

WELCOME:

OPENING PRAYER: *(based on Isaiah 61: 1-2, 10-11)*

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon us.
Lord,
you bring glad tidings to the poor.
Let us hear.
You heal the brokenhearted.
Heal us too.
You free the prisoners from their jails.
Free us from ourselves.
Loving God,
please come to us,
and send us out, forgiven,
to the poor, the brokenhearted the imprisoned.
Amen.

— A. Osdieck. Copyright © 2011, **The Center for Liturgy at Saint Louis University**. Visit that site for other lectionary-based prayers.

GATHERING SONG: ELW 267 "Joy to the World" (Verses 1, 2, and 4)

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.

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.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:10-62:3 *Reader Dan Moellering*

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

^{62:1}For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.
²The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.
³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.



*Desert Cross Lutheran Church
Gilbert, AZ*

L: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: "What Feast of Love"

What feast of love is offered here,
what banquet come from heaven?
What food of everlasting life,
what gracious gift is given?
This, this is Christ the king,
the bread come down from heaven.
Oh, taste and see and sing!
How sweet the manna given!

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939
Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.
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GOSPEL: Luke 2:22-40

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON: Pastor Doris Nolan

SERMON SONG: "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" (ELW 276)

- 1 Infant holy, infant lowly,
for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing,
bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child is Lord of all!

- 2 Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story,
tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you!
Christ the child was born for you!



Text: Polish carol; tr. Edith M. G. Reed, 1885-1933, alt.

***Litany of Farewell and Thanksgiving
for the Transitional Ministry
of Rev. Doris R. Nolan***

Pastor Doris first came to faithfully serve as Desert Cross's Transitional Associate Pastor in January of 2019. We have spent nearly 2 years together in her role as a colleague in ministry, pastor to the people, and presider over word and sacrament ministry. She graciously joined our community of faith in our time of need. Pastor Doris was always willing to serve however she was needed or asked and her presence blessed us with time to carry out the mission of this church so the call committee had the chance to work patiently to discover God's leading toward a new Associate Pastor to serve Desert Cross.

Church families change but God's abiding presence remains constant. We welcome new friends while others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities. Through it all, we share our burdens and struggles, our joys and hopes.

It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, these endings and beginnings. The time has come to say farewell and godspeed to Pastor Doris and end the transitional period of our life together. Pastor Doris is ready to set her sights on a new chapter in her ministry in the GC Synod.

As we release Pastor Doris from her ministry with us to serve in new ways, we send her with our love, deep gratitude, encouragement, and prayers. Thank you, Pastor Doris, for all the ways you have blessed us, taught us, and shared God's word with us. We will always remember your service among us, and you will always be a friend of Desert Cross.

Let us pray, God, whose love and grace are everlasting, help each of us to trust that our future rests in your care. The transitional time experienced at Desert Cross saw laughter and tears, hopes and frustrations. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories while we move in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other, in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

A reading from Ephesians 3: 14-21:

I pray that, according to the riches of God's glory, you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through the Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

BENEDICTION: Now to the One who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus + to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.



OFFERING

SPECIAL MUSIC: "Silent Night" – Pam Brown (flute)

Your generous giving sustains our ministry. To give online, go to desertcross.org and click the online giving button, sign up for online Bill Pay, or mail offerings to Desert Cross, 8600 S. McClintock Dr., Tempe AZ 85284. We give thanks to God as you help us reach out beyond the walls!

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Christ, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray.

Jesus Christ, born in a stable,
Be with the poor and homeless this Christmas season,
And with all separated from friends and family.
As we pray, live and give;
shine your everlasting light.
(silent prayer)

Jesus Christ, born of Mary,
Be with young mothers across the world this Christmas time.
As we pray, live and give;
shine your everlasting light.
(silent prayer)

Jesus Christ, visited by Shepherds,
Be with all people in their work
and those who long to work.
As we pray, live and give;
shine your everlasting light.
(silent prayer)

Jesus Christ, sent by God,
Send your healing, love, and mercy
To all those who are suffering, grieving, or are sick,
We pray for the healing of the world
In these pandemic days and in the days ahead.

For all this and whatever else you see that we need,
we lift to you trusting that you hear us. Amen.

*~ adapted from Sam Hargreaves, and posted on the **EngageWorship** website. <http://engageworship.org/>*

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

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 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 ever. Amen.



SENDING SONG: "Go Tell it On the Mountain" (ELW 290)

Refrain

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and ev'rywhere;
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**

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt.

BENEDICTION:

Almighty God,
Who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary,
Proclaimed joy through the angels,
And sent the shepherds with good news,
Bless you this day ✠
Through the Word made flesh.
Amen.

Musicians: *Daniel Decker (vocalist), Michael Lottes (vocalist), and Pam Brown (flute)*