

# *Christmas Eve*

*December 24, 2025*



*St. James Lutheran Church*

*Rock Island, Illinois*

**WELCOME** to all who are worshiping with us this evening as we celebrate the Emmanuel – God with us. As the Christ child came to the world in Bethlehem, may the presence of Christ be with you this night and always.

**OUR WORSHIP LEADERS** this evening are:

Presiding Minister	Pastor Donald Knowles
Accompanist	John Hildreth
Lector	Dave Renneke
Sound Booth	Dave Renneke
Assisting Minister	Daryl Empen

**At the candle lighting** the pastor will light his candle from the Christ Candle, then light the ushers' candles. The ushers will light the first candle in each pew beginning at the front. The light is then shared down the pew toward the side aisles, passing from candle to candle. Remember to hold the lighted candle upright and tip the unlit candle. Please extinguish your candle at the end of the hymn.)

**IF YOU HAVE PURCHASED A POINSETTIA** to decorate our chancel this Christmas you are welcome to take it with you following the services this weekend.

The poinsettias decorating the chancel this Christmas have been given by:

Tom & Judy Fox	In memory of our son Chad, & Our Parents.
Bill & Ruth Anne Hartman (2 poinsettias)	In honor of family & friends
Elizabeth Johnson	In memory of family
Dave & Donna Renneke	In thanksgiving of our family
Bill & Jo Kempf	In memory of loved ones

Pastor & Mary Knowles

In memory of loved ones

Stacy Miles

Given in memory of their Dad Jim. The Miles family

Frank & Cam Palicki

In honor of our family

Bob & Linda Ryden

## **WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **PRELUDE**

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior, Prince of Peace.

**Amen.**

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.  
*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Reconciling God,

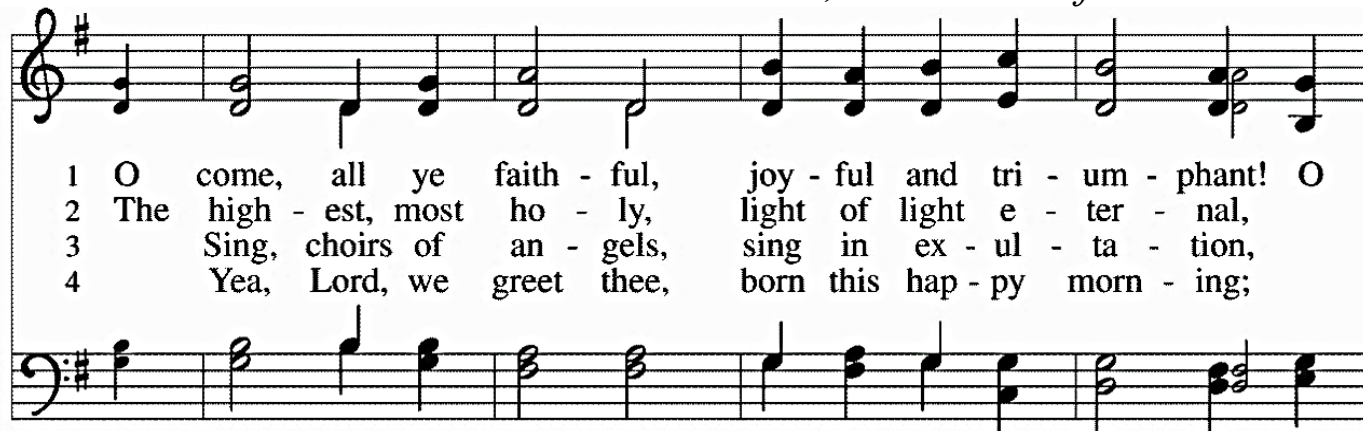
**we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair. We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your love; we have not always recognized your presence among us; we have not always embraced your message of peace. We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear. We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge; our participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones; our reluctance to embody your good news. Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.**

God's grace upon grace flows over you. † Christ's presence redeems the whole creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

Amen.

