



*"The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."*

*~Isaiah 11:6*

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church  
2nd Sunday of Advent – December 7, 2025**

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Mars, PA 16046-0411

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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. An adult must remain with the child.*

*Children are also welcome to utilize the books and puzzles available in the Greeting Area on the top level by the elevator.*

*You are invited to fill out the blue prayer request forms located in each pew as desired. The cards will be collected during our hymn of the day, and prayers will be offered during the prayers of intercession.*

## PRELUDE

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

### GATHERING

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

### \*GATHERING HYMN *Prepare the Royal Highway* (ELW 264)



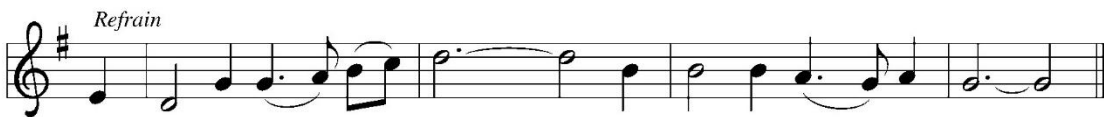
1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!  
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!  
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!  
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!  
Palm branch-es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!  
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.  
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!  
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:  
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

### \*GREETING

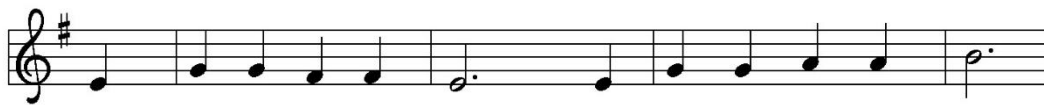
Peace to you and welcome, from God our source of peace  
from the Creator who grows severed trees,  
the Savior who healed withered bodies,  
the Spirit who gives wild new growth.

## **\*CONFESSION**

God is here, and God sees through every defense that fools the world.  
Since we cannot hide from God, there is nothing left to do  
but to be honest with each other and humble before God.  
So, in humility, we confess our sins.

**God, we have acted helpless,  
even when you called us to action.  
We have resisted your truth,  
even when our lies were exhausting.  
We have behaved as though we were alone,  
even when you were beside us.  
God, we have believed we were dying,  
even when you helped us grow.**

## **\*KYRIE**



**\*CANTICLE OF PRAISE *Glory to God***



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.  
2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.  
3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:  
Son of God and gra-cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;  
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.  
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.  
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.  
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.  
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

## LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

We light candles on our Advent wreath representing our burgeoning confidence as God's promises take shape around us, transforming the terrifying into the comforting. Together, we pray:

**Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.**

**John the Baptist calls all people to prepare the Lord's way for the kingdom of heaven is near.**

**Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.**

**Baptize us with the fire of your Spirit,  
that we may be a light shining in the darkness  
welcoming others as Christ has welcomed us,  
for he is our light and our salvation.**

**Blessed be God forever. Amen.**



*The first and second candles are lit during the singing of the hymn.*

### ADVENT SONG *We Light a Candle*

Music notation for the hymn "We Light a Candle". The melody is written on a single staff in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. The lyrics are written below the staff.

We light a can-dle for hope\_\_\_ and our world that's long-ing for hope  
We light a can-dle for peace\_\_\_ and our world that's long-ing for peace

We light a can-dle for hope\_\_\_ and our world that's long-ing for hope Ho - ly One,  
We light a can-dle for peace\_\_\_ and our world that's long-ing for peace Ho - ly One,

\_\_\_ shine\_\_\_ with the fire of our lives oh We light a can-dle for  
\_\_\_ shine\_\_\_ with the fire of our lives oh We light a can-dle for

hope\_\_\_ and our world that's long-ing for hope  
peace\_\_\_ and our world that's long-ing for peace

This candle on our Advent wreath represents the joy of life, which spreads as we share it. The unpredictable flicker of life brings comfort even when the future remains a mystery. In time every person will know the warmth of God's love. But not yet, not fully.

**Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

### PRAYER FOR OUTREACH MINISTRY

## WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 11:1-10**

A reading from Isaiah.

