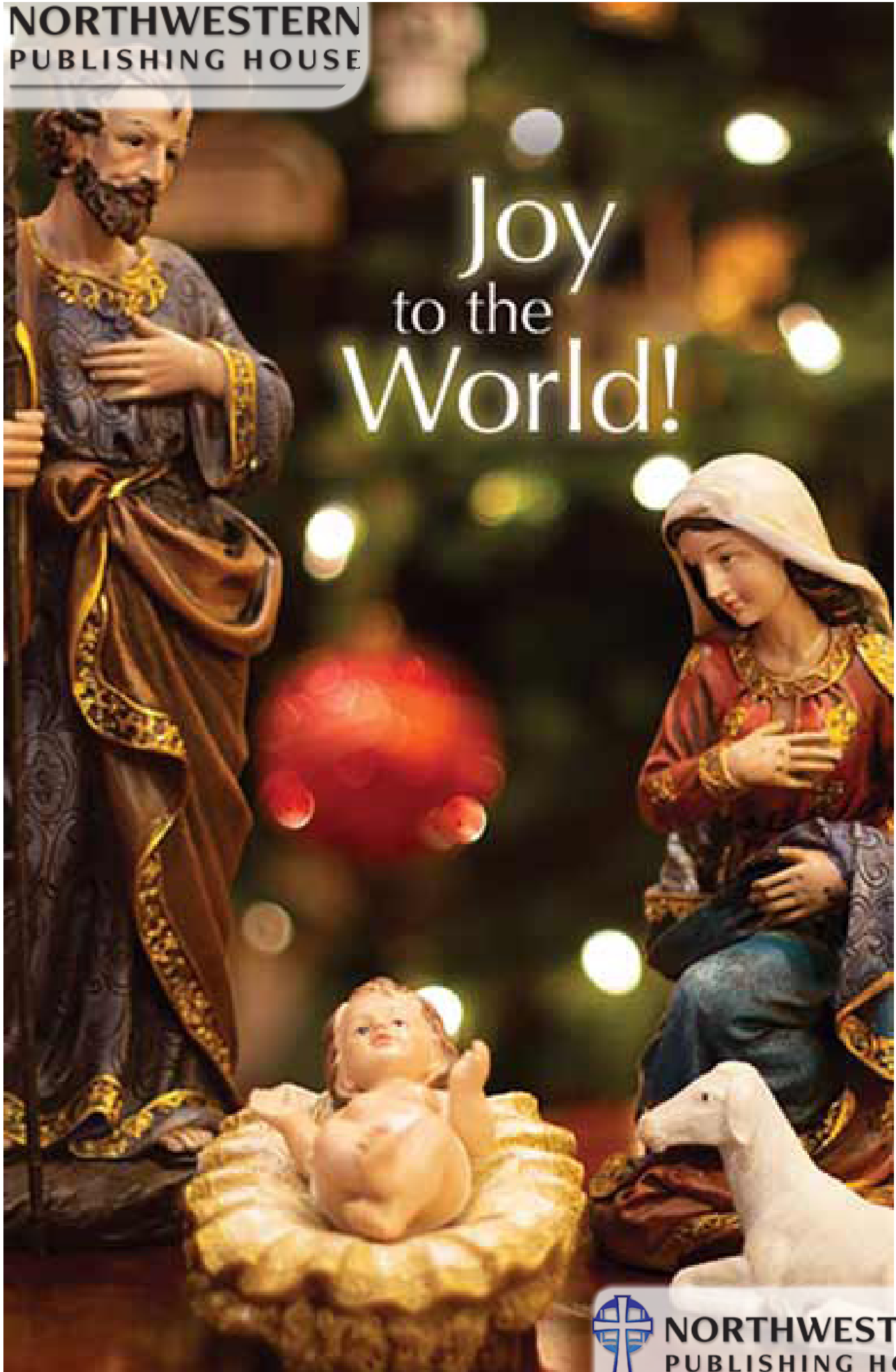


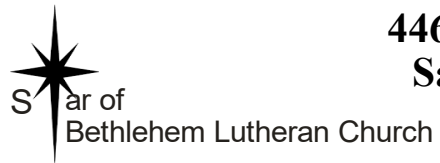


**NORTHWESTERN  
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Joy  
to the  
World!



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4465 South Blosser Road  
Santa Maria, CA 93455  
Office: 805-937-0339  
[www.starlutheran.org](http://www.starlutheran.org)  
Pastor Michael Foley

## Worship Service

*Wednesday, December 25, 2024 10:00 a.m.*

## CHRISTMAS DAY

**Thought for the day:** God's Word for us this day raises us up above the cute and the trite and the trivial; for so many people that is all that Christmas is about. But there is nothing trite or trivial in what has happened today: The deepest lowliness is but the mask for the greatest glory — the glory of him who came to be our Savior!

## WELCOME

A warm welcome to our friends and visitors! Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church is eager to share with you the blessings of its Christ-centered ministry. If you are a new or long-time resident of the Central Coast looking for a church home, we invite you to meet with us at the close of this worship service or at your convenience. All are welcome to stay for refreshments in the fellowship hall.

