

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church
December 31, 2023
1st Sunday of Christmas



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.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the Word made flesh, our life and our salvation.

C: Amen.

P: Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: God of life,

C: You promise good news of great joy for all people, and call us to be messengers of your peace. We confess that too often we hoard our joy, our resources, and our security. We nurture conflict and build barriers. We neglect the needs of our neighbors and ignore the groaning of creation. Have mercy on us. Where we are self-centered, open our hearts. Where we are reluctant, give us courage. Where we are cynical, restore our trust. Renew us with your grace and give us again the hope of eternal life in you. Amen.

P: Hear the good news: We are children of God and heirs of God's promises through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In † Jesus we are forgiven and redeemed. Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth shall know the salvation of God.

C: Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

CHRISTMAS

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The Bells of Christmas

Det kimer nu til julefest

Det ki - mer nu til ju - le - fest, det ki - mer
1 The bells of Christ - mas chime once more; the heav'n - ly
2 This world, though wide and far out - spread, could scarce - ly
3 Now let us go with qui - et mind, the swad - dled
4 Oh, join with me, in glad - ness sing, to keep our

for den høj - e gæst, som steg til la - ve
 guest is at the door. He comes to earth - ly
 find for you a bed. Your cra - dle was a
 babe with shep - herds find, to gaze on him who
 Christ - mas with our king, un - til our song, from

hyt - ter ned med nyt - års - ga - ver: fryd og fred.
 dwell - ings still with new year gifts of peace, good will.
 man - ger stall, no pearl nor silk nor king - ly hall.
 glad - dens them, the love - liest flow'r of Jes - se's stem.
 lov - ing souls, like rush - ing might - y wa - ter rolls!

- 5 O patriarchs' Joy, O prophets' Song,
 O Dayspring bright, awaited long,
 O Son of Man, incarnate Word,
 great David's Son, great David's Lord:
- 6 Come, Jesus, glorious heav'nly guest,
 and keep your Christmas in our breast;
 then David's harpstrings, hushed so long,
 shall swell our jubilee of song.

Text: Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig, 1783–1872; tr. Charles Porterfield Krauth, 1823–1883, alt.
 Music: Carl C. N. Balle, 1806–1855

DET KIMER NU TIL JULEFEST
 LM

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



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Refrain

This is the feast of vic - to - ry for our God.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose
2 Sing . . . with all the peo - ple of God, and

blood set us free to be peo - ple of God.
join in the hymn of all cre - a - tion:

Pow - er and rich - es, wis - dom and strength, and
Bless - ing and hon - or, glo - ry and might be to

Refrain

hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.
God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

3 For the Lamb who was slain has be -

Refrain

gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

C: 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 congregation is invited to sit.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Children dismissed for Sunday School

FIRST LESSON Isaiah 61:10- 62:3

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

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. ^{62:1}For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. ²The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. ³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

L: The word of the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

PSALM 148

TONE



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REFRAIN



Psalm 148:13
Psalm refrain reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year B* © 2008 Augsburg Fortress.
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- ¹Hallelujah! Praise the LORD | from the heavens;
praise God | in the heights.
- ²**Praise the LORD, | all you angels;
sing praise, all you | hosts of heaven.**
- ³Praise the LORD, | sun and moon;
sing praise, all you | shining stars.
- ⁴**Praise the LORD, heav- | en of heavens,
and you waters a- | bove the heavens.**
- ⁵Let them praise the name | of the LORD,
who commanded, and they | were created,
- ⁶**who made them stand fast forev- | er and ever,
giving them a law that shall not | pass away. R**

⁷Praise the LORD | from the earth,
 you sea monsters | and all deeps;
⁸**fire and hail, | snow and fog,**
tempestuous wind, do- | ing God's will;
⁹mountains | and all hills,
 fruit trees | and all cedars;
¹⁰**wild beasts | and all cattle,**
creeping things and | flying birds;
¹¹sovereigns of the earth | and all peoples,
 princes and all rulers | of the world;
¹²**young | men and maidens,**
old and | young together. R
¹³Let them praise the name | of the LORD,
 whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over | earth and heaven.
¹⁴**The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all | faithful**
servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. | Hallelujah! R

SECOND LESSON Galatians 4:4-7

L: The second lesson is from Galatians, the 4th chapter.