- <sup>1</sup> A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
- <sup>2</sup> The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
- <sup>3</sup> His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.  
He shall not judge by what his eyes see  
or decide by what his ears hear,
- <sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor  
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
- <sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist  
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
- <sup>6</sup> The wolf shall live with the lamb;  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;  
the calf and the lion will feed together,  
and a little child shall lead them.
- <sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze;  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- <sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
- <sup>9</sup> They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.
- <sup>10</sup> On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND READING: Romans 15:4-13**

A reading from Romans.

<sup>4</sup> Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. <sup>5</sup> May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>7</sup> Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

<sup>8</sup> For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors <sup>9</sup> and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

“Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles  
and sing praises to your name”;

<sup>10</sup> and again he says,

“Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people”;

<sup>11</sup> and again,

“Praise the Lord, all you gentiles,  
and let all the peoples praise him”;

<sup>12</sup> and again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse shall come,  
the one who rises to rule the gentiles;  
in him the gentiles shall hope.”

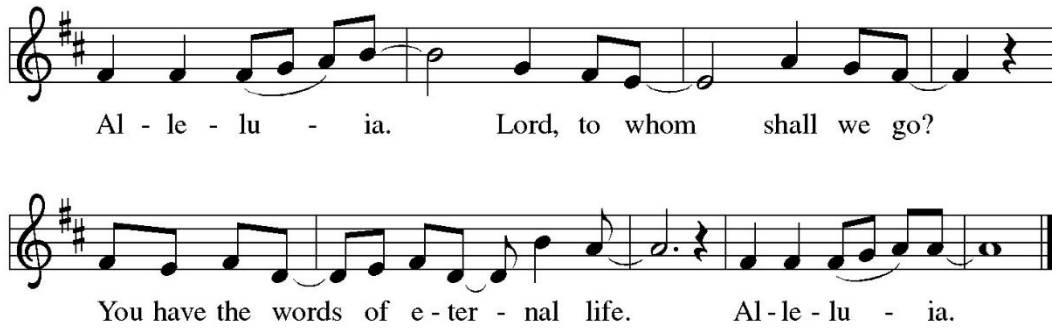
<sup>13</sup> May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**



## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



## \*GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 3:1-12

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, o Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, <sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” <sup>3</sup> This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight.’ ”

<sup>4</sup> Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup> Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, <sup>9</sup> and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>10</sup> Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## CHILDREN’S SERMON SERMON

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* (ELW 240)**

*(Blue prayer cards are collected)*



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



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

**\*NICENE CREED**

Let us confess our faith using the words of the Nicene Creed

**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.**

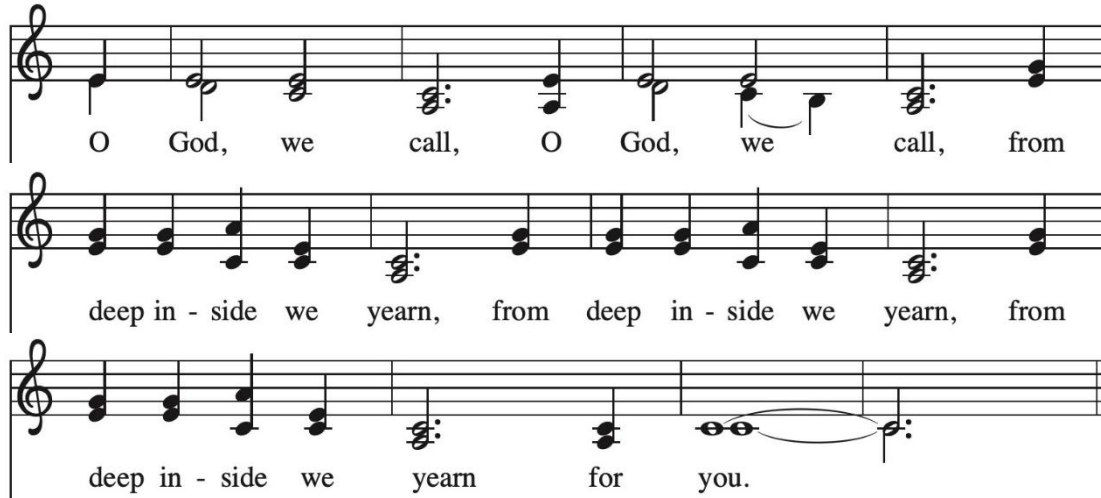
**We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

\*Or, "who proceeds from the Father." The phrase "and the Son" is a later addition to the creed.