**Families** are encouraged to worship together. If you need to step out with your children, the service can be seen and heard in the fellowship hall or narthex area. Feel free to enter and return at any time.

## OUR MISSION

Our congregation exists for the purpose of "HOLDING OUT THE WORD OF LIFE." This is accomplished by faithfully preserving and proclaiming all of God's inerrant word, and administering the Sacraments as they were instituted by Christ.

**OPENING HYMN: “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (CWH #350)**

♪ **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!”  
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

**Christ, by highest heav’n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail th’ incarnate Deity!  
Pleased as man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel!  
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

*Please stand as you are able for last verse:*

**Hail, the heav’nly 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.  
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”**

Minister: We begin this Christmas Day service in the name of the only true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Congregation: **We proclaim the greatness of the Lord, for he has looked with favor on the humble state of his people.**

**M:** We are in the presence of the true and living God, before whom all angels veil their faces and bow in humble adoration.

**C:** **We acknowledge his glory as the only true God, and we offer to him the praise of our hearts and our lips.**

**M:** Let all the earth stand in awe of our God, who has visited and redeemed his people.

**C:** **Blessing and honor and glory and power be to our God forever and ever! Amen.**

*(Introduction is played, and then congregation sings:)*

♪ **Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to thee.  
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;  
thro' thy grace and merit, blest Jesus, Lord most mild,  
draw me unto thee! Draw me unto thee!**

M: Beloved in the Lord! In the beauty of this glorious celebration of our Savior's birth, our sins against a pure and holy God are still evident. Let us come before Him to make confession and be assured of His forgiveness.

C: **Be gracious to me, God, according to your mercy. Erase my acts of rebellion according to the greatness of your compassion. Scrub me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I admit my rebellious acts. My sin is always in front of me.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the miraculous birth, the perfect life and the innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: *(Spoken)* Amen.

♪ **Now through his Son doth shine the Father's grace divine.  
Death was reigning o'er us through sin and vanity  
till he opened for us a bright eternity.  
May we praise him there! May we praise him there!**

#### **PRAYER FOR THE DAY:**

**All: Almighty God, we thank you for the birth of your Son in the flesh that sets us free from our old bondage under the yoke of sin and the law. Give us your Holy Spirit to help us rejoice in the peace you have provided for us. We ask this in the name of our Savior who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit as one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

**HYMN: "A Great and Mighty Wonder" (CWH #349:1-3)**

♪ **A great and mighty wonder, a glorious mystery:  
a virgin bears an infant who veils his deity.  
Proclaim the Savior's birth:  
"To God on high be glory and peace to all the earth."**

**The Word becomes incarnate and yet remains on high,  
and cherubim sing anthems to shepherds from the sky.  
Proclaim the Savior's birth:  
"To God on high be glory and peace to all the earth."**

**While thus they sing your monarch,  
those bright angelic bands, rejoice, O vales and mountains,  
and oceans, clap your hands. Proclaim the Savior's birth:  
"To God on high be glory and peace to all the earth."**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING: Exodus 33:18-23; 34:5-7**

**<sup>18</sup>Then Moses said, "Please show me your glory."**

**<sup>19</sup>The LORD said, "I will make all my goodness pass in front of you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD in your presence. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy." <sup>20</sup>He said, "You cannot see my face, for no human may see me and live."**

**<sup>21</sup>The LORD also said, "Look, there is a place next to me, where you shall stand on the rock. <sup>22</sup>It will happen that, while my glory passes by, I will put you in a crevice in the rock. I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. <sup>23</sup>Then I will take away my hand, and you will see my back. But my face will not be seen."**

**<sup>5</sup>The LORD came down in the cloud. He took his stand there with Moses and proclaimed the name of the LORD. <sup>6</sup>The LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed: "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and overflowing with mercy and truth, <sup>7</sup>maintaining mercy for thousands, forgiving guilt and rebellion and sin. He will by no means clear the guilty. He calls their children and their children's children to account for the guilt of the fathers, even to the third and the fourth generation."**

**HYMN: "A Great and Mighty Wonder" (CWH #349:4,5)**

**♪ Since all he comes to ransom, by all be he adored,  
the infant born in Bethl'em, the Savior and the Lord.  
Proclaim the Savior's birth:  
"To God on high be glory and peace to all the earth."**

**All idols then shall perish and Satan's lying cease,  
and Christ shall raise his scepter, decreeing endless peace.  
Proclaim the Savior's birth:  
"To God on high be glory and peace to all the earth."**

## **PRAYER**

**HYMN: “Let All Together Praise Our God”** *(CWH 355:1-3)*

♪ **Let all together praise our God before his highest throne;  
today he opens heav’n again and gives us his own Son,  
and gives us his own Son.**

**He leaves his heav’nly Father’s throne,  
is born an infant small,  
and in a manger, poor and lone, lies in a humble stall,  
lies in a humble stall.**

**He veils in flesh his pow’r divine a servant’s form to take,  
in want and lowliness must pine  
who heav’n and earth did make,  
who heav’n and earth did make.**

