

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

GATHERING

Congregational Responses in Bold Print

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *How Great Our Joy!* JONES

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, Love from the beginning, Word made flesh, Breath of heaven. Amen.

Let us confess our sinfulness before God and one another, trusting in God's endless mercy and love.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Merciful God, we confess that we are not perfect. We have said and done things we regret. We have tried to earn your redeeming grace, while denying it to others. We have resisted your call to be your voice in the world. Forgive us, loving God. Give us your righteousness, the strength to put aside our failures, and the courage to try again. Amen.

Dear people of God, hear the good news: Christ the Savior is born! You are loved and forgiven in the name of † Jesus, who has come among us. You are freed from proving that you deserve to be loved, because God's love is given to you as the most precious gift of all. Rejoice in this love and share it with the world. Amen.

HYMN #296 *What Child is This* GREENSLEEVES

GREETING

The true light that enlightens everyone has come into the world! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

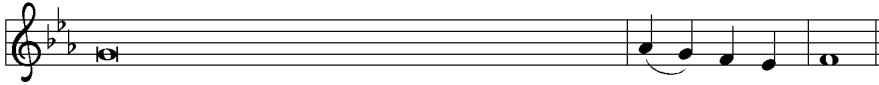
KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



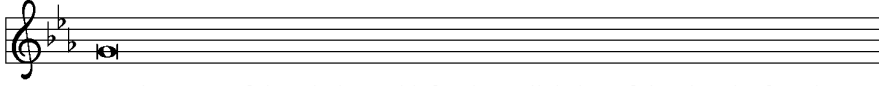
Lord, have mer - cy.



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



Lord, have mer - cy.



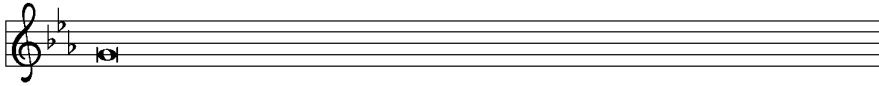
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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.

GLORY TO GOD

Glo - ry to God in the high -
est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.
Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and
Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we
praise you for your glo - ry. Lord Je - sus
Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther,
Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world: have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the
right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.
For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a -

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "GLORY TO GOD". It consists of ten staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The music is in a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: "Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth. Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry. Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer. For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a -".

lone are the Lord, you a - lone are the Most High,
 Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of
 God the Fa - ther. A - men.
 Glo - ry to God in the high -
 est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together. O God our redeemer, you created light that we might live, and you illumine our world with your beloved Son. By your Spirit comfort us in all darkness, and turn us toward the light of Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31: 7-14

God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gift of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.

⁷Thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel." ⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. ⁹With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock." ¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. ¹²They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. ¹³Then

shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. ¹⁴I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SENIOR CHOIR (10:45) *Shine, Jesus Shine*

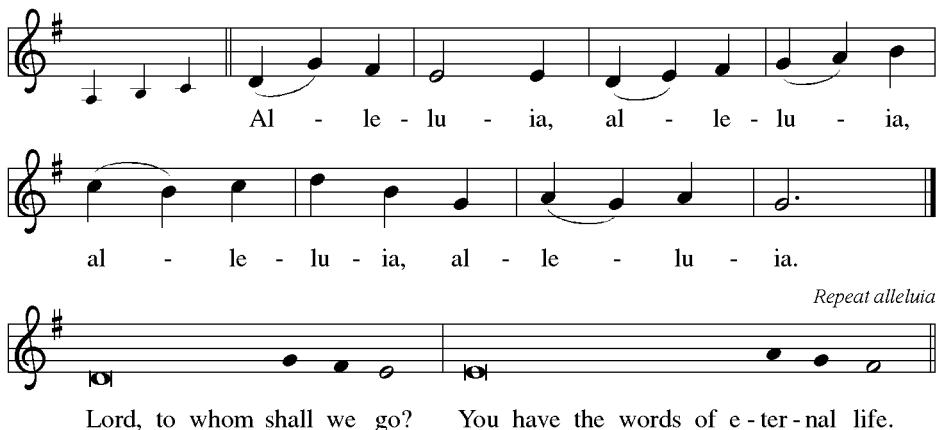
SECOND READING: **Ephesians 1: 3-14**

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

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.

