

Celebration of Christmas

SAVIOR
OF THE WORLD

December 24, 2023 ✝ 5:00 p.m.

Welcome to Lutheran Church of the Reformation! For 154 years, Reformation has enjoyed a unique location near the nation's Capitol. We celebrate God's presence in everyone, including the great variety of members and friends who call Reformation their church home.

Everyone matters to God. You matter to us. Reformation has long been involved in social justice and helping organizations throughout the D.C. area, including Samaritan Ministry. We have helped Good Neighbors of Capitol Hill to equip 120 apartments for refugees over the past few years.

Reformation runs an "emergency" food pantry, in that we provide a bag of food to DC residents that contains items sufficient to sustain a family of four for two days as they make more permanent connections toward food security. It is open on Mondays and Tuesdays (closed on government holidays) from 9AM-5PM; please bring a government issued ID.

Reformation welcomes and supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer+ Christians and their families in all aspects of the church's ministry. Since 1987, we have belonged to ReconcilingWorks, a national Lutheran LGBTQ+ ministry. We honor the Nacotchtank and Piscataway peoples upon whose land we live and worship.

We all may mask or not, according to our preferences. *As of 3/12/23, Reformation will no longer require masks to be worn in Worship.* Let us all be respectful of others' needs, choices, and boundaries. *If you need a mask, just ask an usher!*

Children are most welcome in worship. The Blue Room, to the left as you entered, is equipped with sound for caregivers. A **professionally staffed nursery** and **restrooms with changing tables** are on the lower level of the St. John's building.

An all-gender/handicapped accessible restroom is on the sanctuary level, on the right front of the sanctuary near the elevator.

If you are new to Reformation and would like more information about our church ministry, a baptism, a wedding, or another interest, please fill out an information card found in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate.

Reformation is in partnership with the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (www.elca.org)**, one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States. It has 3.3 million members in more than 8,900 congregations across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region as well as 27 Lutheran Colleges and Universities, 7 Seminaries, 400 worldwide missionaries, hundreds of Lutheran camps and campus ministries, one of the largest non-profit social service networks in the U.S., and Lutheran World Relief.

☪ ☪ ☪ GATHERING ☪ ☪ ☪

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

Prelude

La Nativité

Langlais

Welcome and Introduction

This is a story you might know well together with something else we know well, the alphabet. We begin with **A** for an angel, Gabriel, who began the story with a greeting:

“Greetings, favored one! God is with you! You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.”

Call to Worship

Please rise in body and/or spirit.

The impossible is about to happen in a stable. The people who have walked in gloom have seen a great light;

Those who lived in a land of deep gloom, on them has the light shined!

This is the evening when creation stood still and held its breath, for God was doing the most unbelievable, dangerous thing.

This is the evening when God embraced humanity from the inside, as one of us, from birth to death.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

Gathering Hymn

O Come, All Ye Faithful

verse 1



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O



come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;



come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:

Refrain



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2
Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John Francis Wade

Greeting

The grace and truth of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

After a brief silence for our personal prayers, the minister continues.

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Please be seated.

Christmas Gospel I

Luke 2:1-4

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.

B is for Bethlehem, where our story takes place. People traveled from far and wide to arrive in the city; it was very busy.

C is for a census (that's a counting of all the people), the reason so many people filled the city of Bethlehem.

D is for the donkey that carried the family on their long journey to Bethlehem to be counted.

E is for exhausted. That's how everyone felt when they arrived – tired from all the travelling.

F is for family: Mary and Joseph and their new baby Jesus, who was born that night in Bethlehem.

Hymn

O Little Town of Bethlehem



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893

Music: ST. LOUIS, Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

Christmas Gospel II

Luke 2:5-7

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.

G is for the Good News about to be shared with all the earth.

H is for herds, all the animals that were present in the stable, and the flocks of sheep in the field with the shepherds when they heard the good news.

