



“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.”

Luke 21: 25

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
1st Sunday of Advent – December 1, 2024**

420 Beaver St., PO Box 411

Mars, PA 16046-0411

www.stjohnchurchmars.org

Phone: 724-625-1830

email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org

Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister

Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

*We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning!
Know that you are welcome here just as you are.*

If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time worshipping at St. John, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin.

*Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. As you are comfortable, please rise when there is an * and join in the congregational responses, noted in **bold**. All songs are marked with numbers. The red book in the pew has all the songs. Look for the large number in the upper corner of the page to find the correct song.*

*During the time of **Peace**, you are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcomed to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew.*

*At the time of **Offering**, you are invited to share a gift. Envelopes are available in the pews if you prefer. Online gifts may be made using the QR code below:*



*You may also offer updates to our ongoing prayer list using the yellow cards in the pews and placing them in the offering plates. **Visitor information cards** and member attendance cards (attached to the front of the bulletin) may also be placed in the offering plates.*

*As Lutherans, we believe Christ is truly present in the elements of the Lord's Supper. At the time of **Holy Communion**, all baptized individuals are welcome to come forward via the center aisle, receive the elements, and return via the side aisles. We begin at the front of the right side, commune all on the right side, then we will invite the left side forward. When you come forward, you may receive the bread from the pastor (gluten free wafers are available), then pre-filled cups with wine or grape juice from the assisting minister. You may consume the elements after receiving them then place the empty cup in the tray held by the acolyte. Those who do not receive Holy Communion are welcome to come forward for a blessing.*

*If you need a **restroom**, restrooms are located on the bottom floor at the far side of the building from the elevator. Restrooms may be accessed either via the stairs in the rear of the sanctuary, the stairs by the Greeting Area, or the elevator.*

*A **playroom** is available downstairs for children who need a break from the worship service. This room is by the elevator on the lower level. Children are also welcome to utilize the books and puzzles available in the Greeting Area on the top level by the elevator.*

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to fill out the blue prayer request forms located in each pew. The cards will be collected during our hymn of the day, and prayers will be offered during the prayers of intercession.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

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

*GATHERING SONG *Fling Wide the Door* (ELW 259)



1 Fling wide the door, un - bar the gate; the King of glo - ry
2 He is the rock of our be - lief, the heart of mer - cy's
3 Oh, hap - py towns and bless - ed lands that live by their true
4 Come, Lord, our Sav - ior, Je - sus Christ; our hearts are o - pen



comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the
gen - tle self. His king - ly crown is ho - li - ness; his
king's com - mands. And bless - ed be the hearts he rules, the
wide in trust. Oh, show us now your love - ly grace, up -



Sav - ior of the world who brings his great sal - va - tion
scep - ter is his love - li - ness; he brings our sor - rows
hum - ble plac - es where he dwells. He is the right - ful
on our sor - rows shine your face, and let your Ho - ly



to the earth. So raise a shout of ho - ly mirth and
to an end. Now glad - ly praise our king and friend, and
Son of bliss who fills our lives and makes us his, cre -
Spir - it guide our jour - ney in your grace so wide. We



praise our God and Lord, Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Word.
wor - ship him with song for sav - ing us from wrong.
a - tor of the world, our on - ly strength for good.
praise your ho - ly name, from age to age the same!

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Greetings to you in the name of the triune God, the one whose word always accomplishes:
The Shaper of Life, the Savior of Humanity, the Spirit of Renewal.

Amen.

Today, as we confess our sins, we recognize how easily we overlook the gifts God gives.
And we accept the sad truth that our limitations often create the conditions for sin. Let us
confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Merciful God,

we want a faith that feels like more than words,

but we lack your power to embody goodness.

We hear your call to serve others yet feel too worn out to make the food.

We hunger to taste justice but fear the burning spice of the meal.

We want our place at your table but resist sitting beside a stranger.

We have lost our appetites for mere thoughts and prayers,

but we fail to match our intentions to our actions.

Forgive us and restore us with the healing wholeness of your presence.

God knows we are imperfect.

But God did not invite us here today for what we have done
or how we have behaved. God loves you.

God always cared much more for you than for your shortcomings.

God forgives you all your sins.

Now repeat after me.

We accept God's forgiveness.