HOLY GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to John the 1st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL John 1: 1-18

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

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. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON Rev. Christian Dittmar

HYMN OF THE DAY #294 *In the Bleak Midwinter* CRANHAM

NICENE CREED

With voices united, let us confess our faith

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS

Gathered with all who seek the Christ child, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. (A brief silence.)

... Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Into your gracious hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

MEAL

INTRODUCTION TO THE PEACE

*The peace of Christ be with you always. And also with you.
Share the Peace with one another!*

OFFERING *That Boy – Child of Mary* KERR

OFFERTORY # 692 *We Are an Offering* OFFERING

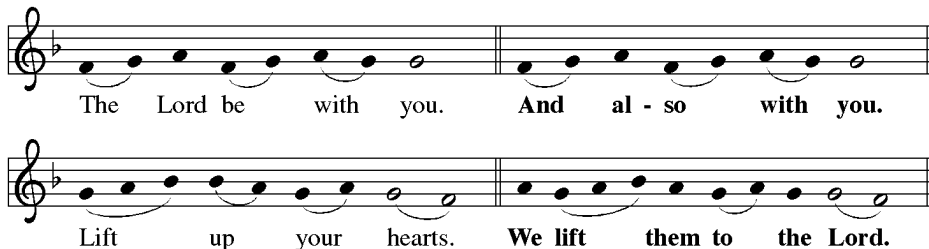
**We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you; we are an offering.
Lord use our voices, Lord use our hands, Lord use our lives, they are yours:
we are an offering.**

**All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you.
We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you; we are an offering,
we are an offering.**

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Generous God, you have given us life, this community, and these gifts of the earth that become the meal of your grace. Move in our hearts, that we might use your gifts to bring hope and blessing wherever we go, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.....we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

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

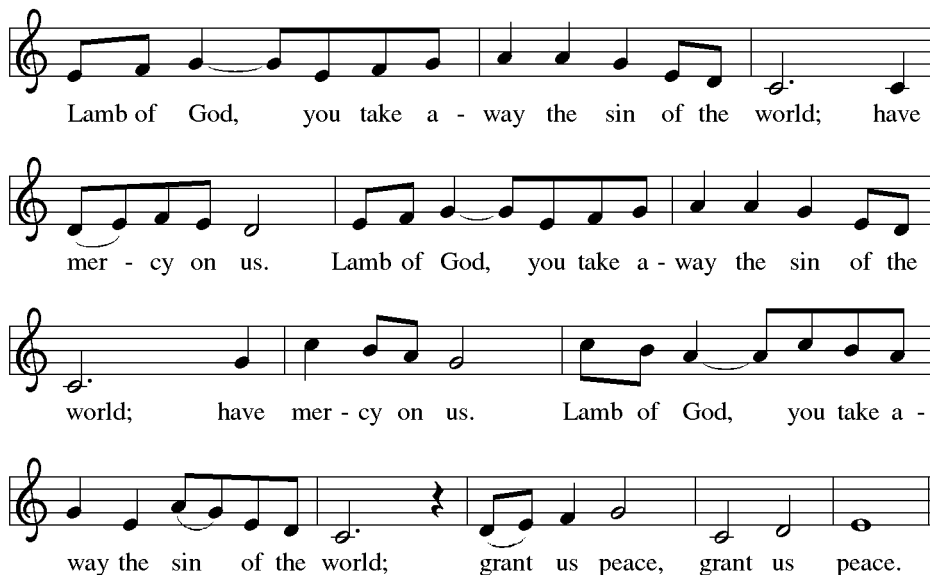
Finally let us pray for those things for which the Lord would have us ask.

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

Love has come: God's love for all people. Come and eat, for Christ invites you.

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.

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

#276 *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* W ZŁOBIE LEŻY

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. Amen.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. Emmanuel, God with us, you grace us with life and breath and give us bread for the journey. Send us out in service to this world that you love, telling the amazing news of your coming to be Savior and Lord of all. Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

Grace from God's own heart, peace from the ✝ Child in the manger, and strength from the Spirit of life be blessings for you today and forever. Amen.

SENDING HYMN #288 *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* IN DULCI JUBILO

DISMISSAL

Christ is born! Go tell it on the mountain and everywhere. Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE *Allegro Vivace* HANDEL

Moving One Step Closer to God.

www.1stLutheranChurch.org



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