

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
December 24, 2023
4th 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 - Love

Reader One: Because too many people are wandering in the wilderness, because too many people are sitting in the valley of the shadow of death, because too many of our conversations are laced with conflict and rancor, we light candles.

Reader Two: Because people all over the world are suffering, and we're often too distracted to notice, we light candles.

Reader One: Today we stop everything and light these candles: one for hope, one for peace, one for joy, and one for love.

Light the fourth candle in your Advent wreath.

Reader Two: May the light from these candles overwhelm the world.

Reader One: May the light from these candles illuminate the valley of the shadow of death.

Reader Two: May the light and fire from these candles burn away everything that is preventing God's love from being born among us.

Reader One: Brothers and sisters, be not afraid, even now—even now—God's love is overwhelming the world, on earth as it is in heaven!

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

279

O Little Town of Bethlehem

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
 4 O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
 cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.

yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
 oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893
 Music: Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908

ST. LOUIS
 86 86 7 6 86

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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father 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 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

L: The first lesson is from 2 Samuel, the 7th chapter.

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you." ⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been

moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

L: The word of the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

PSALM: Luke 1:46b-55

TONE



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REFRAIN



You, LORD, have lift-ed up the low - ly.

Luke 1:48

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^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness [|] of the Lord,
⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in [|] God my Savior,
⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your [|] lowly servant.**
From this day all generations will [|] call me blessed:
⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great [|] things for me
and holy [|] is your name.

⁵⁰**You have mercy on | those who fear you,
 from generation to | generation. R**
⁵¹You have shown strength | with your arm
 and scattered the proud in | their conceit,
⁵²**casting down the mighty | from their thrones
 and lifting | up the lowly.**
⁵³You have filled the hungry | with good things
 and sent the rich | away empty.
⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,
 to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,**
⁵⁵the promise made | to our forebears,
 to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever. **R**

SECOND LESSON Romans 16:25-27

L: The second lesson is from Romans, the 16th chapter.

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

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 Luke 1:26-38

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

C: Glory to you, O Lord!

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

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

All

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: You promise mercy to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants forever. Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, and collaborative relationship with those of other faiths. Strengthen our shared values, that we work together in caring for our world. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: As fields and crops lie dormant, bless them with holy rest. Prepare them to thrive, that they provide abundant food in due season. Protect animals who hibernate and provide for all who scavenge for food in the lean season. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: You raise up the lowly and cast down the arrogant. Teach humility to all in positions of authority. Break down systems of oppression, especially systems that perpetuate inequity and exclusion. Do not allow wealth, power, or pride to become idols that obscure your call to justice. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: Look with favor upon all who cry out to you. Accompany with tenderness all who are afraid or ill especially those we say aloud or silently in our hearts.... Rescue all who experience abuse or who live under threat of violence, especially refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers in search of a safe and stable home. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: You are pleased to make your home among us. Make our homecomings joyful as we gather with friends, families, and chosen families in celebration. Grant safety to all who travel. Sustain the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other ministries that assist in setting up new homes. Merciful God,

C: Receive our prayer.

A: Blessed are you for Mary and all your servants in every generation who lived according to your promise of mercy. Strengthen us by their example until the revelation of your glory is made known. 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.

C: Amen.

The congregation is invited to sit.

OFFERING

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful *Offering Song*



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980
Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923
Text and music © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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The congregation is invited to stand.

OFFERING PRAYER

232

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.

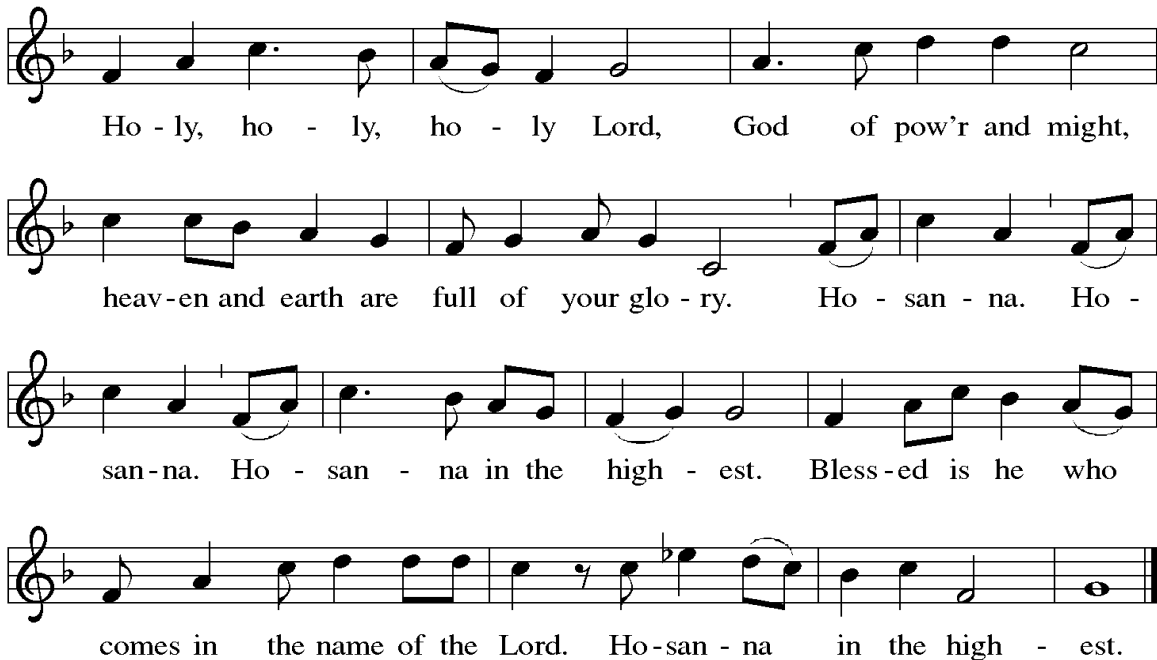
Leader Blessed are you, Creator of the universe, from old you have led your people by night and day. May the light of your Christ make our darkness bright, for your Word and your presence are the light of our pathways, and you are the light and life of all creation.