⁴When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

L: The word of the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God!

The congregation is invited to stand.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

GOSPEL Luke 2:22-40

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2nd chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord!

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” ²⁵Now 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. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷Guided 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, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” ³³And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” ³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

P: The gospel of the Lord!

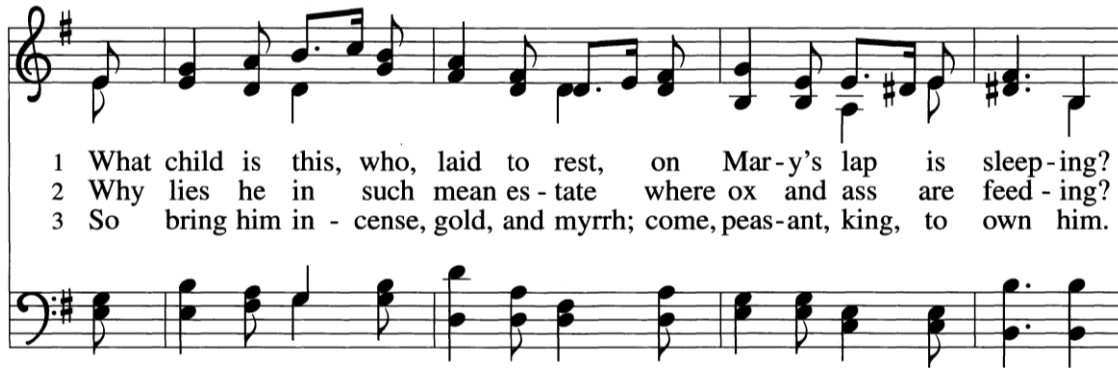
C: Praise to you, O Christ!

The congregation is invited to sit.

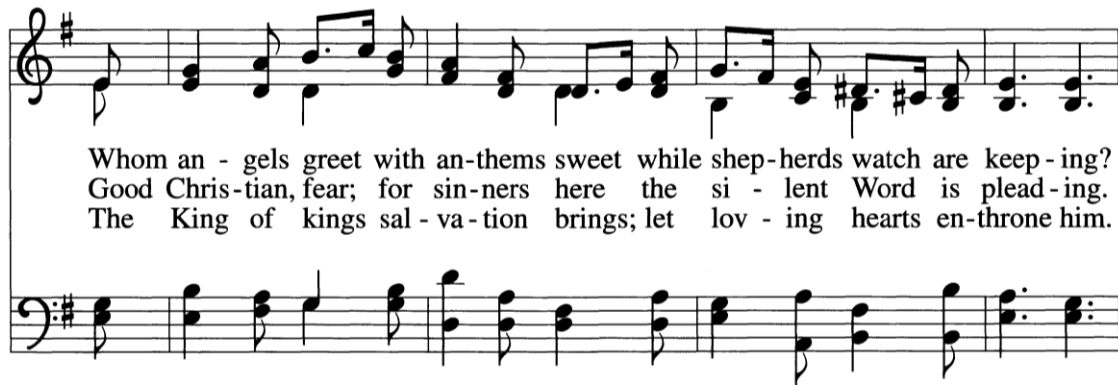
SERMON

Pastor Laura Kuntz

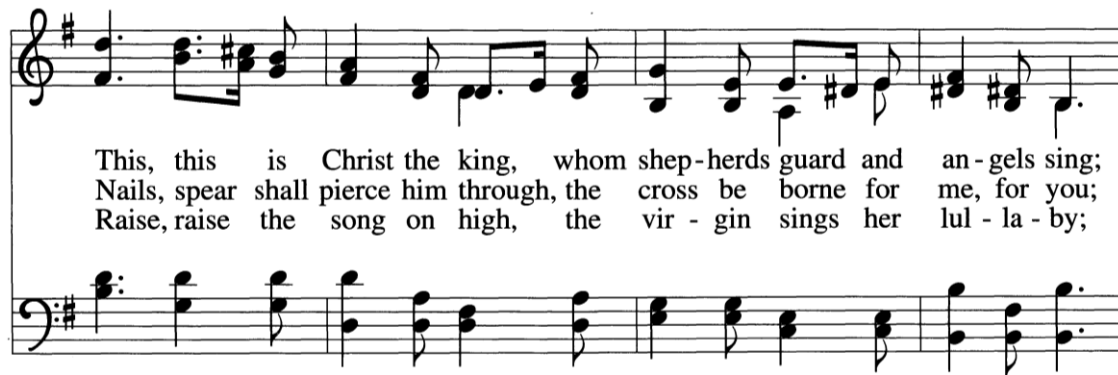
The congregation is invited to stand.



