

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
December 17, 2023
3rd Sunday of Advent



ALL ARE WELCOME HERE!

**Gospel in Action: Caring for all God's children, we shall serve
God through worship, learning, and sharing.**

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Interim Pastor: Rev. Laura Kuntz

Office Administrator: Heather Nordman

Organist: Randi Smarsh Custodians: Bill Higgins and Beth Lecorchick



ORDER OF WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

The congregation is invited to stand.

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE - Joy

Reader One: When I look around, I see shadows of sadness, families who have lost loved ones, people in prison, people who are isolated and feel on their own.

Reader Two: When I look around, I see shadows of grief, people dreading the holidays because of painful memories, because they're recently divorced, because they don't want to spend another Christmas alone.

Reader One: In the face of sadness, we light a candle of joy.

Reader Two: In the face of grief, in the face of loss, we light a candle of joy.

Light the third candle on your Advent wreath.

Reader One: May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.

Reader Two: May the light from this candle say to all that God's joy is coming on earth as it already is in heaven.

Reader One: Brothers and sisters in Christ, be not afraid, God's joy is at hand!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

C: Amen.

P: God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Everlasting God,

C: You love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.

P: Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all.

C: Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

Joy to the World

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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
 and heav'n and na - ture sing, and

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.
 heav'n and na - ture sing,

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748
 Music: English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

ANTIOCH
 CM and repeat

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

KYRIE

Leader
In peace, in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Assembly
Lord, have mer - cy. Christ, have
For the reign of God, and for
mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.
peace through-out the world, for the u-ni-ty of all, let us pray to the
Lord. For your
Lord, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.
peo-ple here who have come to give you praise, for the strength to live your

word, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer-cy. Christ, have mer-cy. Lord, have

Help, save, and de-fend us, O God.

mer - cy. A - men.

Text: *Lutheran Book of Worship*, adapt. Marty Haugen, b. 1950
 Music: *Now the Feast and Celebration*, Marty Haugen
 Text and music © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The congregation is invited to sit.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Children (through 6th grade) dismissed for Sunday School.

FIRST LESSON Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

L: The first lesson is from Isaiah, the 61st chapter.

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. 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.

L: The word of the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

PSALM 126

TONE



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REFRAIN



The LORD has done great things for us.

Psalm 126:3
Psalm refrain reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year B* © 2008 Augsburg Fortress.
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¹When the LORD restored the for- | tunes of Zion,
then were we like | those who dream.

²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with | shouts of joy.**

Then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great | things for them.”

³The LORD has done great | things for us,
and we are | glad indeed.

⁴**Restore our for- | tunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses | of the Negeb. R**

⁵Those who | sowed with tears
will reap with | songs of joy.

⁶**Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed,
will come again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves. R**

SECOND LESSON 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

L: The second lesson is from 1 Thessalonians, the 5th chapter.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil. ²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

L: The word of the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

The congregation is invited to stand.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL John 1:6-8, 19-28

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 1st chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord!

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. ¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” ²¹And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” ²²Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer

for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said. ²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” ²⁶John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

P: The gospel of the Lord!

C: Praise to you, O Christ!

The congregation is invited to sit.

SERMON

Pastor Laura Kuntz

The congregation is invited to stand.

THE ANNUNCIATION

Luke 1:26-28, 30-32, 38

Leader: And angel went from God to a town called Nazareth to a woman whose name was Mary. The angel said to her, “Rejoice, O highly favored, for God is with you. You shall bear a child, and his name shall be Jesus, the Chosen One of God most high.” And Mary said, “I am a servant of my God, I live to do your will.”

HYMN OF THE DAY

The Magnificat

Luke 1:46-55



1., 3. My soul pro-claims your great-ness, O God, and my
2. You have cast the might - y down from their thrones, and up -



spir - it re - joic - es in you. You have looked with love on your
lift - ed the hum - ble of 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. How you fa - vor the
strong is your jus - tice, strong your love, as you prom - ised to

weak and low - ly one, hum - bling the proud of heart!
Sar - ah and A - bra - ham, kind - ness for - ev - er - more. D.C.

