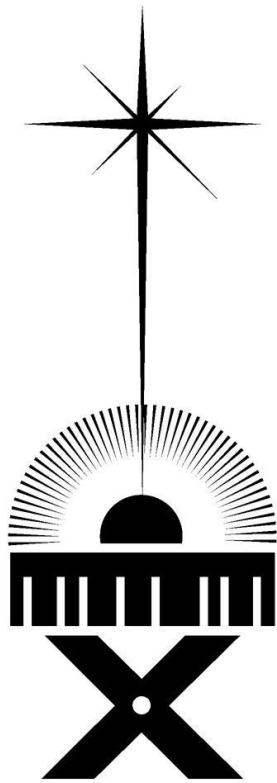


**W E L C O M E T O W O R S H I P**



**First Sunday of Christmas  
December 31, 2023  
10:00 am**

**Reformation Evangelical Lutheran Church  
102 West Rose Tree Road  
Media, Pennsylvania 19063**

**[www.relcmmedia.org](http://www.relcmmedia.org)**

# Welcome to Reformation!

**Land acknowledgement** – Reformation is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Lenapehoking (Lenni-Lenape) people, and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all of our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.

**A special welcome to visitors** – we pray that the encounter with God in worship will nurture us in Christian faith and equip us for our life of loving service and justice in the world.

**Children in worship are a blessing.** We invite our smallest members to sit toward the front where it is easiest for them to see and hear worship and to join the pastors for the Sermon on the Steps.



**Worship bags** (filled with coloring books and crayons) are available at the back of the sanctuary and can be taken to your seat.

**A play space** is also available at the back of the sanctuary with additional books and soft toys.

**A professionally staffed nursery** is available for children from birth to age 4. Patty Boccella is our nursery attendant. Worship is livestreamed to the nursery as well as to the lobby.

**All are welcome at the table** of our Lord Jesus Christ where God nourishes faith, forgives sin, and calls us to be witnesses to the Gospel. We believe Christ is present in the bread and wine. Instructions for distribution are printed in the service bulletin.

**Our Prayer List** can be found at [relcmedia.org/virtualchurch](http://relcmedia.org/virtualchurch). To make your prayer request known, please call the church office (610-891-0600, ext. 115) or send an e-mail to [rlc@relcmedia.org](mailto:rlc@relcmedia.org).

**Williams Personal PA Receivers** are available for use by the hearing impaired.

**Large print bulletins are available from an usher**

# First Sunday of Christmas

## December 31, 2023 • 10:00 am

### A Service of the Canticles of Christ's Birth

The word “Canticle” is derived from the Latin, “canticulum,” which means “little song.” Generally these are biblical texts, in addition to the psalms, that may be chanted or sung as hymns, and there are four of them found in the first two chapters of the gospel of Luke.

*The Benedictus* (Luke 1:67-79) is sung by Zechariah following the birth of his son, John.

*The Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55) is sung by Mary as she greets her cousin Elizabeth.

*The Gloria in Excelsis Deo* (Luke 2:14) is sung by the angels announcing the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

And finally, *The Nunc Dimittis* (Luke 2:29-32) is sung by Simeon who meets the baby Jesus at the Temple.

These four canticles tell the story of the birth of Christ in words and song and invite us to join in the proclamation of this good news and the praise of God with Zechariah, Mary, Simeon, and all the angels, as they sing of the good news that God has come to be with us.

**C** = Congregation

**A** = Assisting Minister

**P** = Presiding Minister

# GATHERING

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

*PRELUDE*

*In the Bleak Midwinter*

arr. David Lasky

*WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS*

**P** This is the day that the Lord has made

**C** **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!** (Ps. 118:24)

*The assembly stands*

*LITANY FOR A NEW YEAR*

**P** Holy God, grant us your gracious, guiding presence as we enter the new year. Lead us into this new time, confident that your promises will be fulfilled.

**C** **Reveal your love and make us new.**

**P** Spirit of Truth, call us to repentance at the beginning of this new year. Forgive us for past unfaithfulness, silence in the face of injustice and inaction amid suffering. Help us to share your gifts with those who cry out for daily bread.

**C** **Reveal your love and make us new.**

**P** Prince of Peace, healer and reconciler, heal the divisions in your Church and among the peoples of the world. Give us new vision to zealously seek the unity for which you prayed, that we should all be one.

**C** **Reveal your love and make us new.**

**P** God of all ages, release us from fear. Give us faith to trust that you lead us forward just as you have led your church throughout all ages. Be our companion as we walk unexplored paths into an unknown future. Open us to new possibilities and renew our hope. In Jesus' name.

