



Atonement Lutheran Church

July 20, 2025
Christmas in July

9242 Kiefer Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95826

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Serving in Worship Today

Pastor Holly Feather (she/her/hers)
Assisting Minister.....Jim Weber
Readers Julie Backman and Mike Meyer
Interim Choir Director..... Gwen Freeman
Pianist..... Youlee Duray
Altar Guild/Counters..... Barb Wildrick and Julie Backman

Remote Worship Access

Use this link to join the service on a computer, tablet, or smart phone:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84490589512> . You may have to wait for the host to admit you to the service.

To call in for sound only, the telephone number is (669) 900 6833. When you are prompted to enter a Meeting ID, the number is 844 9058 9512. If you are asked for a passcode (you may not be), it is 750450.

Those worshipping remotely are invited to share in communion. Please have a small portion of bread and wine/juice ready before the service.

If you have a prayer request, please enter it in the “chat” feature and we will include it during today’s Prayers of the People.

Welcome!

**Whether you are worshipping in-person or remotely,
we're glad you have joined us.**

Atonement is a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and is also a Reconciled in Christ (RIC) congregation. This means that we are an inclusive congregation that welcomes and encourages all people, regardless of race, language, previous denominational affiliation, gender identity, or sexual orientation to worship with us so that we may enjoy all the spiritual gifts that God gives to all God's people.

At Atonement, we embrace the Richard Feynman quote that has been so popular on social media: *"I would rather have questions that can't be answered than answers that can't be questioned."* Questions are welcome here, even the questions we can't answer, even if you're questioning your faith (don't we all sometime?). Whatever your questions, we would love to walk with you so we can learn from each other.

This bulletin contains all the music and responses you will need for today's service. If you are not familiar with the liturgical form of worship, please let the spirit of the service carry you along.

- Congregational responses are in **bold face type**.
- **Songs** are printed in the back of the bulletin.
- At various times during the service, you will be invited to **stand**. Please feel free to remain seated if you prefer to worship in this way.

We celebrate **Holy Communion** every week. You do not need to be a member, or even a Lutheran, to participate. Everyone is welcome at God's table. If this meal is meaningful to you, please come. If you are not able to come forward, we will bring communion to you. Simply let an usher know.

If you need to contact Pastor Holly, her cell number is (530) 613-9018, or you may email her at pr.holly@gmail.com. The "**ALC Guest**" wifi password is ALC9242!

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Welcome and Announcements

Carol Prelude Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (ELW 270)
It Came Upon a Midnight Clear (ELW 282, vs. 1-3)
What Child is This? (ELW 296)

Confession and Forgiveness

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

Amidst the darkness of this world, let us confess our sin and welcome the light of God's forgiveness.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Mary accepted your call to be the mother of Jesus.

Forgive our lack of faith and trust in your will.

Your Son was born in the poverty of a stable.

Forgive our neglect of the poor.

The shepherds left their flocks and went to Bethlehem.

Forgive our selfishness and complacency.

The magi followed the star to find the Savior of the nations.

Forgive our reluctance to seek you with all our hearts.

The angel said, "you shall call his name Jesus for he will save God's people from their sins." With great joy, I announce to you the entire forgiveness of your sins in the name of the Ever-Creating Parent, the Only-Begotten One, and the Sanctifying Spirit. **Amen.**

Gathering Song O, Come All Ye Faithful (ELW 283, vs. 1-3)

Oh, come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant!
Oh, come ye, oh come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him born the King of angels.
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes.
Son of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, glory in the highest.
Oh, come, let us adore him, Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Greeting/Prayer of the Day

From the one who was, who is, and who is to come: Grace and peace be with you all.

And also with you.

All powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son Jesus Christ, not just at Christmas but throughout our lives.

Amen.

Word

God speaks to us in scripture, sermon, and song.

First Reading **Isaiah 9:2ff**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

First Carol..... Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming (ELW 272, vs. 1-3)

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.

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.

This flow'r, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us
And lightens ev'ry load.

Welcoming God's Word

*The children (and those young at heart)
are invited to come forward and help the Pastor welcome God's Word.*

Second Reading..... Micah 5:2-5a

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; ⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

Second Carol: All Earth Is Hopeful (ELW 266, vs. 1-2, 4)

All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!
Furrows lie open for God's creative task:
This, the labor of people who struggle to see
How God's truth and justice set ev'rybody free.

