

**FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
BRISTOL, CT**

**SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION
December 28, 2025, 9:30 a.m.**

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

Offerings towards our Ministries are welcomed at our entryways or you can scan this code with your phone camera.



+GATHERING+

The Holy Spirit calls us together as people of God.

WELCOME

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace. **Amen.**
Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

Pause for silence and reflection.

Reconciling God, **we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; we have not always embraced your message of peace. We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear. We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones; our reluctance to embody your good news. Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.**

God's grace upon grace flows over you. ☩ Christ's presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad! **Amen.**

GREETING

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

GATHERING HYMN

O Come All Ye Faithful

ELW 283

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

+WORD+

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

First Reading

God does not delegate divine intervention to a messenger or angel. God's own presence brings salvation. The prophet and all who read these words join in celebrating God's gracious deeds. God trusts that God's people will not act falsely.

A reading from Isaiah, chapter 63.

⁷ I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. ⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not act deceitfully," and he became their savior ⁹ in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Isaiah 63: 7-9

Psalm 148

¹ Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise God in the heights.

² **Praise the LORD, all you angels; sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

³ Praise the LORD, sun and moon; sing praise, all you shining stars.

⁴ **Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.**

⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD, who commanded, and they were created,

⁶ **who made them stand fast forever and ever, giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;

⁸ **fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

⁹ mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;

¹⁰ **wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds;**

¹¹ sovereigns of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;

¹² **young men and maidens, old and young together.**

¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD, whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

¹⁴ **The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!**

Second Reading

Through Jesus' suffering and death, the trail to eternal salvation has been blazed for us. We do not fear death, because he has conquered the power of death. Thus Christ, our merciful and faithful high priest, has the final say over the destiny of our lives.

A reading from the letter to Hebrews, chapter 2.

¹⁰ It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

¹³ And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free

those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Hebrews 2: 10-18

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Word of God, Come Down on Earth

ELW 510 (vs. 1)

Gospel

In a dream, Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt to protect the infant Jesus from the jealousy of Herod.

The holy Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 2. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹³ Now after the magi had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ**

Matthew 2: 13-23

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE (aimed toward Grades K thru 6th, but those younger are welcomed with an accompanying adult).

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Gentle Joseph Hear a Warning

ACS 1060

L: NICENE CREED

Let us profess our faith using the words of the Nicene Creed.

We believe in one God, the Father, the 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, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. 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 again 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, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who 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.

(Please be seated)

L: PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great**

God our healer, we continue to pray for those on our prayer list. In addition we lift up to your care these loved ones and concerns that we name aloud or in our hearts before you now...*(time is allowed for additions)*. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great**

Now may we lift up praise and thanksgiving for Restored Health, Life Celebrations and God Sightings for which we are joyful...*(time is allowed for responses)*. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

SHARE THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

Remain Standing

+MEAL+*God feeds us in the presence of Jesus Christ.*

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OFFERTORY Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

ELW 885

L: OFFERING PRAYER*For all that we have received from God let us pray for what we return.*

Nourishing God, **you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.** Through this meal, **satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW p. 129

Holy, Holy, Holy

p. 130

Eucharistic Prayer

p. 132

Lord's Prayer

p. 134 (left column)

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread.

*At Faith **all** are welcome to receive Holy Communion. You are invited to come forward by the center aisle to fill in along the rail from the center to the sides. You may either stand or kneel to receive bread (or gluten-free wafers upon request) and wine (or white grape juice) in pre-filled glasses. Empty glasses can be placed in baskets provided as you return by the side aisles to your seat for silent meditation. If you need communion brought to you, please notify the usher. (if you are giving a reminder at the end of the service, please move to the lectern as the altar is cleared after communion distribution)*

Lamb of God

p. 135

COMMUNION HYMN

Here is Bread

ELW 483

L: POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us. **Amen.**

+SENDING+*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.***BLESSING**

The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter, ☩ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy. **Amen.**

REMINDERS

(If you are giving a reminder, come to the lectern as the altar is cleared).

SENDING HYMN

Love Has Come

ELW 292 (vs. 1 & 3)

DISMISSAL

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

WORSHIP LEADERS for Sunday, December 28, 2025

Presiding Minister: Pastor Chris Dion

Musician: Aimee Allen

Assisting Minister: Valerie Holcomb

Lector: Joyce Chmura

Tech Team: Abigail Griffin, Ken Griffin, Connor Pratt

Ushers: Keith Hintz, Amanda Hintz, Mike Beaudoin

Altar Guild: Susan and Ashley Provenzano

Communion Assistants: Joyce Chmura and Jill Little

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THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Sunday, December 28, 2025

9:30 a.m. Service of Holy Communion (Sanctuary, You Tube, Facebook)

10:30 a.m. Coffee Time

Thursday, January 1, 2026

7:00 p.m. AA (Fellowship Hall)

7:00 p.m. Al Anon

Sunday, January 4, 2026

9:30 a.m. Service of Holy Communion (Sanctuary, You Tube, Facebook)

10:30 a.m. Coffee Time

11:00 a.m. Bible Nuggets

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, BRISTOL, CT

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