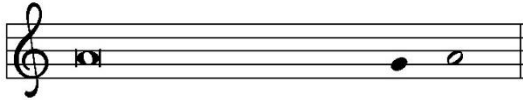
We accept God's forgiveness.

We take our place in God's purpose.

We take our place in God's purpose.

Amen.

***KYRIE**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



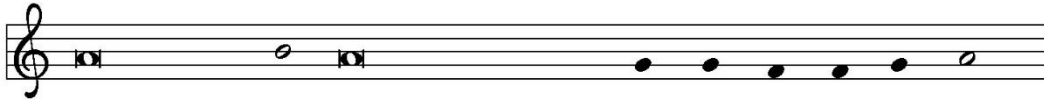
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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 wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE *This Is the Feast

Refrain

Assisting minister



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.

All



1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless-ing and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless-ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



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

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Each of our Advent candles
represents God's generous goodness,
the advent of Jesus, God's greatest gift,
the Spirit's fluttering flicker of joy.



As we light each candle,
we recognize the gifts
God has given us this week.

Together, we pray:
God, we reach for unreasonable hope;
and you prepare an incomparable future.

The first candle is lit during the singing of the hymn.

ADVENT SONG *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* (ELW 240)

1 Light one can-dle 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.

Spirit, you know how shallow hope feels
when our faith hides from what is real.
Use your holy story to show us the human moments
when you worked wonders for your people,
so we can find hope in our lives, too.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

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

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

PRAYER FOR OUTREACH MINISTRY

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14-16

A reading from Jeremiah.

¹⁴ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*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.

*GOSPEL READING: Luke 21:25-36

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ²⁵ “There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶ People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

²⁹ Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰ as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴ “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵ like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

*HYMN OF THE DAY *Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding!* (ELW 246)

(Blue prayer cards are collected)



1 Hark! a thrill - ing voice is sound - ing! "Christ is near," we
2 Wak - ened by the sol - emn warn - ing, from earth's bond - age
3 See the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, come with par - don
4 So, when next he comes in glo - ry and the world is
5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, and bless - ing to the Fa - ther



hear it say. "Cast a - way the works of dark - ness,
let us rise; Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling,
down from heav'n. Let us haste, with tears of sor - row,
wrapped in fear, he will shield us with his mer - cy
and the Son with the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it



all you chil - dren of the day!"
shines up - on the morn - ing skies.
one and all, to be for - giv'n;
and with words of love draw near.
while un - end - ing a - ges run!

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

We now welcome these persons who wish to join with this body of Christ, the people of St. John Lutheran Church. I introduce to you Tim and Laura Wach and Josie and Henry and Sharon Wach.

Tim, Laura, and Sharon, is it your wish to make this community of faith the people with whom you will share your journey of faith?

Is this the community with whom you wish to seek to make sense of your faith, the issues of your life, and who God calls you to be?

Is this the community where you wish to continue listening to the story of God's salvation and the Good News of Jesus Christ, and being nourished at the table of new life?

Response: It is.

The presiding minister continues with prayer.

Let us pray.

Merciful God, we thank you for these people whom you have made your own by water and the Word in baptism, you have called them to yourself, enlightened them with the gifts of your Spirit, and nourished them in the community of faith.

Uphold your servants in the gifts and promises of baptism, and unite the hearts of all whom you have brought to new birth.

We ask this in the name of Christ.

Amen.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The presiding minister addresses those making public affirmation of baptism.

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church.

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?

Response: We renounce them.

Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?

Response: We renounce them.

Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?

Response: We renounce them.

**The congregation is invited to stand as they are able.
The presiding minister addresses the candidates and the assembly.*

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**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.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**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.**

***AFFIRMATION**

The presiding minister addresses those making public affirmation of baptism.

You have made public profession of your faith.

Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,

to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,

to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,

and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

Response: I do and I ask God to help and guide me.

The minister addresses the assembly.

Will you who are witnessing these promises, share the joys and sorrows, and do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ: Will you welcome these individuals into this faith family, embrace their gifts, their needs, and their dreams? Will you recognize that their presence and participation will change the shape of the body and help it grow in new ways? Will you support them in their journeys, and assist them in their ministries?

We will and we ask God to help and guide us.

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life.

Stir up in Sharon, Tim, Laura, Josie, and Henry the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

Amen.