People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel."
She conceived him, "God with us," our brother, whose birth
Restores hope and courage to children of this earth.

We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.
This same Lord Jesus today has come to live
In our world; he is present, in neighbors we see
Our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.

Third ReadingMatthew 1:18-23

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ “Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.”

Third Carol:Mary Did You Know (Lowry/Greene/Henry)
Special Music Lucy Taylor, Pr. Holly Feather

Fourth Reading Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Fourth Carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem (ELW 279, vs. 1, 2, &4)

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 street shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

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!

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 Emmanuel!

Fifth Reading..... Luke 2:8-20

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Fifth Carol: Go Tell It on the Mountain (ELW 290, vs. 1-3)

Refrain

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. *Refrain*

The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*

Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*

Sixth Reading Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Sixth Carol:.....The First Noel (ELW 300)

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.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

They looked 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.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

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.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

This star drew near to the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

Then entered in those wise men three,
full rev'rently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel! Born is the King of Israel.

Seventh Reading John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Seventh Carol:..... The Bells of Christmas (ELW 298, vs. 1, 2, &6)

The bells of Christmas chime once more; the heav'nly guest is at the door.
He comes to earthly dwellings still with new year gifts of peace, good will.

This world, though wide and far outspread, could scarcely find for you a bed.
Your cradle was a manger stall, no pearl nor silk nor kingly hall.

Come, Jesus, glorious heav'nly guest, and keep your Christmas in our breast.
Then David's harpstrings, hushed so long, shall swell our jubilee of song.

Prayers of the People

Each petition will end God of grace.

*Please respond: **Receive our prayer.***

Greetings of Peace *(Please stand in body or spirit)*

The passing of the peace was already part of worship in the early church. During the peace, we act on our belief that we are reconciled to one another through our faith in Christ. We greet one another with a handshake or a bow with palms pressed together. As we seek to build a community of consent, please be sensitive to the other person's desired level of physical contact.

Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Gathering of the Offering *(be seated)*

Offering Song Angels We Have Heard On High (ELW 289)

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.
Glo - - - ria in excelsis Deo; Glo - - - ria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song?
Glo - - - ria in excelsis Deo; Glo - - - ria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.
Glo - - - ria in excelsis Deo; Glo - - - ria in excelsis Deo.

Offering Prayer *(Please stand in body or spirit)*

Let us pray together

God with us: You came as a baby to a manger. You slept on straw and greeted shepherds. You come again in bread and wine. Remind us how good you are at blessing ordinary things. And then, through these gifts, help us to bless the lives of others in the strength of your holy name. Amen.

We Gather at God's Table

The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts.

Let us give thanks to the Lord,
our God.

And also with you.

We lift them up to God.

**It is right to give God
thanks and praise.**

The angel told the shepherds: "You will find the baby all wrapped up and lying in a manger." In a manger, a feed box for animals, full of oats and hay, a place for cows and oxen to eat and be filled!

Christmas is full of surprises: The Lord of this vast universe became small for us, and lay as a frail infant in a manger at Bethlehem. And how marvelously we have been fed and nourished by that infant Jesus, fed and filled with the love that God has for us in Jesus Christ. All his days and nights were moments of sharing with us the deep mystery of the love God has for every creature great and small.

And then in the last night of his life our Lord Jesus took bread and wine, the common food of every day, and blessed them. He broke the bread and said that through it he will come to us and feed our hearts: "Take and eat: this is my Body which is given for you."

And he took the cup and gave it to them and to us, promising that this cup binds us to him and to one another forever: "Take and drink: this cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all."

The Son of God on the first Christmas was content to lie in a poor manger. And He still comes, even here today, in bread and wine, to fill our lives.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Please feel free to offer this prayer in whatever language or translation speaks most deeply to your heart.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Invitation

A child has been born for us. Come, receive the gift of Jesus.

Communion Song.....Silent Night (ELW 281)

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar, heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from your holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth

Communion Blessing *(after all have been served)*

(Please stand in body or spirit.)

The body and blood of our Savior Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you now and forever. **Amen.**

Post Communion Prayer

Let us pray. Merciful God, we thank you for Jesus, who is our heavenly food. Strengthened by this goodness, send us forth to announce your peace, comfort the afflicted, and share the good news of great joy.

