



**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas      December 31, 2023**

**New Hope Lutheran Church    3125 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. S., Great Falls, MT  
(406) 315-1203                      [www.newhopegf.org](http://www.newhopegf.org)**

## **GATHERING**

Gathering Music:

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude:

L: May the hope and joy of God-with-us be with you and yours.

**C: And also with you.**

Gathering Hymn: Joy to the World!

ELW #267

1. 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.
2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.
4. 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, wonders, of his love.

L: The people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**C: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

L: Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

**C: We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.**

L: To us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

**C: In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all the people.**

L: The Lord be with you.    **C: And also with you.**

L: We pray together... **C: Almighty God, you have filled us with the new light of the Word who became flesh and lived among us. Let the light of our faith shine in all we do; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

### READINGS and CAROLS

Isaiah 9:2-7 - God Promises a King

Song: Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming (vs. 1 & 2 only)

ELW #272

1. Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung,  
it came, a flow'r so bright, amid the cold of winter,  
when half-spent was the night.
2. Isaiah had foretold it, the rose I have in mind;  
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior,  
when half-spent was the night.

Micah 5:2-5a – The King Will Come From Bethlehem

Song: O Little Town of Bethlehem

ELW #279

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary, and, gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth.
3. How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.  
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
4. 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;  
Oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

Luke 1:26-35, 38 – The Annunciation to Mary

Song: My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness

ELW #251

1. My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord; I sing my Savior's praise!  
You looked upon my lowliness, and I am full of grace.  
Now ev'ry land and ev'ry age this blessing shall proclaim –  
Great wonders you have done for me, and holy is your name.
2. To all who live in holy fear your mercy ever flows.  
With mighty arm you dash the proud, their scheming hearts expose.  
The ruthless you have cast aside, the lowly throned instead;  
The hungry filled with all good thigs, the rich sent off unfed.
3. To Israel, your servant blest, your help is ever sure;  
The promise to our parents made their children will secure.  
Sing glory to the Holy One, give honor to the Word,  
And praise the Pow'r of the Most High, one God, by all adored.

Luke 2:1-7: - The Birth of Jesus

Song: Away in a Manger

ELW #278

1. Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;  
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
2. The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.
3. Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay  
close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in your tender care  
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

Luke 2:8-14 - The Angels Appear to the Shepherds

Song: While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

ACS #913

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down, and glory shone around.
2. "Fear not," said he, for mighty dread had seized their troubled mind:  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring to you and human kind.

3. "To you, in David's town this day, is born of David's line  
The Savior, who is Christ the Lord, and this shall be the sign:
4. "The heav'nly babe you there shall find to human view displayed,  
All humbly wrapped in swathing bands, and in a manger laid."
5. Thus spoke the seraph, and forthwith appeared a shining throng  
Of angels praising God, who thus addressed their joyful song:
6. "All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace;  
Good will to all from highest heav'n begin and never cease!"

Luke 2:15-20 – The Shepherds Return Rejoicing

Song: Go Tell It on the Mountain

ELW #290

REFRAIN: Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;  
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

1. While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. (refrain)
2. The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. (refrain)
3. Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;  
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. (refrain)

Luke 2:21-24 – Jesus Receives His Name

Song: That Boy-Child of Mary

ELW # 293

REFRAIN: That boy-child of Mary was born in a stable,  
a manger his cradle in Bethlehem.

1. What shall we call him, child of the manger?  
What name is given in Bethlehem? (refrain)
2. His name is Jesus, God ever with us,  
God given for us in Bethlehem. (refrain)
3. How can he save us, how can he help us,  
born here among us in Bethlehem? (refrain)
4. Gift of the Father, to human mother,  
makes him our brother in Bethlehem. (refrain)
5. One with the Father, he is our Savior,  
heaven-sent helper in Bethlehem. (refrain)
6. Gladly we praise him, love and adore him,  
give ourselves to him in Bethlehem. (refrain)

Luke 2:25-40 – Jesus is Presented in the Temple

Song: What Child is This?