A representative of the congregation addresses the assembly.

Let us rejoice with our siblings in Christ.

We rejoice with you in the life of baptism.

**Together we will give thanks and praise to God
and proclaim the good news to all the world.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence. *A brief silence*

God of righteousness, your people live in hopeful expectation of your coming. Fill your church with renewed passion for our shared mission and deepen our relationships with other Christians and other faith traditions in our local community and across the world. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of the cosmos, all creation shows that your presence is near. Help us sense your goodness and love in the sun and moon, in sprouting leaves and bare branches, in the roaring sea and quiet breeze. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of the nations, your reign extends over all principalities and powers. Give leaders and all in authority hearts for justice and peace. Encourage efforts to enact policies that benefit the common good. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of change, you accompany us through life's transitions. Be near to all who are changing jobs, moving, welcoming children, or facing the loss of loved ones. Sustain those who are ill or suffering, especially Bob, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Henry, Harry, Ellen, Ruth, Sally, Katie, Debi, Anne, Karen, Nan, Beverly, those on our prayer list, and those we carry in our hearts. In times of change, remind us of your steadfast love. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of community, your Spirit holds us together. Sustain our care for one another. Inspire us to seek new ways to live together and to embrace the diversity of thought and identity in our communities. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of memory, we give you thanks for faithful ones who have died. Tend to our grief and sorrow with renewed trust in your promise of abundant and eternal life. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of hosts, you are always with us. Restore us with your great and everlasting mercy, and receive the prayers gathered before you now with the prayers on the hearts of this congregation today (*blue prayer cards are read*). Into your precious keeping we entrust our prayer.
Amen.

***PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share Christ's peace with one another.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257) *Rise on 4th verse*



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joice! Re-joice!
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

*OFFERING PRAYER

Together we pray.

Holy Spirit, please bless these small gifts we give.

You set the table with plenty of love.

Prepare room in your home
for my neighbor and me.

Prepare a place in your vision
for my neighbor and me.

Prepare a seat at your table
for my neighbor and me.

Holy Spirit, you have blessed these gifts we give.

You set the table with plenty of love.

*GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

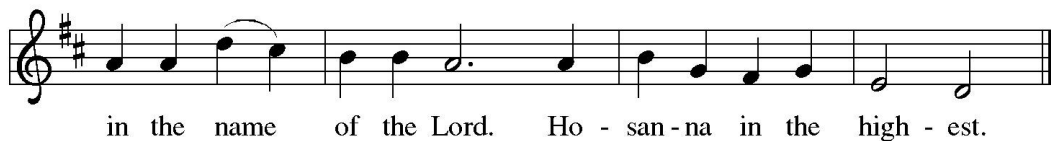
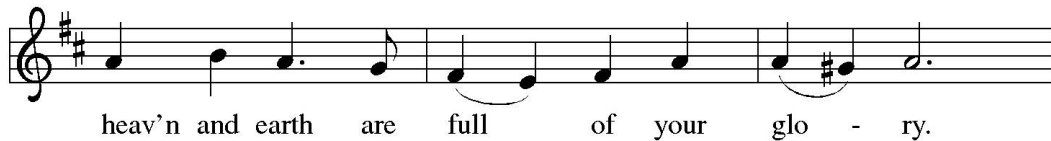
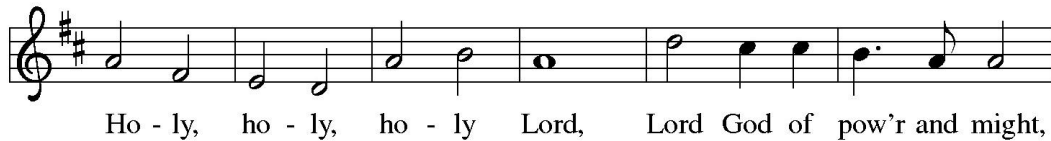
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
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:



God, yours was the First Thought; before any human lived or knew your name, you whispered, and creation built itself around your words. Before your ancient people knew the depth of your love, you promised them goodness, and led them to freedom.

Your love grows unseen.

Before the world knew your face, your own child was born in a quiet stable.

Your love blooms in the dark.

Before we knew the depth of your love, your child died, crucified, and you forgave, and new life grew in the grave.