**C** **Amen.**



1 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice      with heart and soul and voice;  
 2 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice      with heart and soul and voice;  
 3 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice      with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say:      Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
 now ye hear of end - less bliss:      Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
 now ye need not fear the grave;      Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.  
 He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.  
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day!      Christ is born to - day!  
 Christ was born for this!      Christ was born for this!  
 Christ was born to save!      Christ was born to save!

### 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.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

☞ Let us pray. Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

☞ **Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

# WORD

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

## *INTRODUCTION TO THE CANTICLES OF CHRIST'S BIRTH*

### *THE BENEDICTUS*

Luke 1:57-79

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him. Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

*(the assembly sings the Song of Zechariah)*

SONG OF ZECHARIAH

Hymn No. 250



1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free  
 2 With prom - ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call,  
 3 My child, as proph - et of the Lord you will pre - pare the way,



and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da - vid's tree.  
 the oath once sworn to A - bra - ham, from foes to save us all;  
 to tell God's peo - ple they are saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.



So have the proph - ets long de - clared that with a might - y arm  
 that we might wor - ship with - out fear and of - fer lives of praise,  
 Then shall God's mer - cy from on high shine forth and nev - er cease



God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.  
 in ho - li - ness and righ - teous - ness to serve God all our days.  
 to drive a - way the gloom of death and lead us in - to peace.

THE MAGNIFICAT

Luke 1:39-55

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary exclaimed:

*(the assembly sings the Song of Mary)*

SONG OF MARY

*All:*

1., 3. My — soul pro - claims your  
2. You have cast the might - y

great - ness, O God, and my spir - it re - joic - es in  
down from their thrones, and up - lift - ed the hum - ble of

you, You have looked with love on your  
heart, You have filled the hun - gry with

ser - vant here, and blessed me all my life through.  
won - drous things, and left the wealth - y no part.

Great and might - y are you, O Ho - ly One,  
Great and might - y are you, O Faith - ful One,

strong is your kind - ness ev - er - more.  
strong is your jus - tice strong your love,

How you fa - vor the weak — and low - ly one,  
As you prom - ised to Sar - ah and A - bra - ham,

hum - bling the proud of heart.  
kind - ness for - ev - er - more.



GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO

Luke 2:1-14

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And 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. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and [singing]:

(the assembly sings the Song of the Angels)

SONG OF THE ANGELS



Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God in the high - est;



glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



Glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God, glo-ry to God in the high - est;



glo-ry to God, glo - ry to God, and peace to God's peo-ple on



earth, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

## SERMON ON THE STEPS

### THE NUNC DIMITTIS

Luke 2:22-32

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

Now 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. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided 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, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God:

*(the assembly sings the Song of Simeon)*

### SONG OF SIMEON



1 O Lord, now let your ser - vant de - part in heav'n - ly peace,  
2 Then grant that I may fol - low your gleam, O glo - rious Light,



for I have seen the glo - ry of your re - deem - ing grace:  
till earth - ly shad - ows scat - ter, and faith is changed to sight;



a\_\_ light to lead the na - tions un - to your ho - ly hill,  
till ho - ly saints shall gath - er up - on that shin - ing shore,



the glo - ry of your peo - ple, your cho - sen Is - ra - el.  
where Christ, the bless - ed day - star, shall light them ev - er - more.

*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION*

**A** In joy and wonder, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

*After each portion of the prayers:*

**A** Lord, in your mercy,

**C** **hear our prayer.**

*The prayers conclude:*

**A** Almighty God, we entrust to you all for whom we pray, confident that you fulfill your promises through Christ our Savior and Lord.

**C** **Amen.**

*PEACE*

**P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C** **And also with you.**

*The people greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace saying "Peace be with you" or similar words.*

*The assembly is seated.*

# MEAL

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

*OFFERING*

*Tithes and offerings are gathered for the mission of the church.*

*MUSICAL OFFERING*

*Forest Green*

Paul Manz

*SETTING THE TABLE*

*The assembly stands to sing as the gifts are brought forward.*

*What Child is This*

Hymn No. 296, vs. 1 & 3

**What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?**

**Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?**

**This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;**

**haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!**

**So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him.**

**The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.**

**Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;**

**joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!**

*OFFERING PRAYER*

- A** Let us pray. Good and loving God,  
**C** **we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let our gifts be a source of blessing for others, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*GREAT THANKSGIVING*

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**C** **We lift them to the Lord.**

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C** **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**P** It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, . . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

(Sung to the tune *Good King Wenceslas*)

**C** **Holy, holy, holy Lord, praise to you be given.**

**All your glory fills the earth, and it fills the heavens.**

**Blessed is the King who came bringing love divine.**

**Blessed is the King who comes in the bread and wine.**

**P** Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world. In the fullness of time, . . .

. . . With thanksgiving we take this bread and this cup and proclaim the mystery of faith.