Amen.

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Benediction

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child.

God bless you and keep you, ☩ Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Song:.....Joy to the World (ELW 267, vs. 1, 2 & 4)

Joy to the world! the Lord is come! Let earth receive its 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.

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.

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.

Dismissal

Go in peace. The Word of God dwells in you richly.

Thanks be to God.

PostludeYoulee Duray
..... Do You Hear What I Hear?

Acknowledgements

Offering Prayer, Invitation to Communion, Post-Communion Prayer, Benediction, and Dismissal adapted from Sundays and Seasons, copyright © 2024 Augsburg Fortress.

July Offerings

	Offerings	Missions, Usage, Flowers, Special, Other	Total Income
July 6	510.00	895.00	1405.00
July 13	2825.00	0	2825.00
July 20			
July 27			
Total	3335.00	895.00	4230.00

Next Week’s Readings:

Genesis 18:20-32
Psalm 138
Colossians 2:6-15 [16-19]
Luke 11:1-13

Christmas in July – From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Some global traditions:

1. In some parts of Australia, where Christmas falls in the summer and July is the one of the coldest months, Christmas in July parties are held to mimic the traditional northern Christmas. Some traditional Christmas activities are difficult to have in the December summertime (such as a heavy meal with roasted meats and heavy sweets like plum pudding), so these may be held in July instead. In Australia, this celebration is also called "Half-Christmas."

2. McMurdo Station in Antarctica celebrates Christmas in July, as well as in December. Its origins there appear to be how deliveries were made. July is in the middle of winter in Antarctica; high winds and ice once made it too dangerous for planes to land with supplies. Instead, planes parachuted deliveries (such as food and mail) to the ice; the sudden arrival in July of presents from the sky reminded some people of a "visit from Santa."

3. In the United States it is more often used as a marketing tool than as an actual holiday celebrated by ordinary people. Stores and Online sellers may choose to re-run Christmas specials, and many stores have "Christmas in July" sales. Still, some individuals do choose to celebrate the time themselves, typically as an intentionally transparent excuse to have a party and sing Christmas Carols (just as we are doing today).

Bits and Pieces of Information

Adult Discussion Time: Our discussion group on Manna and Mercy will continue today after worship. This wonderful graphic novel is by Dan Erlander. In the introduction, he writes “I am convinced that authentic God-Talk can take place only in the context of trembling, laughing at oneself, praying for forgiveness, and understanding that words never capture the reality to which they point.”

The Great Cloud of Witnesses: This Fall, as we move towards All Saints Day, we will focus on those who have gone on before us, both in our congregation and in our lives. More information will be shared in the coming weeks. Watch this space.

Do you enjoy Handcrafts? The Handcrafters meet the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 1:00-2:30. All hand-held (easily transported) crafts – Knit, Crochet, Needlepoint, Miniatures, etc. – are welcome. If you don’t craft, you are welcome to come by and chat.

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Our Prayer Concerns (Please ask the permission of the person for whom you are requesting prayers through the Prayer Chain or the pastor to publish their name and their request.)

Stephanie (Linda Cancio’s daughter), Donna Philp, Bodil Drucker, Sue Napalitano (Brother Mike’s sister), Ezekiel (Tito’s nephew), Mark Montgomery, Pat Crongeyer (Walt Wildrick’s friend), Joan Witt (Lucy’s Friend), Faith (Lucy’s Friend), Bob Grosse (Kathy Chance’s father), Tosh Shikasho (Barb’s friend), Bob (Mary Wudel’s brother), Christopher Chance (Kathy’s son), Nina Haskett (friend of Barb), Beverly Olson, Sedona (Lucy’s friend), Lauri Snyder, Curt Hanson, Carolyn Hanley, Ron Geirhan, Jody Koch, Lisa Berumen, Mary Lechner, Lonee Martinez, Dennis Tagawa (Barb’s friend), Dan and Kathy, Judi Phelps, John Studybaker. All countries experiencing conflict, the many places recovering from natural disasters, all those caught up in the epidemic of violence in the US. Our local congregations and synod staff, especially St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, St. John’s Lutheran Church and Logan Rimel (Finance Assistant).