ELW #296

1. 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!
2. Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!
3. So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.  
The King of kings salvations brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.  
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

John 1:1-14 – The Mystery of the Incarnation

Song: Love Has Come

ELW #292

1. Love has come – a light in the darkness!  
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.  
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises:  
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on high.
2. Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.  
Love is God now asleep in the hay.  
See the glow in the eyes of his mother; what is the name her heart is saying?  
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers; Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.
3. Love has come and never will leave us!  
Love is life everlasting and free.  
Love is Jesus within and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.  
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.  
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Responsive Prayer of the People

L: Glory to you, O God; glory in the highest,

**C: and peace to all people on earth.**

L: Blessed are you, Prince of peace. You rule the earth with truth and justice.

**C: Send your gift of peace to all nations of the world.**

L: Blessed are you, Son of Mary. You share our humanity.

**C: Have mercy on the sick, the dying, and all who suffer this day.**

L: Blessed are you, Son of God. You dwell among us as the Word made flesh.

**C: Reveal yourself to us in word and sacrament that we may bear your light to all the world. Amen.**

Sharing the Peace of Christ

L: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. **C: And also with you.**

**The Offering:** (At this time we bring our gifts and offerings to God in gratitude and joy. In response to God's love, we care for others in the name of Jesus. We appreciate your gifts of time, money, energy, and prayers to this work! If you are our guest today – either in person or online – we invite you to join us in caring for God's people and God's world!)

Offertory:

Offering Response: In the Bleak Midwinter (v.3 only)

ELW #294

3. 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'll give him – give my heart.

**Offertory Prayer: C: Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be a blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer C: 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, forever and forever. Amen.**

## SENDING

L: Almighty God: Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever. **C: Amen.**

Song: The First Noel

ELW #300

1. 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!

2. They look-ed 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)

3. And by the light of that same star three wise men came from country far;  
To seek for a king was their intent,  
And to follow the star wherever it went. (refrain)

4. This star drew near to the north-west, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;  
And there it did both stop and stay  
Right over the place where Jesus lay. (refrain)

5. Then entered in those wisemen three, full rev'rently upon their knee,  
And offered there in his presence  
Their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. (refrain)

L: Go in peace. Christ is with you. **C: Thanks be to God!**

**THANK YOU** to today's worship team:

Accompanist: James Rickley, organ    Cantor: Gaynell Tempel    A/V: Neil White, Allan Tooley  
Leaders/Readers: Ron Coons, Alex Tooley, Barbara Ovitt

**THANK YOU!** A heartfelt word of thanks to everyone who had a hand in making our Christmas celebration wonderful: office volunteers, banner & altar care committees, musicians, worship assistants, cleaners & fixers, greeters & ushers, decorators & organizers – (you know who you are!) **THANK YOU !!!**

**If you are able, please stay a few minutes after today's service to help us un-decorate the sanctuary. Thanks!**

**Keeping in Prayer...** James & Clare, Eloise Moorhead, Lilith, Chris Bender, Dawn, Doris, Brian, Kathy's friend, Ron, Beth, Doris, Jim, Arnie Depping, Larry & Peggy Johnson, Rachel, Don & Donna, Ann, Jennifer, Diana, Rose Ulery, Amy, Ted, Carl & Harley, Marilyn, Angie, Dorothy Sowa, Sandy Kirkegaard, Noah, Elaine Rice, Dorothy Roseth, Jerry, Toni Sperle, Steven, Megan, Scott, Haley, Judi Jonas, Esther Bender, Reta, Sharron.

**Annual Committee Reports:** If you have not already done so, please email your annual committee reports to Pastor Tammy or drop them off at the church office by **WEDNESDAY JANUARY 3<sup>rd</sup>. THANK YOU.**

**Reminder:** The annual meeting of the congregation will be on Sunday, January 28, 2024 following the worship service. In order to be a voting member at the meeting, you must be on record as having communed and contributed financial support for the ministry here at New Hope. The annual meeting will be followed by a potluck meal in the Social Hall.

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