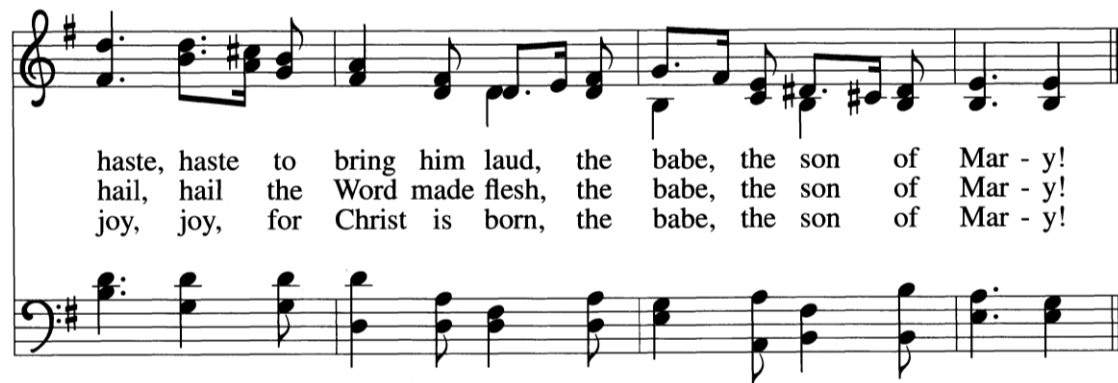
1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas - ant, king, to own him.



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: English ballad, 16th cent.

GREENSLEEVES
 87 87 68 67

APOSTLES' CREED

C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A: 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.

A: You inspire faith in our hearts and call us to rejoice with our whole selves at the salvation you bring. Make our churches places of belonging for all people in the fullness of their being. Raise up the gifts and the witness of people who are neurodivergent, living with disability, or bearing invisible illness. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Your praise is sung throughout creation in all times and seasons. As the new year turns, ground us in your changeless and sustaining love. Keep us attentive to the rhythms of the cosmos and inspire us to live in harmony with all the earth. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Give hope and stamina to leaders who work tirelessly for the sake of the most vulnerable. We pray especially for organizations working on behalf of children to provide basic needs, to protect from abuse and neglect, to address trauma, and to rescue from trafficking. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Sustain all people who, like Simeon and Anna, have been waiting for salvation and wholeness especially those we say aloud or silently in our hearts... We pray especially for anyone living with cancer or chronic illness, all people who are in physical rehabilitation or addiction recovery, and those experiencing complications from long COVID. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Let this community of faith be a joyful and welcome place for all ages and generations. Teach us to honor the wisdom of children, the inquisitiveness of youth, the thoughtfulness of adults, and the knowledge of elders. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: We give thanks for all the beloved who lived with expectation and departed this life in peace. Sustain us in joy until we join them around your throne. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

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. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

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

C: Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

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

C: And also with you.

The congregation is invited to sit.

OFFERING

"Little Baby Child"