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

A: Fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy as we bear witness to the great things you have done. Give your church a spirit of gladness as we gather and as we are sent. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: Let the trees of the field sing your praise. Protect forests, orchards, rainforests, and all wooded areas from disease and deforestation. Keep us grateful for their gifts of oxygen, food, shade, and shelter. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: You love justice and promise your favor to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and incarcerated. Grant wisdom and compassion to those who work for public safety and all who work within prisons, jails, and courts, that mercy may increase and violence wither away. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: Give us strength to pray for our world without ceasing and provoke us toward love and good deeds for all who are in need especially those we say aloud or silently in our hearts.... Give Provide for all without adequate housing, food, employment, or access to health care. Empower us as helpers and advocates. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: Open our hearts to those who serve as truth-tellers in our church and in our society. Bless leaders in church and society in their task of proclamation. Amplify voices of peacemakers, advocates, and especially those whose voices are ignored or marginalized. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: With gratitude we rejoice in the saints who witnessed to your life in all circumstances, in whom your Spirit was not quenched, even in death. Through them, teach us always to hold fast to what is good. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: We pray for this community of faith and for its Call Committee. For your wisdom and love. Give us holy indifference that we may be indifferent to our own will. Through your Holy Spirit, help us to be unwilling to do anything but your will. Give us patience and guidance as we seek to know what you would like us to do. Bless all that we do, so that we can do what you bless. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

P: Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

Amen.

The congregation is invited to sit.

OFFERING

“People Look East”

Bell Choir

The congregation is invited to stand.

OFFERING PRAYER

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Let My Prayer Rise Up

All




Let my prayer rise up like in - cense be - fore you, the



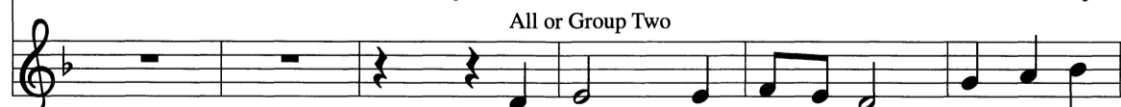
lift-ing up of my hands as an of - fer-ing to you.

Leader or Group One



O God, I call to you, come to me now; oh, hear my

All or Group Two



O God, I call to you, come to me



voice when I cry to you. Let my prayer rise up like




now; oh, hear my voice when I cry to you. Let my prayer rise




in - cense be - fore you, the lift-ing up of my hands as an



up like in - cense be - fore you, the lift-ing up of my



of - fer-ing to you. Keep watch with - in me, God;



hands as an of - fer-ing to you. Keep

deep in my heart may the light of your love be burn - ing
 watch with - in me, God; deep in my heart may the light of your

bright. Let my prayer rise up like in - cense be -
 love be burn - ing bright. Let my prayer rise up like

fore you, the lift - ing up of my hands as an of - fer - ing to
 in - cense be - fore you, the lift - ing up of my hands as an

you. All praise to the God of all— Cre - a - tor of
 of - fer - ing to you. All praise to the

life; all praise be to Christ and the Spir - it of love.
 God of all— Cre - a - tor of life; all praise be to Christ and the

Let my prayer rise up like in-cense be - fore you, the
 Spir-it of love. Let my prayer rise up like in-cense be -
 lift-ing up of my hands as an of-fer-ing to you.
 fore you, the lift-ing up of my hands as an of-fer-ing to you.

Text: *Holden Evening Prayer*, Marty Haugen, b. 1950, based on Psalm 141
 Music: Marty Haugen
 Text and music © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Leader or Assistant *All*
 May God be with you all. And al - so with you.
Leader or Assistant *All*
 Let us sing our thanks to God. It is right to give God thanks and praise.