Your love echoes in the silence.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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

This is the body of Jesus, the blood of Jesus.

To you, O God, holy three-in-one, one-in-three, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever. **Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread;

**and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen**

*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Holy Spirit, you are here now in this food, where you embody forgiveness;
and in these people, whom you have leavened with grace.

People of God, God's love grew unseen, but now you know it;
God's love echoes in silence, but you have sung the song.

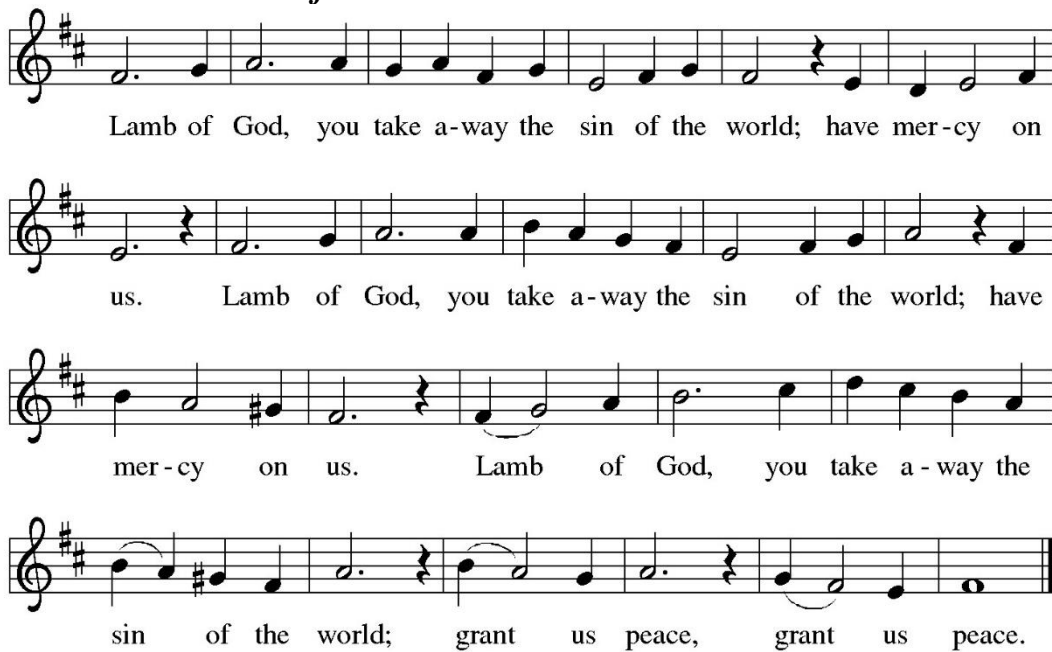
Now come taste the goodness of God's mercy and notice what God has done for you.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life, and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. In response to Jesus' invitation, all baptized individuals are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Those who do not receive the bread and wine are invited to come forward for a blessing.

Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available upon request. Communion may also be brought back to the pews for those who are unable to come forward.

COMMUNION SONG *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.

COMMUNION HYMN *Each Winter as the Year Grows Older* (ELW 252)



1 Each win - ter as the year grows old - er, we each grow old - er,
 2 When race and class cry out for trea - son, when si - rens call for
 3 Yet I be - lieve be - yond be - liev - ing that life can spring from
 4 So e - ven as the sun is turn - ing to jour - ney to the
 5 O Child of ec - sta - sy and sor - rows, O Prince of peace and



too. The chill sets in a lit - tle cold - er; the
 war, they o - ver - shout the voice of rea - son and
 death, that growth can flow - er from our griev - ing, that
 north, the liv - ing flame, in se - cret burn - ing, can
 pain, bright - en to - day's world by to - mor - row's, re -



ver - i - ties we knew seem shak - en and un - true.
 scream till we ig - nore all we held dear be - fore.
 we can catch our breath and turn trans - fixed by faith.
 kin - dle on the earth and bring God's love to birth.
 new our lives a - gain; Lord Je - sus, come and reign!