## GATHERING SONG

## *O Come, All Ye Faithful*



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O  
 2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of light e - ter - nal,  
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,  
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
 born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;  
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!  
 Je - sus, to thee be . . . glo - ry giv'n!



come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:  
 Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!  
 Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:  
 Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

*Refrain*

Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus, ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus,  
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,

ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.  
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, sts. 1, 3–4; tr. unknown, st. 2  
Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John Francis Wade

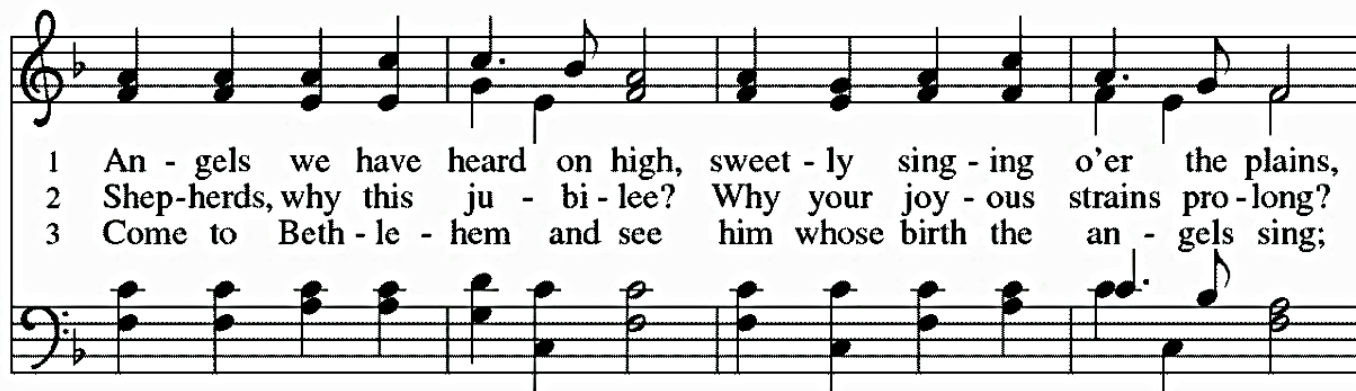
## GREETING

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

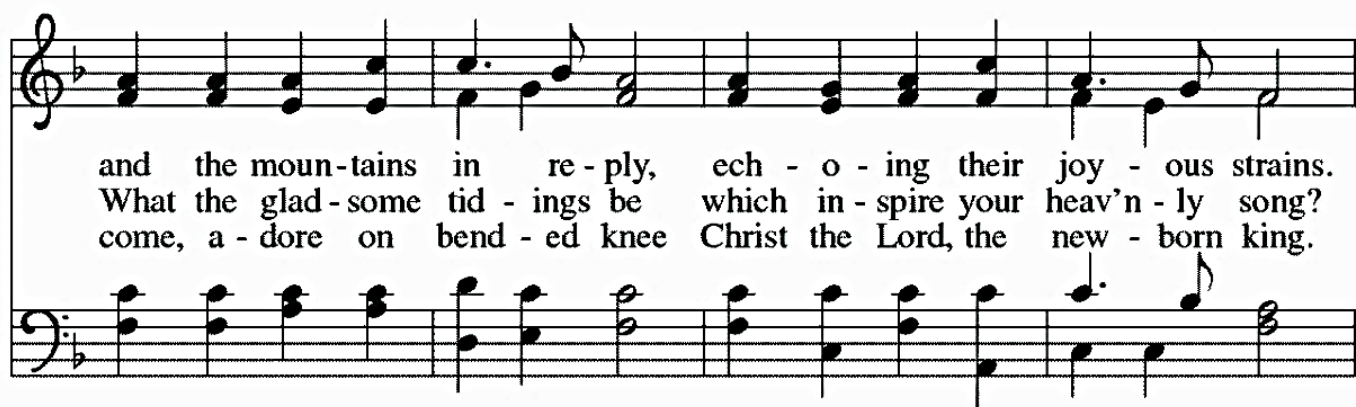
**And also with you.**

# HYMN OF PRAISE

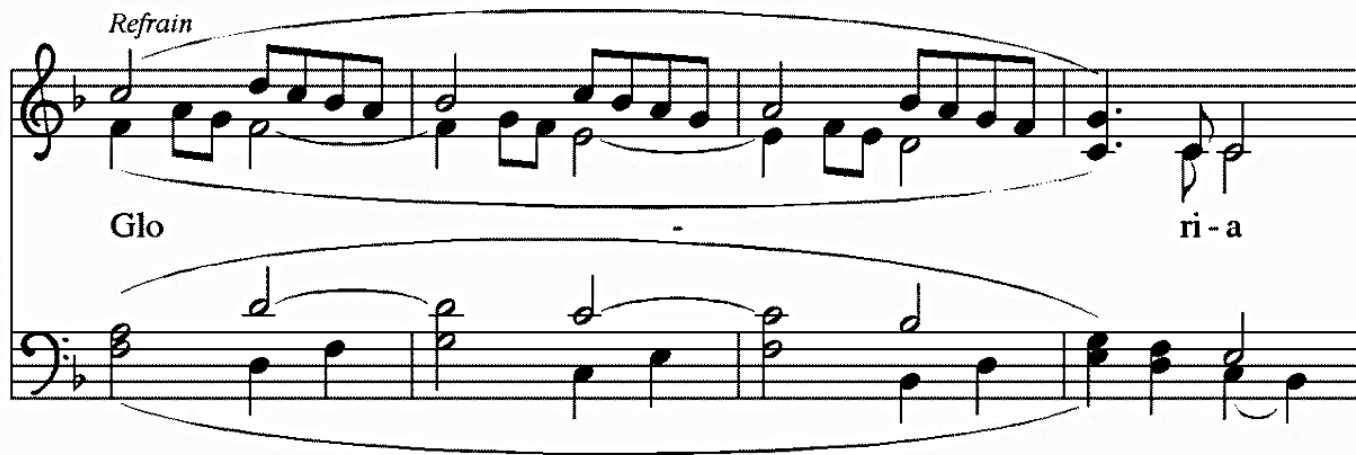
## *Angels We Have Heard on High*



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,  
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?  
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.



*Refrain*

Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo -

- ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864  
 Music: GLORIA, French carol; arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1887–1958

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen**

*The assembly is seated.*



**FIRST READING:****Isaiah 9:2–7**

*This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!*

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness —  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>4</sup>For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

<sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**



**RESPONSIVE READING:**

**Psalms 96**

<sup>1</sup>Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

**<sup>2</sup>Sing to the LORD, bless the name of the LORD;  
proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**

<sup>3</sup>Declare God's glory among the nations  
and God's wonders among all peoples.

**<sup>4</sup>For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised,  
more to be feared than all gods.**

<sup>5</sup>As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;  
but you, O LORD, have made the heavens.

**<sup>6</sup>Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;  
power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

<sup>7</sup>Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples,  
ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

**<sup>8</sup>Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the holy name;  
bring offerings and enter the courts of the LORD.**

<sup>9</sup>Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness;  
tremble before the LORD, all the earth.

**<sup>10</sup>Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is king!  
The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved  
will judge the peoples with equity."**

<sup>11</sup>Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;  
let the sea thunder and all that is in it;  
let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

**<sup>12</sup>Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy  
at your coming, O LORD, for you come to judge the earth.**

<sup>13</sup>You will judge the world with righteousness  
and the peoples with your truth.

**SECOND READING:****Titus 2:11–14**

*The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.*

<sup>11</sup>For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, <sup>13</sup>while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

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

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION****GOSPEL:****Luke 2:1–20**

The holy gospel according to St. Luke, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter.  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own

towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

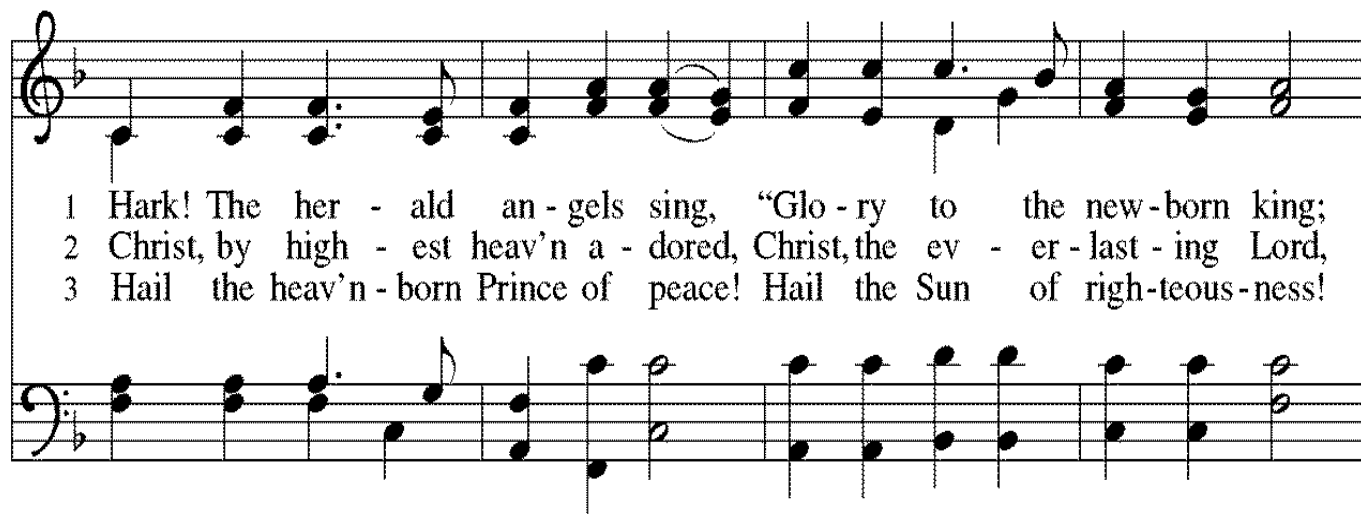
<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