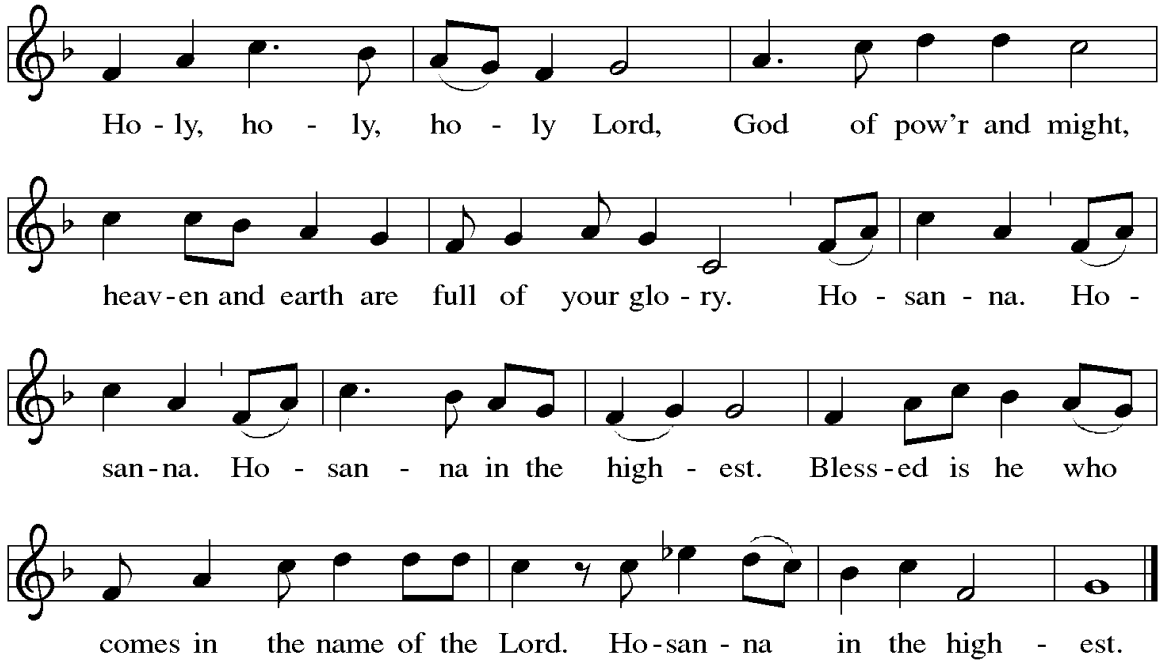
Leader Blessed are you, Creator of the universe, from old you have led your people by night and day. May the light of your Christ make our darkness bright, for your Word and your presence are the light of our pathways, and you are the light and life of all creation.

All
 A - men.

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PREFACE

P: Gracious God, you give life to all Creation. It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

Bell Choir

Words printed below for reflection.

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.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

The congregation is invited to sit.

COMMUNION

Drawn to the Light

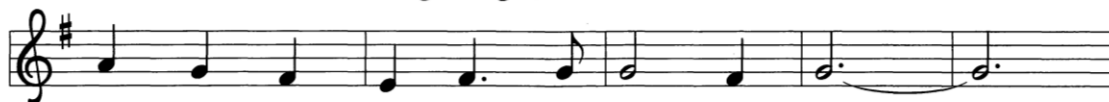
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1 Peo - ple who walk in dark - ness have sought a light in the
2 How can we tell a heav - en from hell if ev - 'ry - one
3 Where is the sun? Oh, there will be none! The Lamb is the



heart of the dark - est night. Just when we thought all would be
dwells in the dark of night? Morn - ing dis - pels, gent - ly com -
one who is shin - ing bright, bids us to come! Life has be -



lost, we were drawn to the light of God.
pels, and we're drawn to the light of God.
gun when we're drawn to the light of God.

Refrain



Dawn is in sight! Gone is the night, drawn to the



light and the morn - ing. Glo - rious and bright, oh, what a



sight to be drawn to the light of God.

Text: John C. Ylvisaker, b. 1937
Music: John C. Ylvisaker
Text and music © 1990 John C. Ylvisaker

LA CROSSE
9 10 88 and refrain

All Earth Is Hopeful

Toda la tierra



To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra al Sal - va - dor
 1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
 2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:
 3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;
 4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



y el sur - co a - bier - to, la ob - ra del Se - ñor; es el
 Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
 "A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -
 new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most
 This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -
 la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
 ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -
 here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All
 world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad. dar - nos li - ber - tad.
 God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
 stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.
 clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!
 Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

- 2 *Dice el profeta al pueblo de Israel:*
"De madre virgen ya viene Emmanuel,"
será "Dios con nosotros," hermano será,
con él la esperanza al mundo volverá.
- 3 *Montes y valles habrá que preparar;*
nuevos caminos tenemos que trazar.
Él está ya muy cerca, venidlo a encontrar,
y todas las puertas abrid de par en par.

- 4 *En una cueva Jesús apareció,*
pero en el mundo está presente hoy.
Vive en nuestros hermanos, con ellos está;
y vuelve de nuevo a darnos libertad.

The congregation is invited to stand.

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

P: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: Let us pray,

C: Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

BLESSING

Leader or Assistant *All*

Let us bless our God: Praise and thanks to you.

