

NEW LIFE



THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY
CHRISTMAS EVE
DECEMBER 24, 2024

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Thank you for joining us for worship today. We welcome you into our fellowship as together we gather in the presence of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

If you are a visitor, please take a moment to scan the QR code below and fill out the form.

We want to acknowledge your presence today with a note of thanks. Please let us know if there is a way we may be of help or encouragement to you today.

If you have any prayer requests or concerns, questions about your faith or the Christian life, if you have updates to your contact information, or if there is anything you need to communicate, please note those remarks on the form.



On the front: On the front: The story of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, 1873.

WORSHIP MEDITATIONS

The Coming

And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look he said.
The son looked. Far off,
As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crusted buildings
Cast their shadows: a bright
Serpent, A river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
With slime.
On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. many People
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
Boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.

-RS Thomas

ADVENT + CHRISTMAS + EPIPHANY + LENT + EASTER + PENTECOST

Christmastide is the twelve-day celebration of the birth of our Lord. This season begins with Christmas Eve and lasts through Epiphany on January 6. From Epiphany until pre-Lent we are still in the “time of Christmas.” So, we see that Christmas is not just one day, but an entire season to celebrate the birth of our Lord. Just as we spend Advent preparing, longing, and praying for Christ to come, now is the season to celebrate his birth, not because we are pretending that everything in our lives is OK, but because the one who will set all things to rights is here. Rejoice! Emmanuel has come to thee! The colors for Christmas are white and gold.

PROCESSIONAL

Please stand for the processional.

You will light your candles as the procession passes by.

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL



1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O come ye, O



come ye to Beth - le - hem! Come and be - hold him born the King of



an - gels; O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him O,



come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

2. God of God,
Light of Light;
lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
very God,
begotten, not created; [*Refrain*]

3. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
glory to God
in the highest; [*Refrain*]

4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning:
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n;
Word of the Father,
late in flesh appearing; [*Refrain*]

Words and Music: John Francis Wade from Cantus Diversi, 1751

THE WORSHIP OF ALMIGHTY GOD

GREETING

Blessed be God: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And blessed be his kingdom now and forever. Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Alleluia! Unto us a child is born. O come, let us adore him!

Let us pray.

COLLECT

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.**

CALL TO CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP

For 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.

Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things!

His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

The Lord has made known his salvation;

he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;

break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

For 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.

-- Psalm 98:1-4; antiphon: Isaiah 9:6

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

1. Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn 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 host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

**Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King."**

2. Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come,
offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
hail th'incarnate Deity,
pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel. [*Refrain*]

3. Hail, the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun 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 the sons of earth,
born to give them second birth. [*Refrain*]

*Words: Charles Wesley, 18th c.
Music: Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, 19th c.*

CONFESSING OUR SINS

Please extinguish your candles.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

-Hebrews 4:15-16

Let us then confess our sins unto God, our Maker:

God of grace and truth, in Jesus Christ you came among us as light shining in darkness. We confess that we have not welcomed the light, or trusted good news to be good. We have closed our eyes to glory in our midst, expecting little, and hoping for less. Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope, so that we may receive the fullness of your grace, and live in the truth of Christ the Lord.

Continue to confess your sins silently before the Lord.

RECEIVING ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

-John 3:16

Glory to God in the highest!

And peace to His people on earth.

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

1. Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echo back their joyous strains.

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

gloria in excelsis Deo.

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be,
which inspire your heav'nly song? (*Refrain*)

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
(*Refrain*)

Words and Music: from a traditional French carol.

PRAYER OF ADORATION

Almighty and Everlasting God, who consecrated this day through the incarnation of your Word and through the childbearing of the blessed virgin Mary, give your people joy in this celebration, that those who have been redeemed by your grace might also be adopted as your children. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

A brief time of welcome and greeting. You are welcome to "pass the peace of Christ" to one another.

THE LORD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS WORD

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: ISAIAH 7:10-14

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” ¹³ And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is

it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

THE PSALM: PSALM 110:1-4

Antiphon: The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter.

¹ The Lord says to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand,
until I make your enemies your footstool.”

² **The Lord sends forth from Zion
your mighty scepter.**

Rule in the midst of your enemies!

³ Your people will offer themselves freely
on the day of your power,
in holy garments;
from the womb of the morning,
the dew of your youth will be yours.

⁴ The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind,
“You are a priest forever
after the order of Melchizedek.”

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.

Antiphon: The Lord sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter.

GOSPEL LESSON: LUKE 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of

David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with
whom he is pleased!"