**C** **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

**P** All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

*LORD'S PRAYER*

☞ With the confidence of children of God let us pray:

☞ **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**

*COMMUNION*

☞ God fills the hungry with good things. Come with joy to the feast.

☞ **Thanks be to God!**

*The assembly is seated.*

All are welcome at the table of the Lord! We believe and teach that Christ is present in the mystery of the sacrament of holy communion and that by communing with him we receive forgiveness of our sin.

Communion will be distributed by intinction – after you receive the bread, you may dip it in the chalice on the bread tray, which has grape juice, or the chalice held by the communion assistant, which has wine. Children who have not received instruction for communion are invited to come forward for a blessing. If you are unable to walk to communion, please let an usher know so that a pastor can bring communion to your seat. Gluten free wafers are available upon request to the pastor distributing the bread.

*As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:*

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*The communicant may say:* Amen.

*The assembly sings the following during communion:*

(Sung to the tune *Once in Royal David's City*)

☞ **Lamb of God, the world's Redeemer, mercy to your people give.  
Lamb of God, the word's Redeemer, may we in your mercy live.  
Lamb of God, we all implore: Grant us peace forevermore.**



1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and trem - bling stand;  
 2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on earth he stood,  
 3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van - guard on the way;  
 4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim with sleep - less eye,



pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed, for with bless - ing in his hand  
 Lord of lords in hu - man ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,  
 as the Light of light, de - scend - ing from the realms of end - less day,  
 veil their fac - es to the pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry:



Christ our God to earth de - scend - ing comes full hom - age to de - mand.  
 he will give to all the faith - ful his own self for heav'n - ly food.  
 comes, the pow'rs of hell to van - quish, as the dark - ness clears a - way.  
 "Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!"

*After all have communed, the assembly stands.*

#### TABLE BLESSING

**P** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**C** Amen.

#### PRAYER

**A** Let us pray. We give you thanks, O God that with our eyes we have seen your salvation, and in this meal we have feasted on your grace. May your Word take flesh in us, that we may be your holy people, revealing your glory made known to us in Jesus Christ our Savior.

**C** Amen.

# SENDING

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

## BLESSING

☞ God most high, God with us, God poured out on us, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

☞ Amen

## SENDING SONG

*Angels, From the Realms of Glory*

Hymn No. 275



- 1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
- 2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
- 3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
- 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,



once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.  
seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.  
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

*Refrain*



Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.

*DISMISSAL*

**A** Called by Christ,

**C** We invite all people, serve our neighbors, and build a living faith.

**A** Go in peace. Share the good news.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*POSTLUDE*

*Das alte Jahr Vergangen ist*

J.S. Bach

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**To see the list of today's worship volunteers,  
you can go to [relcmedia.org/worshipteam](http://relcmedia.org/worshipteam),  
scan here:**



**or visit the Worship Team  
information stand in the lobby.**

## **OUR MISSION**

**Called by Christ, we INVITE all people,  
SERVE our neighbors, and  
BUILD a living faith.**

## **WELCOME**

Called by Christ we invite all people, celebrating the diversity of God's creation. Reformation is an affirming congregation for all: rejoicing with the young and old, welcoming people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, working to cultivate an accessible and inclusive community for all abilities, and embracing all races, cultures, and faith traditions.

We serve our neighbors following the teachings of Christ. Reformation responds to the needs of the most vulnerable - providing nourishment and comfort, supporting the work of the local and global church, and protecting God's creation for future generations.

We build a living faith emboldened by the Holy Spirit. Reformation embodies the unconditional love of God through worshiping and learning together and valuing the gifts of everyone. To create the fullness of our community of faith, we nurture relationships, pursue racial equity and gender justice, and advocate for the wellbeing of the marginalized.



# Reformation Evangelical Lutheran Church Leadership Team

To contact those with an extension please call **610-891-0600** and use the listed extension number or send e-mail to the listed address.

## All other phone calls: 610-891-0600

The Rev. Alina S. Gayeuski <i>Lead Pastor</i>	ext. 109 PastorAlina@relcmedia.org
The Rev. Eileen Ruppel-Doan <i>Pastor</i>	ext. 108 PastorEileen@relcmedia.org
Vicar Paula Estornell <i>Deacon Intern</i>	VicarPaula@relcmedia.org
Christine Corson <i>Senior Administrative Assistant</i>	ext. 112 rlc@relcmedia.org
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Valerie Rozek <i>Director of Music</i>	cell: 440-478-8163 varozek@relcmedia.org
Erik Flaten <i>Director of Contemporary Music</i>	cell: 509-528-8979 erik.flaten@relcmedia.org
Liz Hazlett <i>Children's Choir Director</i>	lizhazlett@relcmedia.org
John Grantland <i>Council President</i>	president@relcmedia.org

**Office Hours:** Monday-Thursday, 9:00am – 3:30pm  
Friday, Closed