Frank Lee

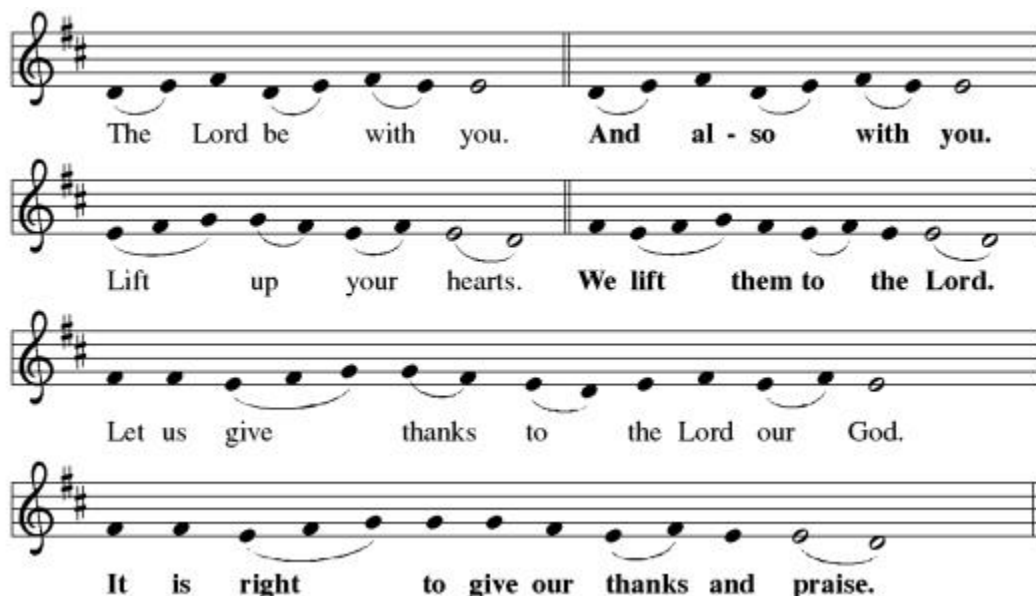
The congregation is invited to stand.

OFFERING PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

C: God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.

DIALOGUE



The Lord be with you. And also with you.

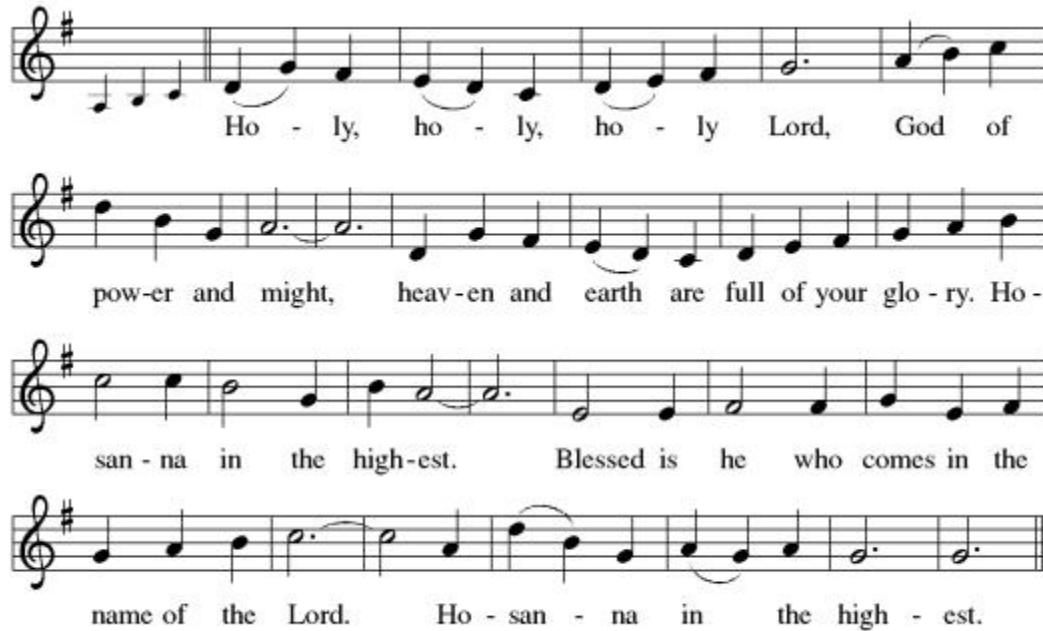
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

P: 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. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. 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-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high-est. Blessed 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, grant us peace.

The congregation is invited to sit.

COMMUNION

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Love Has Come

1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the
2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -
3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -
Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;
sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;
last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.
hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to
what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the
Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the
you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.
gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950
Music: F. Seguin, *Recueil de Noël's composés en langue provençale*, 1856
Text © 1996 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