## \*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

With wisdom and understanding, inspire the faithful around the world. Unite hearts and minds in work to address poverty, access to housing, and equity among peoples. With welcome and hospitality, embolden us in our shared ministry to overcome all that divides. In acts of repentance, reconciliation, and reparation, may we serve in the way of Christ. Hear us, O God.



With righteousness and faithfulness, encourage nations to live in harmony with one another. With counsel and might, move us to care for creation. As we dream of the day when all creatures will flourish alongside one another, guide us in ways humanity and all creation will mutually thrive. Hear us, O God.

### ***Sung Refrain:***

**O God, we call, O God, we call, from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn, from deep inside we yearn for you.**

With steadfastness and encouragement, strengthen those who struggling to have hope in the face of grief, depression, or disease especially Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Henry, Harry, Sally, Katie, Debi, Anne, Karen, Nan, Beverly, Mike, and all those on our prayer list. Renew the spirits of those recovering from medical procedures. With peace, we remember our ancestors in the faith. Fill us with the hope of the Holy Spirit now and into the ages of ages. Hear us, O God.

### ***Sung Refrain:***

**O God, we call, O God, we call, from deep inside we yearn,  
from deep inside we yearn, from deep inside we yearn for you.**

God of life, you always hear our cry. Restore us with your everlasting mercy, and receive the prayer gathered before you now with the prayers on the hearts of this congregation today (*blue prayer cards are read*). Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

## **\*PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**  
Let us share Christ's peace with one another.

*You are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace as we prepare to receive God's grace in communion. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcome to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.).*

## **MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ*

## **COLLECTION OF THE OFFERING**

*You are invited to support the ministries of this congregation through gifts and prayers at this time. Ongoing prayer requests, connection cards, communion records, and financial gifts are collected in the plates as we remember that we offer all of ourselves to God.*

## **OFFERTORY HYMN *He Came Down* (ELW 253)**



- 1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
- 2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
- 3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
- 4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;  
he came down that we may have light; hal - le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.  
he came down that we may have peace;  
he came down that we may have joy;

## PRESENTATION OF GIFTS *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful* (ELW 182)

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

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The piece concludes with a double bar line on the fifth staff.

### **\*OFFERING PRAYER**

Please pray with me.

**God, we cherished what we thought belonged only to us:  
our money, our time, our families, and our freedom.**

Yet in a moment, we recognize that every truly good thing was a treasure we had taken from your open hand. We thought such treasures were ours to earn and to own.

**You bless those who are hungry, promising to fill them with good things.**

**Fulfill that promise through us and these your gifts.**

**Nourish us with the abundance of your feast**

**and unite us into the blessed body of Jesus Christ our Savior, now and forever. Amen.**

## \*GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

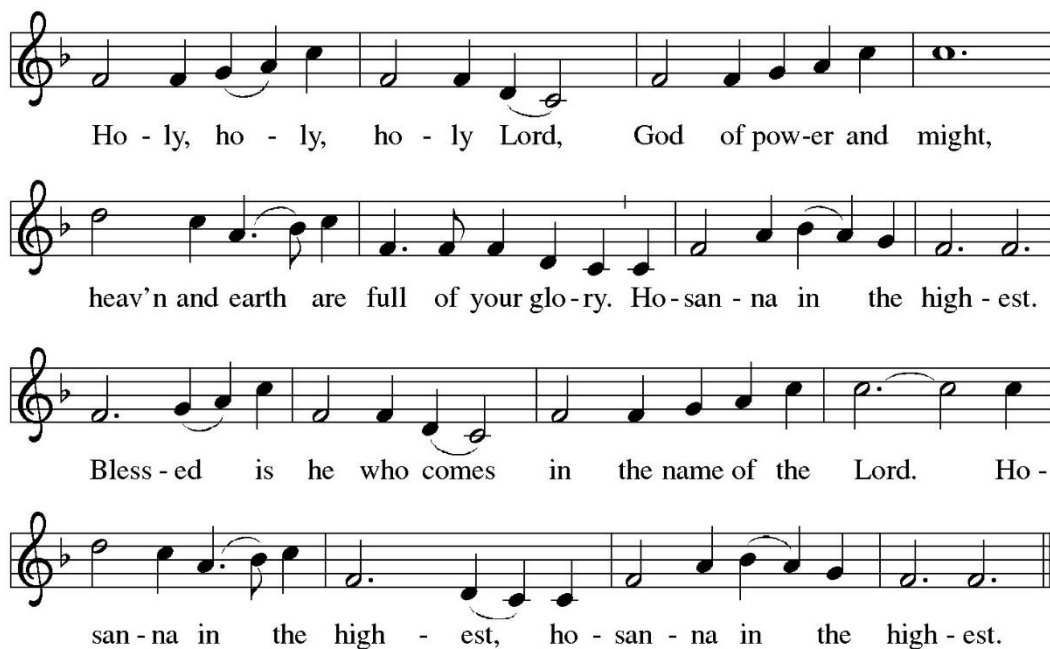
Lift up your hearts.