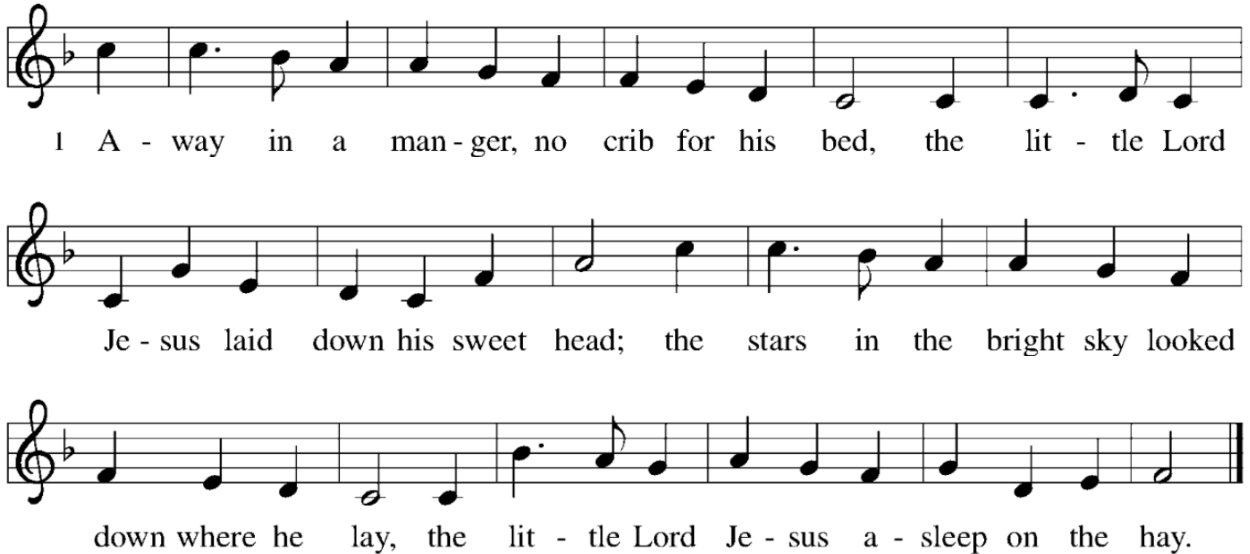
I is for our imaginations, stirred by this story!

J is for joy, the excitement, and happiness that a new baby and now, this special night, brings.

K is for kindness shown by the innkeeper that night, allowing a tired family to stay in the stable when there was no room in the inn.

Hymn

Away in a Manger



The image shows three staves of musical notation for the hymn 'Away in a Manger'. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is written in a simple, accessible style. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The second and third staves continue the melody and lyrics, ending with a double bar line.

i A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord
Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked
down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

Music: AWAY IN A MANGER, James R. Murray, 1841–1905

Christmas Gospel III

Luke 2:8-14

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 Saviour, 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!'

L is for the love we share with one another all through the year and especially at Christmas.

M is for the manger. It is usually used to hold food for animals, but this time it held the baby because he had no crib.

N is for Noel, another word for Christmas. It means new birth, and that's what happened in our story, and every year. The angels sang songs of Noel, Christmas!

Please rise in body and/or spirit for our next songs, prayers, and sharing of the peace.

Please rise in body and/or spirit.

Hymn

Angels We Have Heard on High



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad-some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.

Refrain



Glo

ri - a



in ex - cel - sis

De - o;

glo



ri - a

in ex - cel - sis

De

o.

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864

Music: GLORIA, French carol

Prayers of Intercession

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

A brief silence.

Glory to you, God, for the song of the angels, proclaiming to the world Christ's holy birth. Give your church a joyful song to sing, that we bring the good news of peace and salvation to all people. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the stars that shine in the depth of the night. Provoke awe in our hearts at the expansive mystery of the cosmos. Open us to find beauty in the clear darkness of night and in the first glimmers of dawn. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Glory to you, God, for the child born to us who establishes a kingdom of justice and righteousness. Break bonds of oppression, bring reconciliation to warring lands, and establish peace from this time onward and forevermore. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Glory to you, God, for Mary's loving care. Lead us to tend to one another in time of need. Share the comfort of your presence with all people tonight who are alone or separated from loved ones due to estrangement, incarceration, or illness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the faithfulness of the shepherds in their vocation. Grant rest to any who feel exhausted from their work during this season: retail and restaurant workers, church musicians, administrative staff, and clergy, organizers of charitable-giving events, and service workers doing essential tasks. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Glory to you, God, for the multitude of the heavenly host. We rejoice in the zeal of all your saints who have witnessed the appearing of your grace, and who reveal to us your salvation for all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace. **Amen.**

Sharing of Peace

The Peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*Please share a sign of Christ's peace, forgiveness, freedom, and reconciliation and say "Peace be with you" or similar words. As you have finished sharing the peace, **you may be seated** for short announcements and our offering.*

☪ ☪ ☪ **MEAL** ☪ ☪ ☪

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering of Gifts and Musical Offering

We reflect on the gifts we have, and the gifts we can offer to the Lord: our selves, our time, and our possessions. If you would like to make a monetary offering to the work and ministry of Reformation, please place it in the offering plate as it comes by, or, to do so by phone/online, turn to page 16. All gifts are beautiful to God!