All
 A - men.

Text and Music: Marty Haugen, © 1990, 2016 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

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

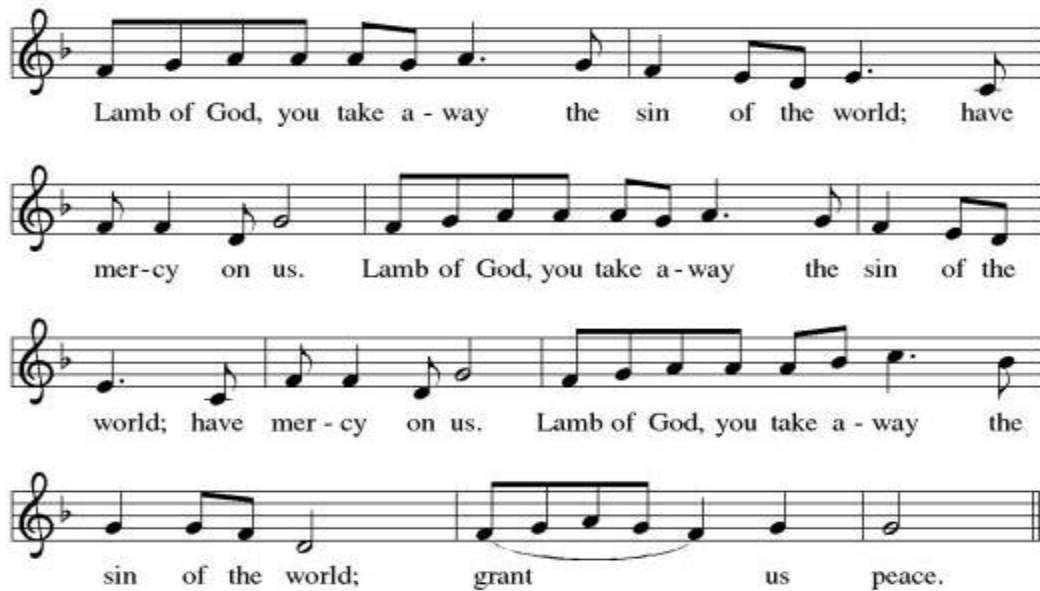
P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: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

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

C: 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

Christ, Be Our Light

715



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for
2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for
3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for
4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for
5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the
truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants
your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the
 dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your
 church gath - ered to - day.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957
 Music: Bernadette Farrell
 Text and music © 1993 Bernadette Farrell, admin. OCP Publications

CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT
 98 96 and refrain

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah 240

- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.

He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
 He shall feed the flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them home - ward.
 Lift your heads and lift high the gate - way for the King of glo - ry.
 He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954
 Music: Yiddish folk tune
 Text © 1984 Fortress Press

TIF IN VELDELE
 107 96

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.

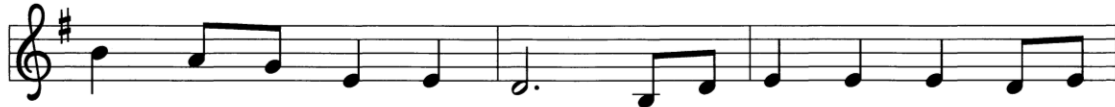
C: Amen.



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
 jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . . from his throne.
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.



Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat
 Music: Irish traditional
 Text © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc.

STAR OF COUNTY DOWN
 Irregular

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Christ is near.

C: Thanks be to God.

Join us Christmas Eve!



*Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
December 24th @ 7:00 P.M.*

*32747 Lake Rd.
Avon Lake*

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