COMMUNION HYMN *Come Now, O Prince of Peace* (ELW 247)



O - so - sŏ o - so - sŏ, pyong - hwa - ũi - im - gŭm
 1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
 2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
 3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
 4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.



u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sŏ.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

***POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and preserve you in grace. **Amen.**

*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Faithful God, you have spread before us a feast of rich food and drink in the body and blood of your Son. Now send us out to labor with you, in service to the world you have made, and among the people you have made your home, in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

*BLESSING

God our Creator, who made the starlit sky, blesses you.

God our Redeemer, who arrives at just the right time, blesses you.

God our Sustainer, who sparks hope for the hopeless blesses you.

God the Three in One and One in Three blesses you.

God blesses you. Amen.

*SENDING SONG *Comfort, Comfort Now My People* (ELW 256)



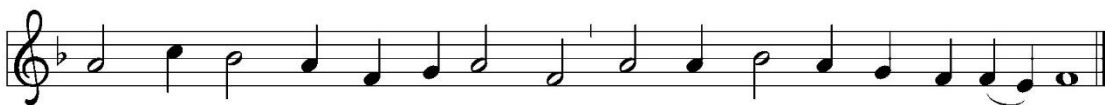
- 1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
- 2 For the her-ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
- 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for - ev - er.
Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

*DISMISSAL

People of God, you have already shared the arrival of God's goodness.

You carry the blessing of God, God, the First Whisper,
Jesus, the Living Promise, Spirit, the Speaker of Hearts.

Now go into this world expecting God's justice and nurturing God's peace. Christ is with you
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Flowers on the altar today were supplied by Larry and Amy Werner to the glory of God in honor of their grandchildren, Emma, Ava and Ella.

Assisting in worship today:

Assisting Minister: Denise H

Acolyte: Nathan K

Ushers: Dave K

Offering: Ava N & Ella N

Attendance last week: 65 + 6 zoom

Notes for the day's texts:

As Advent begins, we look forward to the celebration of Jesus' first coming to the world in the light of a text that promises his final coming. We, like the gospel writer, Luke, live in the time between these two "advents" of Jesus. Today's gospel gives us guidance on how to live faithfully as we wait for Jesus to return. However, in this in-between time, it is easy for us to become distracted and lose sight of the promises of Jesus. Daily tasks and routines can lull us into apathy. Ease and success can allow us to ignore our spiritual needs. Struggles, setbacks, and disappointments can cause us to lose hope and fall into despair. But Jesus tells us we should not feel beaten down or defeated by the struggles of this world, but instead "stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Lk 21:28).

Jesus goes on to say that there will be signs of new life and growth, such as the sprouting of a leaf on a fig tree in the summertime. These signs are perceptible to us here and now and help us know that God's kingdom is coming. In fact, they remind us that in Jesus, God's kingdom has already come near, and Jesus words will not pass away until this kingdom has fully come. We should live with our eyes focused on today's signs that demonstrate God's reign and trust that Jesus' redemption of the world will one day be complete.

Today's Music

Fling Wide the Door. Text: Georg Weissel, 1590-1635; tr. Garcia Grindal, b. 1943, Music: J. A. Freylinghausen, Geistreiches Gesangbuch, 1704; arr. hymnal version. Augsburg Fortress /Lutheran Book of Worship / Public Domain.

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah. Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954, Music: Yiddish folk tune. Augsburg Fortress /Public Domain.

Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding! Text: Latin hymn, 1632; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814-1878, Music: William H. Monk, 1823-1889. Public Domain.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. Text: Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. composite, Music: French processional, 15th cent. Augsburg Fortress / Public Domain.

Each Winter as the Year Grows Older. Text: William Gay, b. 1920, alt., Music: Annabeth Gay, b. 1925. Pilgrim Press/United Church Press.

Come Now, O Prince of Peace. Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope, Music: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947. Geonyong Lee.

Comfort, Comfort Now My People. Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635-1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt., Music: Trente quatre psaumes de David, Geneva, 1551. Public Domain.

Liturgy words and music taken from SundaysandSeasons.com Copyright © 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

More Than Words: Words for Worship © 2024 Barn Geese Worship. Used by permission. Adapted by Pastor Katie McNeal.

Reprinted under One License # A-724822 and CCLI .

Next Week's Readings

Malachi 3:1-4 My messenger is a refiner and purifier

Luke 1:68-79 In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us

Philippians 1:3-11 A harvest of righteousness on the day of Jesus Christ

Luke 3:1-6 Prepare the way of the Lord