O Holy Night

Text: Placide Cappeau
Music: Adolphe Adam

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining;
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!

What Child Is This?



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar - y's lap is sleep - ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898

Music: GREENSLEEVES, English ballad, 16th cent.

Please remain seated until after our next hymn.

Offering Prayer

Let us pray. Holy God,
your beauty shines forth from the manger and your love flows from the cross.
As you gather us around these signs of your love come among us, warm us to extend your care among the hungry and all in need. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

Christmas Gospel IV

Luke 2:15-20

¹⁵ When 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.' ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

R is for revelation—God showing us who God is (in a little baby born one night).

S is for one special star that shone bright in the night showing wise ones the way to Jesus.

T is for trust, the confidence we have in God.

U is for unity, where all different people brought are together tonight to celebrate God's love!

V is for vulnerable, like a little child that needs to be cared for, protected.

W is for wonder—our amazement at the beauty of how much God loves us.

Hymn

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

Refrain



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

O is for offering, there were many gifts for the baby; even the ones we just shared!
P is for peace – something we shared with a handshake, a hug, or smile! This peace is a sign of Christ's reconciliation
Q is for quiet we hear when we pray in church and ask for God's love and mercy.

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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.

Please be seated.

Candle Lighting

As the prayer concludes, we will begin to dim the lights and light the candles before the Hymn, Silent Night. The ministers light a candle from the Christ candle, which symbolizes the Light of the world of whom John's gospel speaks. The ushers light their candles from the ministers candle, then light the candle of each worshiper nearest the aisle. Please dip your unlit candle to receive the flame from your neighbor's lit candle. The lighted candle is never tilted, but is always held upright when giving light to another. Candles will remain lit until after the blessing.

Silent Night, Holy Night



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
 1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885
 Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

✠ ✠ ✠ SENDING ✠ ✠ ✠

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

Blessing

God the Creator who delights in you,
 Jesus the Savior who is born for you,
 and the lifegiving Spirit who shines on you,
 ✠ bless you and keep you in hope and peace.

Amen.

Candles may be extinguished as the lights brighten and we conclude the alphabet.

X is for Xmas, the X is actually the symbol for Christ and the first letter of the Greek word for Christ, Χριστός

Y is for You! You're here to celebrate and worship.

Z is for zeal, the passion with which we share the Good News and God's love tonight. It is with zeal we sing our final song!

Please rise in body and/or spirit.

Sending Hymn

Joy to the World



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

Sending Forth

Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Toccata

C.M. Widor

Your Offering Empowers Our Ministry

Thank you! Supported by your time, your talents, and your financial support, Lutheran Church of the Reformation continues its mission to gather, welcome and nurture a spiritual community to love and serve the world in Christ's name.

Regular donations can be set up at reformationdc.org/give, or by reaching out Jarrod Jabre, our Director of Operations, at 202-543-4200 Ext. 100 | jabre@ReformationDC.org.

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PRAYER LIST

WE GIVE THANKS ...

For those who celebrate anniversaries this week:

None this week.

For those who celebrate birthdays this week:

Timothy Allmond, Jr. (12/26); Larson Grant, Karin Haxton, Deborah Mennuti, & Frederic Robb (12/28); Axel Euken (12/30).

WE PRAY FOR ...

For the people of Palestine, Israel, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Ethiopia.

For the families, friends, and communities affected by gun violence.

For elder and homebound congregation members.

For the families, friends, and communities affected by natural disasters.

For Al Swingle, as he continues to navigate health challenges.

For Shay McNeil and Jeff Poulin, in the loss of Jeff's father.

For the family and friends of Dina Finkel's godfather, as they mourn his passing.

For Nancy Doellgast and Matt & Jocelyn Donahue, as they mourn the passing of Nancy's sister, Jeannette Doellgast.

For those experiencing anxiety, loneliness, and distance from family and friends.

For the migrants who are bused throughout the country.

Roger Dahlin, as his health recovers.

Rebecca Pfahl, for health and healing.

For the Anacostia River.