15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord

People: Glory to you, O Lord!

ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY

1. Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

2. He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall:
with the poor, and mean, and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.

3. And through all his wondrous
childhood
he would honor and obey,
love and watch the lowly maiden
in whose gentle arms he lay:
Christian children all must be
mild, obedient, good as he.

4. And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above,
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

5. Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him, but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
when like stars his children crowned
all in white shall wait around.

Words: Cecil F. Alexander (1848)

Music: Henry J. Gauntlett (1849)

HOMILY

Title: **Sermon on the Nativity**

Preacher: St. John Chrysostom

This homily was originally preached in 386 AD in Antioch by a young preacher named John. He would later be dubbed Chrysostom, Greek for “Goldenmouth” for his sermonic eloquence. After becoming the Patriarch of Constantinople, Chrysostom was an early advocate in the East for adopting December 25th as the proper day to celebrate Christmas.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets.

And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE OFFERING

New Life is supported by the generous gifts of our church members and friends. If you are visiting, you are not expected to give, but if the Lord has blessed you today and you would like to support our ministry, it would be most appreciated. If you don't have cash or check, you can also give on-line at www.newlifeithaca.org/giving/

Tonight's offering will be donated to Loaves and Fishes.

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

-- 2 Cor. 9:6-7

The candles will be relit during the offering.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

EUCHARIST
THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to the Lord!

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

It is proper and right to do so.

Truly it is proper, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. For in the mystery of the Word made flesh You have given us a new revelation of Your glory that, seeing You in the person of Your Son, we may be drawn to the love of those things which are not seen. Therefore, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, and with the Church on earth, we praise and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts!

Heaven and earth are filled with your glory!

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND PRAYER

THE ACCLAMATION

For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of Faith:

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

The pastor prays a further prayer for the Holy Spirit to bless our communion meal.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts,

As we forgive our debtors.

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.

THE INVITATION

New Life Presbyterian Church welcomes all baptized Christians who trust in Jesus Christ to receive Holy Communion with us.

-If this does not describe you, you are invited to come forward, crossing your arms in front of your chest when you reach the front, to receive a blessing from the pastor.

DISTRIBUTION

The congregation will come forward row-by-row, forming two lines in the center aisle. Cup your hands together to receive the bread, eat the bread, then proceed outwardly to the wine tray. There is juice in the very center and wine on the outside. Then use the outside aisle to return to your seat and wait until we drink together. There is gluten free available upon request. Those wishing to partake of the common cup may form a line in the center aisle after the celebrants partake.

Prayers for Those Not Communing

New Life Presbyterian Church welcomes all baptized Christians who trust in Jesus to receive Holy Communion with us. If you are not able to receive Communion, please use the time to meditate on one of the following prayers:

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open me to the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I recognize that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever dared admit, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, taking what I deserved in order to offer me complete forgiveness. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.

For Those Struggling with Sin

If you are a baptized believer in Christ who is struggling with sin, you should still come forward for communion. As it says in our Larger Catechism 172:

One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, *for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians*) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labour to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and *ought to come to the Lord's supper, that he may be further strengthened.*

LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE



1. Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;



7 Pon-der no-thing earth-ly mind-ed, for with blessing in his hand



13 Christ our God to earth des - cend - eth, our full homage to de - mand.

2. King of kings, yet born of Mary,
as of old on earth he stood;
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
in the body and the blood,
he will give to all the faithful
his own self for heav'nly food.

4. At his feet the six-winged seraph;
cherubim, with sleepless eye,
veil their faces to the presence,
as with ceaseless voice they cry,
"Alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia, Lord Most High!"

3. Rank on rank the host of heaven
spreads its vanguard on the way,
as the Light of light descendeth
from the realms of endless day,
that the pow'rs of hell may vanish
as the darkness clears away.

Words: The Liturgy of St. James, 4th c.
Paraphraser: Gerard Moultrie, 1864
Music: 17th c. French Carol
Arranger: Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

THE HOLY COMMUNION

We partake together of the most holy body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

After the communion the pastor prays a prayer of blessing.

JOY TO THE WORLD!

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come:
let earth receive her King;
let every 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 men 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 sins and sorrows 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.

Words: Isaac Watts (1719)
Music: George Frederick Handel (1742)

BENEDICTION

The Pastor pronounces a blessing upon the congregation from Scripture.

DECLARATION OF PEACE

Alleluia! May the Peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you. Alleluia!

Christ is born!

He is born, indeed!

Merry Christmas!

Merry Christmas!

Go in peace.

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The English Standard Version

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