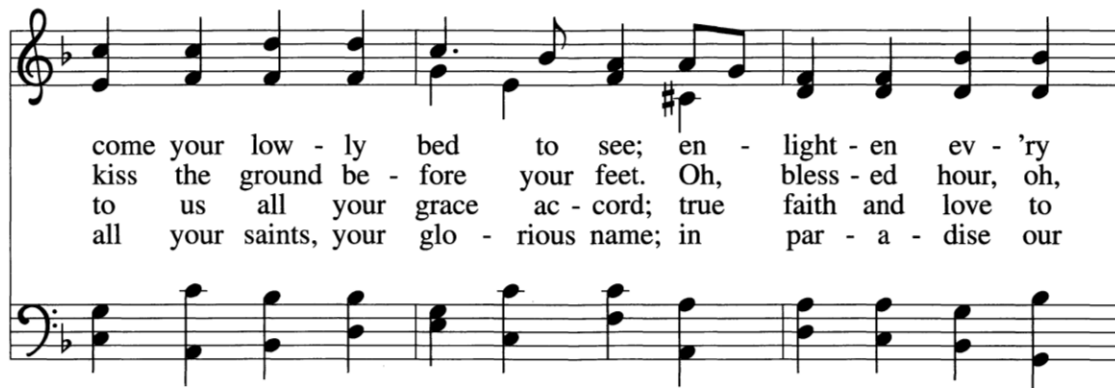
UN FLAMBEAU
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Your Little Ones, Dear Lord

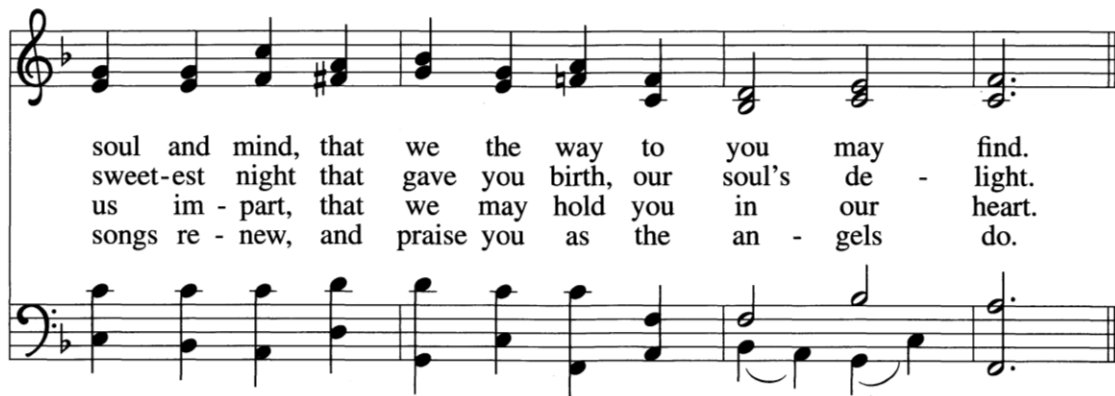
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1 Your lit - tle ones, dear Lord, are we, and
2 With songs we has - ten you to greet, and
3 Oh, draw us whol - ly to you, Lord, and
4 Un - til at last we too pro - claim, with



come your low - ly bed to see; en - light - en ev - 'ry
kiss the ground be - fore your feet. Oh, bless - ed hour, oh,
to us all your grace ac - cord; true faith and love to
all your saints, your glo - rious name; in par - a - dise our



soul and mind, that we the way to you may find.
sweet-est night that gave you birth, our soul's de - light.
us im - part, that we may hold you in our heart.
songs re - new, and praise you as the an - gels do.

Text: Hans A. Brorson, 1694–1764; tr. Harriet Krauth Spaeth, 1845–1925, alt.
Music: Johann A. P. Schulz, 1747–1800

HER KOMMER DINE ARME SMÅ
LM

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: God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

BLESSING

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

C: Amen.

SENDING HYMN

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

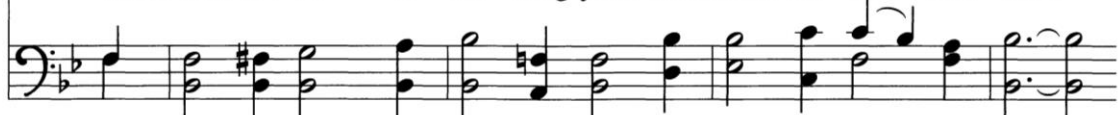
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1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,
3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,
4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.
who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow:
when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king.”
A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,
look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still-ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
 and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
 oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!
 and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810–1876
 Music: Richard S. Willis, 1819–1900

CAROL
 CMD

DISMISSAL

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

C: Thanks be to God.

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