For our congregational and family members in military and foreign service:

Deborah, Jonathan, and Sophia Mennuti, Matt Oskam, Drew Shealy, Diane Kohn, Melinda Manning, Jon Jones, Lee Patterson, Kim Loewecke, and family members of those in service here and around the world.

From our hearts for:

Tim Allmond, Angela Braxton, Emanuele and Emmajeane Crupi, Bob Hedrick, Leah Jones, Marvin Jones, Emmanuel Kabasaala, Margot Lyddane, Ron and Daphne Rhine, Bill Scott, Madge Selinsky, Carolyn Walker, Thomas Winter, and Gloria Wolf.

Please email your prayer requests to office@ReformationDC.org.

Have an announcement for the Weekly Word? Please submit to miller@reformationdc.org by Tuesday at midnight.



The poinsettias in the chancel are given to the glory of God!

Names are listed alphabetically by honoree's last name.

In memory of Yat Lai Au by Thomas Au

In honor of my parents, Patti and John Aviles, by Matt Aviles

In memory of Susan Blackman by Paul Blackman

In memory of Ted's brother-in-law John Paul Fackler, Jr., PhD by Ted Steege

In memory of Margot Glavis by Margot Lyddane

In memory of Carol Grawey by Karen and Rob Cowden

In memory of Rev. David and Sarah Fae Heim by Peter and Laurie Heim

In memory of Victor Hickman and Betty Walker by Wayne and Grace Krumwiede

In memory of Dorothy Hutchinson by George and Sara Hutchinson

In memory of their mother – Verna E. (Betty) King by Kay and Larry King

In memory of their brother – Corliss F. King II by Kay and Larry King

In honor of Emmanuel Kabasaala, his foster Dad, and in memory of Emmanuel's mother by Philip W. Moeller

In memory of Mary Lange by Ivy Finkenstadt

In memory of James Lyddane, Sr. by Margot Lyddane

In memory of Aune and Ed Manty by Liz Tuckermanty and Dale Manty

In memory of Rosina Mason by Margot Lyddane

In memory of The Rev. George and Evelyn Moeller, his parents, by Philip W. Moeller

In memory of Kittie Murray by Margot Lyddane

In memory of Leah and Frank Papke by Karen and Rob Cowden

In memory of my husband, Robert Christian Pfahl, Jr., and in gratitude for my daughters, Rebecca Christiane Pfahl and Elisabeth Lloyd Pfahl, and for my grandchildren, Jacqueline Newstead and Margaret Carmela Newstead by Nancy Pfahl

In memory of Ted's brother, John Francis Steege, MD., by Ted Steege

In memory of Clarie McKeever Thompson by Mike Thompson and Pete Hillman

In memory of Roger Thompson by Mike Thompson and Pete Hillman

In memory of Bob and Mary Rose Tucker by Liz Tuckermanty and Dale Manty

In memory of Faith Wasicek by Thomas Au

In memory of Frederick, Katerina, and Arlene Williams, his grandparents and aunt, by Philip W. Moeller

In memory of Jule and Peggy Zabawa by Margot Lyddane



In memory of Barney Finkel by Dina Finkel

In memory of Lillian Finkel by Dina Finkel

In memory of our dads David and Albert from Andrew Robb and Sarah Stauderman

In honor of our moms Frances and Helen from Andrew Robb and Sarah Stauderman

In memory of Bitte Sewell by Dina Finkel

In memory of Thomas Sewell by Dina Finkel

May God bless you with the courage of Mary
and the graciousness of Joseph this
Christmas season.

Thanks be to God for today's Worship Leaders...

Presiding Minister: Pastor Kevin Vandiver

Altar Care: Sarah Stauderman

Teller: Judith Mangubat

Cantors: Gabbi Levy

Reader: Parry Carlson

Assisting Minister: Karen Carlson

Greeter/Ushers: Emma Harrington, Andy Weaver

Livestream Tech Team: Kirsten Petree, Nisa Kibona



If you are in need of pastoral care, please call the church office at 202-543-4200, ext. 103. You may also email Pastor Kevin at vandiver@reformationdc.org.

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Community Host	Emmanuel Kabasaala	space@ReformationDC.org
Director of Operations	Jarrod Jabre	jabre@ReformationDC.org
Church Administrator	Julie Miller	miller@ReformationDC.org

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**President:** Mike Thompson      **Vice President:** Evan Schrage      **Treasurer:** Matt Aviles  
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