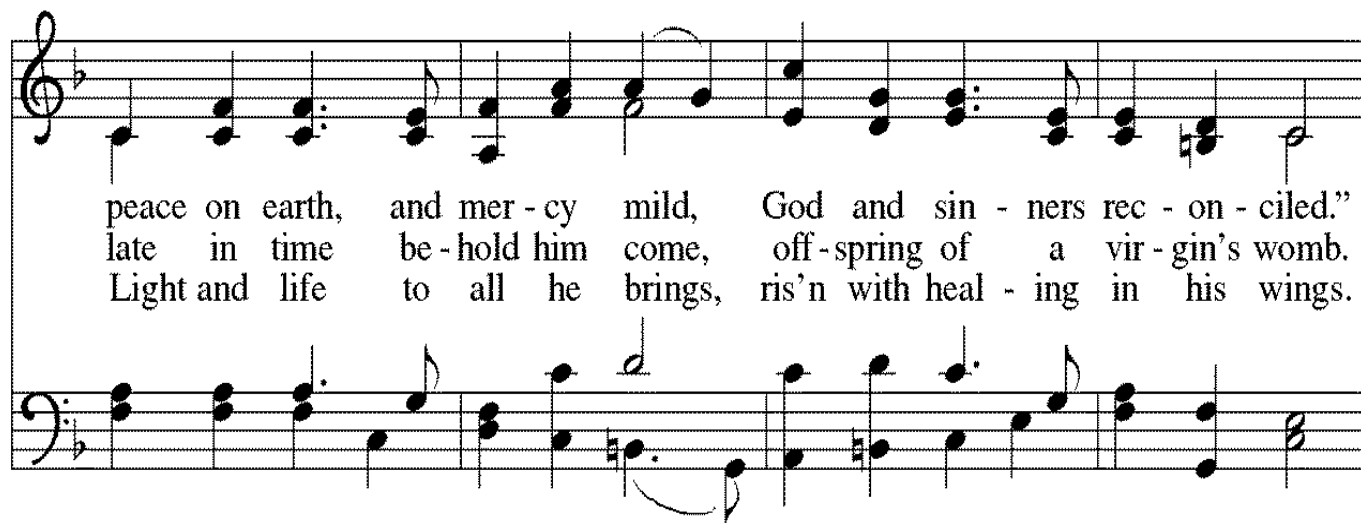
**SERMON**

# HYMN OF THE DAY:

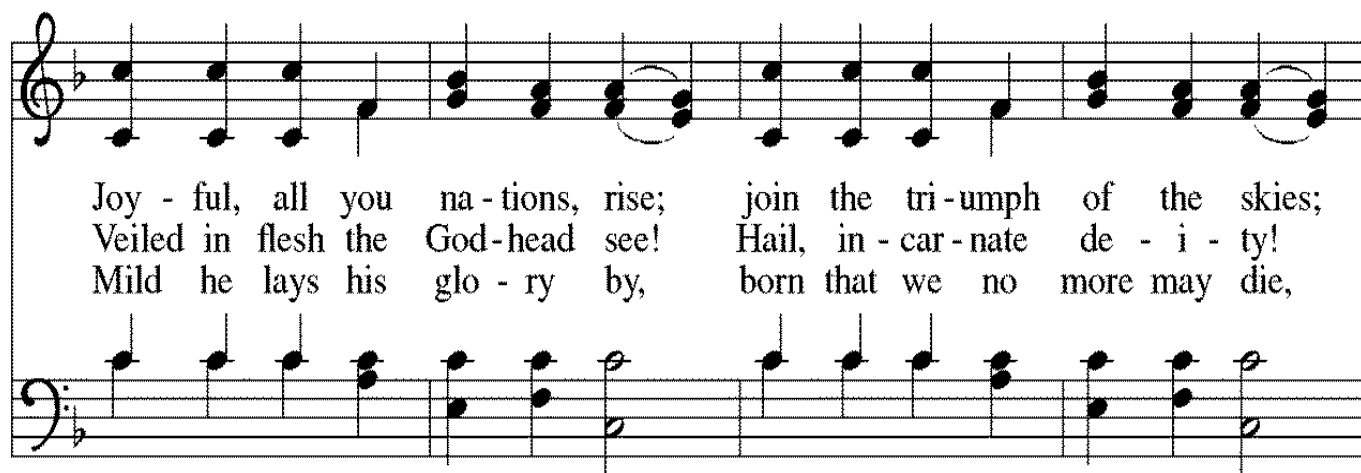
## *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*



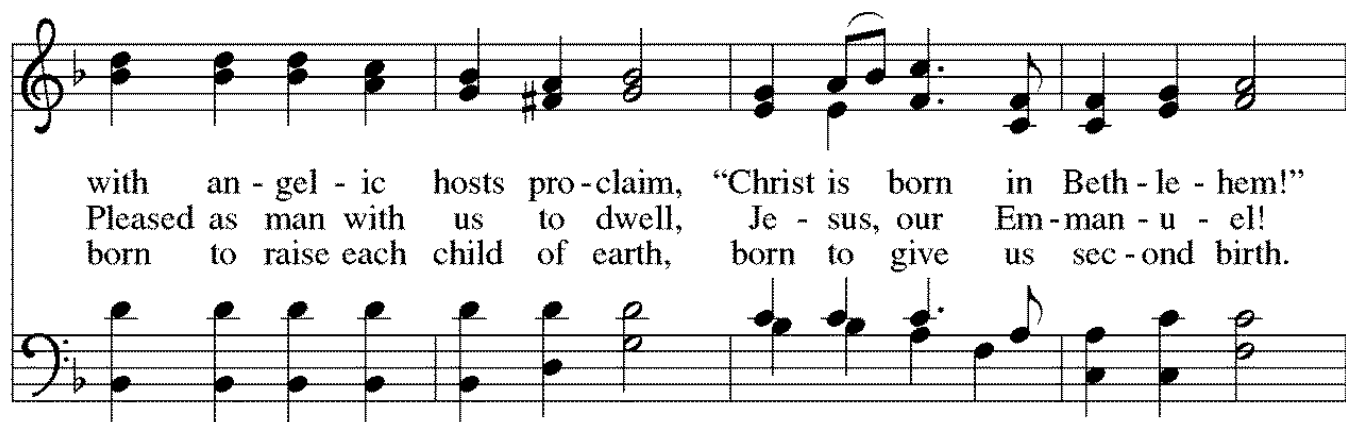
1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king;  
 2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
 3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness!



peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."  
 late in time be - hold him come, off-spring of a vir - gin's womb.  
 Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri-umph of the skies;  
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!  
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
 Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!  
 born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

*Refrain*



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king!"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

Music: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1809-1847; arr. William H. Cummings, 1831-1915

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence, then each petition concludes:*

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*The prayers conclude:*

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**Amen.**

## PEACE

*The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.*

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## OFFERING

### OFFERING PRAYER

God of glory,

**great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior.**

**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.

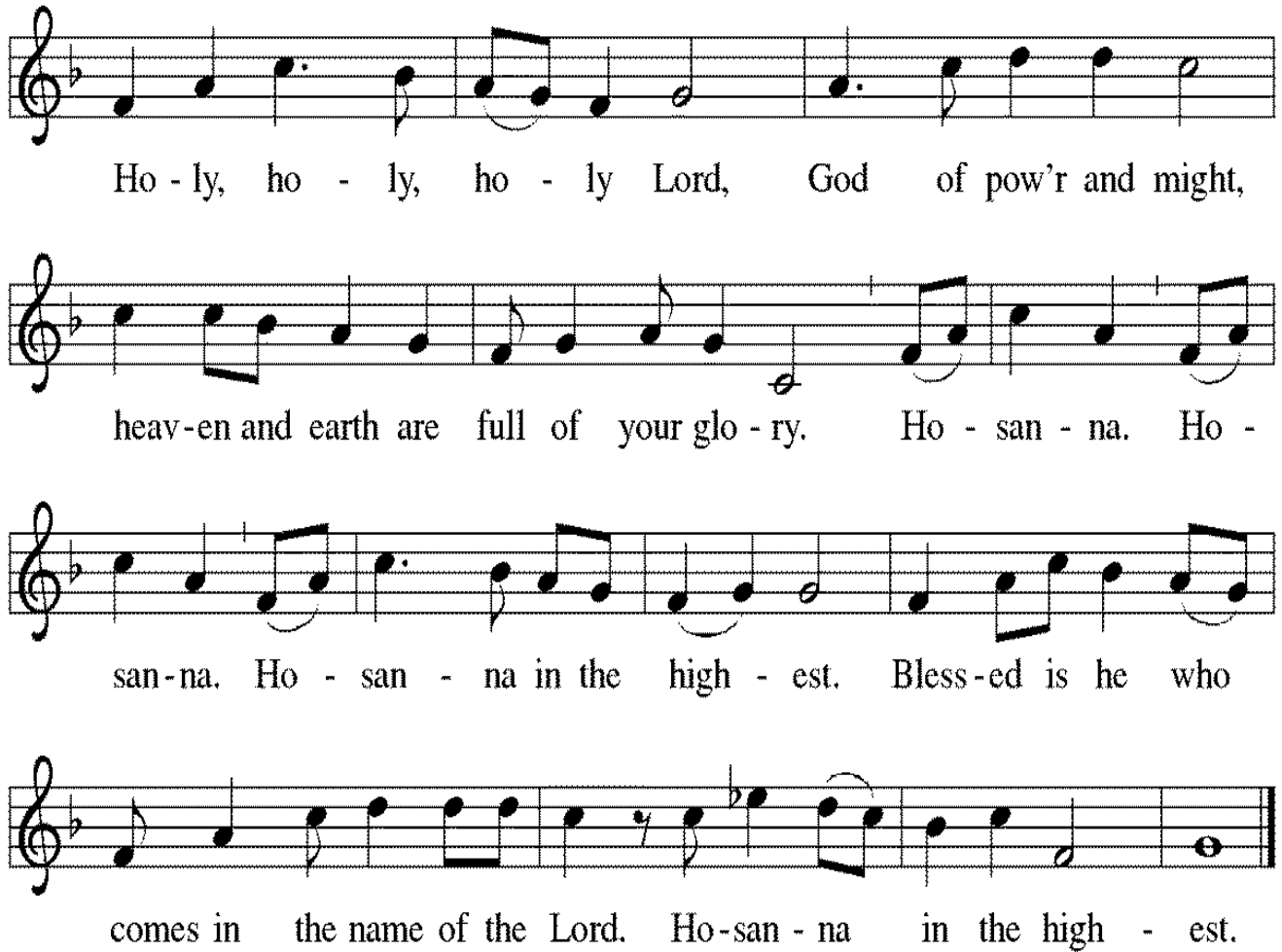
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## PREFACE

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:

### **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**



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.