**EPISTLE READING: Romans 8:31,32**

**<sup>31</sup>What then will we say about these things? If God is for us, who  
can be against us? <sup>32</sup>Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but  
gave him up for us all—how will he not also graciously give us all  
things along with him?**

**HYMN: “Let All Together Praise Our God”** *(CWH 355:4-6)*

♪ **He undertakes a great exchange, puts on our human frame,  
and in return gives us his realm, his glory, and his name,  
his glory, and his name.**

**He serves that I a lord may be— a great exchange indeed!  
Could Jesus’ love do more for me to help me in my need,  
to help me in my need?**

**For us he opens wide the door of paradise today.  
The angel guards the gate no more;  
to God our thanks we pay,  
to God our thanks we pay.**

## **PRAYER**

**HYMN: “O Come, All Ye Faithful”** (CWH # 354:1,2)

♪ **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 from true God, and Light from light eternal,  
born of a virgin, to earth he comes!  
Only begotten Son of God the Father:  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

**GOSPEL READING: John 1:1-18**

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. <sup>5</sup>The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

**<sup>6</sup>There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.**

**<sup>9</sup>The real light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. <sup>13</sup>They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband’s will, but born of God.**

**<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

**<sup>15</sup>John testified about him. He cried out, “This was the one I spoke about when I said, ‘The one coming after me outranks me because he existed before me.’ ” <sup>16</sup>For out of his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God. The only-begotten Son, who is close to the Father’s side, has made him known.**

**HYMN: “O Come, All Ye Faithful”** (*CWH # 354:3,4*)

♪ **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!**

**CONFESSION OF FAITH** (*Formula of Concord, Article VIII*)

**We believe, teach, and confess that God’s Son from eternity has been a particular, distinct, entire, divine person. Yet He is true, essential, perfect God with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time He received also the human nature into the unity of His person. He did not do this in such a way that there are now two persons or two Christs. Christ Jesus is now in one person at the same time true, eternal God, born of the Father from eternity, and a true man, born of the most blessed Virgin Mary.**

**In this one undivided person of Christ, there are two distinct natures: the divine, which is from eternity, and the human, which in time was received into the unity of the person of God’s Son. These two natures in the person of Christ are never either separated from or mingled with each other. Each one abides in its nature and essence in the person of Christ to all eternity.**

**These two natures are so united that they make up one single person, in which the divine and the received human nature are and exist at the same time. So now, since the incarnation, there belongs to the entire person of Christ personally not only His divine nature, but also His received human nature. Therefore, Christ is not two distinct persons, but one single person.**

**The Christian Church has always simply believed and held that the divine and the human nature in the person of Christ are so united that they have a true communion with each other. In death, when He died not simply as any other man, but in and with His death conquered sin, death, devil, hell, and eternal damnation.**



**Now He also truly fills all things, being present everywhere, not only as God, but also as man. Since in the Holy Scriptures Christ is called a mystery upon which all heretics dash their heads, we admonish all Christians not to arrogantly indulge their reason in crafty investigations about such mysteries. They should simply believe, and rejoice without ceasing in the fact that our flesh and blood is placed so high at the right hand of God's majesty and almighty power. In this way we will certainly find constant consolation in every difficulty and remain well guarded against deadly error.**

## **OFFERING**

### **PRAYER:**

**All: Gracious God, we celebrate this day of our Lord's birth as the fulfillment of your promise of redemption from sin. We welcome you, Jesus, as the Savior of the world and the Lord of our hearts, who now lives and rules with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER:**

**♪ (Tune of "Away in a Manger" CWH #340)**

**Our Father in heaven, all praise to Your name!  
Your kingdom among us, Your will done the same  
By mortals and angels, Come, Lord, reign alone;  
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.**

**The bread that we yearn for, provide us each day;  
As we forgive others, our sins take away;  
In time of temptation, to lead us, be near;  
From evil deliver Your children most dear.**

**For Yours is the kingdom, o'er all things You reign.  
And Yours is the power; all things You maintain.  
To You be the glory, resounding again  
From all of creation, forever! Amen.**

**♪ Song: The Benediction** (“Adeste Fidelis” *CWH # 354*)

**M:** The Lord bless and keep you,  
Look with love upon you,  
Be gracious, and cause his face  
To shine with peace.

**C:** **Glory to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**  
**The Savior close beside us,**  
**God’s love from harm to hide us,**  
**The Spirit’s pow’r to guide us**  
**Evermore.**

**CLOSING HYMN: “Joy to the World”** (*CWH 353:1,2,4*)

**♪ 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.**

**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.**

**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.**

Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!



- 2 Corinthians 9:15

- ‡ **Please feel free to take a poinsettia home with you.**
- ‡ **BIBLE STUDY** every Sunday at 9:00 before worship;  
also Thursdays at 10:00.
- ‡ **WORSHIP SERVICE** is at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays.
- ‡ **Our Worship services are streamed and archived at:**  
**[starlutheran.org](http://starlutheran.org)**



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