lord of the earth! Jesus, Lord of the earth! ♪*
- ♪ *Silent night! Holy night! Christ the Lord crucified, Mary mourns the death of her Son. One last breath and his life is undone. Rest and wait in your tomb! Rest and wait in your tomb! ♪*
- ♪ *Silent night! Holy night! All things have been made right! Death’s great stone has been rolled away, vict’ry has been won o’er the grave! Jesus, raised from the dead! Jesus, raised from the dead! ♪*

- \* **Faith & Film:** “Signs” (Jan 5, 12) | “The Woodsman” (Jan 19, 26) | “The Chosen” Season 5 (Feb 9, 16, 23, Mar 2, 9, 16, 23, 30)
- \* **Growing in H.O.P.E.:** Wednesdays @ DG (5:30 pm food/fellowship, 6:00 pm study)
- Questions & Conversations:**
- Jan 7 (potluck) — “Spiritual Disciplines”
  - Jan 14 — “The Bible & Inspiration”
  - Jan 21 — “Biblical Interpretation”
  - Jan 28 — “Violence in the Old Testament”
- \* **Game Night:** First Fridays @ DG (6 pm, BYOB), Jan 2, Jan 30, Mar 6

**Weekly Calendar | December 21 - 28, 2025**

<b>Sun, Dec 21</b>	9:30 am	Liturgy & Αγάπη Feast   Isaiah 24:1—25:12
<b>Mon, Dec 22</b>		
<b>Wed, Dec 24</b>	6:00 pm	Christmas Eve   Matthew 1:1—2:23
<b>Sat, Dec 27</b>	7-9 am	Breakfast & Devotion
<b>Sun, Dec 28</b>	9:30 am	Liturgy & Αγάπη Feast   Matthew 3:1—4:25

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