### **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time  
your word brought light into the world.

In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary,  
to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us,  
his death and resurrection,  
we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup,  
that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children,  
shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
in your holy Church, both now and forever.

**Amen**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

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

**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.**

*The assembly may be seated.*

## **COMMUNION SONG**



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.

## **COMMUNION**

*(All are welcome to receive communion. We believe that Christ is truly present for us through the bread and cup. Please come forward down the center aisle and take an individual communion cup at the head of the center aisle. Grape juice is also available in the prefilled cups in the tray. **Gluten-free wafers** are available. Please indicate to the pastor if you would like the wafer instead of the bread. After receiving communion, you may return to your seat by the side aisle. Used communion cups may be placed in the basin at the head of the side aisle.)*

## HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

*Away in a Manger*

*ELW #277*

*I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve*

*ELW #271*

*Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

*ELW #276*

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives,  
through Christ born in us. **Amen.**

## CANDLE LIGHTING DIALOG

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.


**We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.**

For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

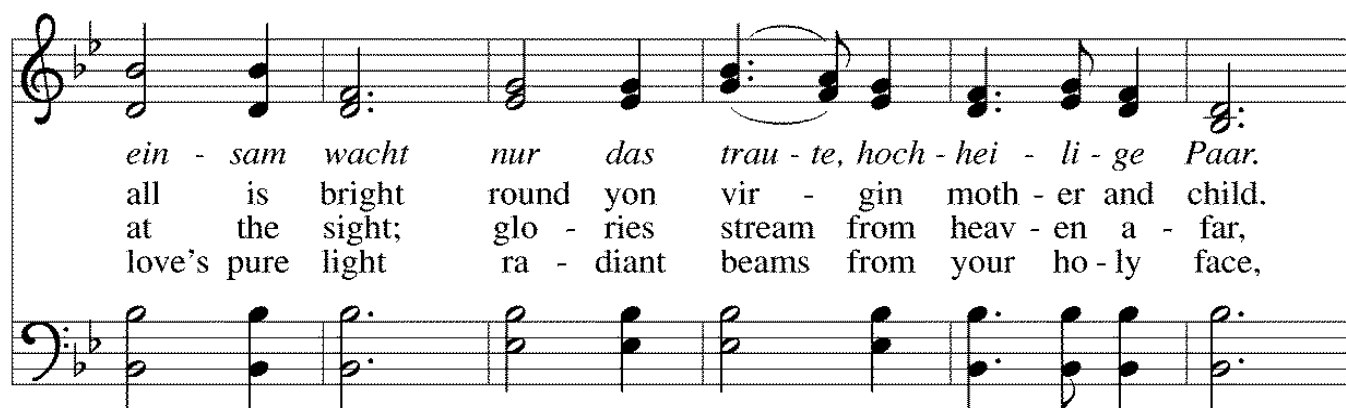
**In him was life, and the life was the light of all people.**

# CANDLE LIGHTING HYMN

## *Silent Night, Holy Night*



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,  
 1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,  
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake  
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.  
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.  
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,  
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Hol - der Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher  
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly  
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is  
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.  
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!  
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792–1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820–1885  
 Music: STILLE NACHT, Franz Gruber, 1787–1863

## BLESSING

The triune God,  
glorious Mystery,  
holy Incarnate One,  
abiding Comforter,  
✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.  
**Amen.**

## SENDING SONG

### *Go Tell It On the Mountain*

*Refrain*



Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,  
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth  
3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born;



*Refrain*



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
rang out the an - gel cho-rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.



Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.  
Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

## **DISMISSAL**

Glory to God in the highest!

**And peace to God's people on earth!**

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

**Thanks be to God.**

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