Leader or Assistant

May God, Cre - a - tor, bless us and keep us, may

Christ be ev - er light for our lives, may the Spir - it of Love be our

guide and path for all of our days. *All* A - men.

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SENDING HYMN

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

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1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
 2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
 3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'ings bore,
 4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;

the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
 go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.
 shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.
 a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.

The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
 The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
 A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;
 With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see

Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
 A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.
 in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
 the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

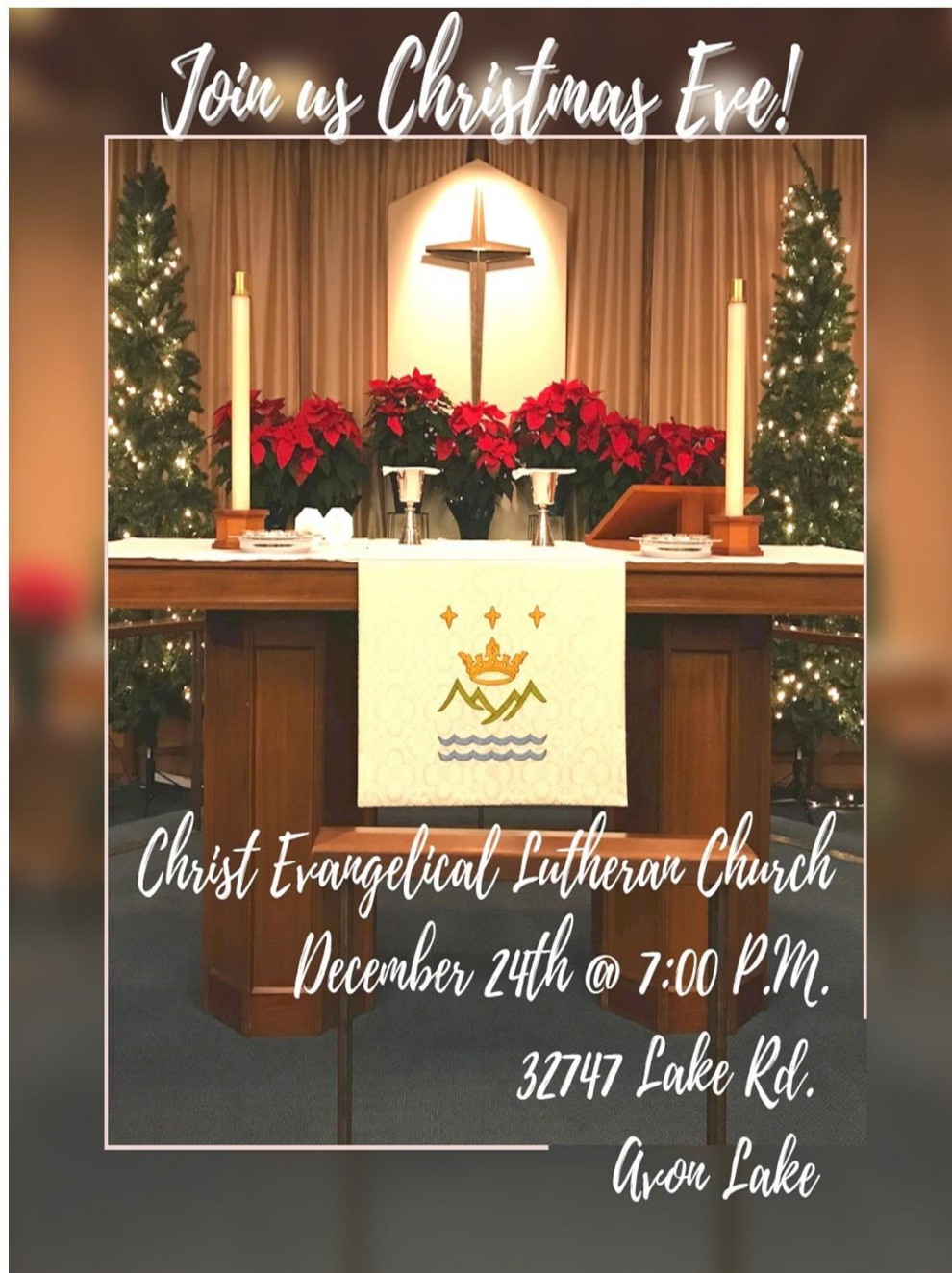
Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907
 Music: Swedish folk tune

HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG
 76 76 D

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Keep awake.

C: Thanks be to God.



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