**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:



The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The first staff ends with a whole note, the second with a half note, the third with a half note, and the fourth with a double bar line.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. 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, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Holy God, as soon as you made humankind, you loved them.  
From the first human mistake, you planned the path to salvation.  
Yet even when you set clear signs of promise in sky or stars,  
in the mouths of prophets, or the faces of a newborn,  
people still felt astonished to receive your goodness.

Jesus, at your birth your parents greeted you with wonder.  
On the cross, your enemies crushed you, then marveled as you exuded grace.  
And on the night in which you were betrayed, Jesus, you took bread and gave thanks,  
broke it, and gave it to your disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, you 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.

And so we gather around this bread and cup, your body and blood  
As disciples gathering to be in your community,  
gathering to be fed and nourished, gathering to be filled with your grace.

Holy Spirit, we may not feel the fire of your presence,  
but pour yourself out upon this bread and this cup.  
And fill those gathered here with your holiness so we may be  
crumbs of your mercy and drops of your goodness.

Make us your people, who can never separate from you again.  
Gather us into one and teach us to 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

People of God, you are Christ's people:  
tied to Jesus in his death and made new in his resurrection.

So listen to the promise prepared for you in this moment:

Even when you feel dead, you are alive;  
even when you have done wrong, God forgives you.

And even when you feel unwelcome or unworthy,  
Jesus brings you to the table where you can find new community.

Come and take your place at the feast that never ends.

*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*



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;  
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;  
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;

you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.  
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.  
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.



## COMMUNION HYMN *O Day of Peace* (ELW 711)



1 O day of peace that dim-ly shines through all our hopes and prayers and dreams,  
2 Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb, nor shall the fierce de-vour the small;



guide us to jus-tice, truth, and love, de-liv-ered from our self-ish schemes.  
as beasts and cat-tle calm-ly graze, a lit-tle child shall lead them all.



May swords of hate fall from our hands, our hearts from en-vy find re-lease,  
Then en-e-mies shall learn to love, all crea-tures find their true ac-cord;



till by God's grace our war-ring world shall see Christ's prom-ised reign of peace.  
the hope of peace shall be ful-filled, for all the earth shall know the Lord.

## COMMUNION HYMN *Filled with Hope and Gratitude* (ACS 907)



1 Filled with hope and grat - i - tude and filled with ver - y  
 2 God's e - ter - nal mer - cy, meant for all of hu - man -  
 3 Hun - gry peo - ple eat good things and find an hon - ored  
 4 Filled with hope and grat - i - tude and filled with ver - y



God, I sing with soul and spir - it ex - ul -  
 kind, is giv - en as de - liv - 'rance from op -  
 place; the rich are sent a - way though they are  
 God, I sing with soul and spir - it ex - ul -



ta - tion, for God has smiled up -  
 pres - sion. The pow - er - ful and  
 hun - gry. The prom - ise to our  
 ta - tion, for God has smiled up -



on the hum - ble ser - vant who will give her  
 haugh - ty find that they are now cast down, the  
 fore - bears God re - news for us to - day: the  
 on the hum - ble ser - vant who will give her



own sweet milk to Christ, the world's sal - va - tion.  
 low - ly raised be - yond this world's de - ri - sion.  
 world is filled with God's a - bun - dant mer - cy.  
 own sweet milk to Christ, the world's sal - va - tion.

### \*POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

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

### \*POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## SENDING

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

### \*BLESSING

May God who comes among us, the blessed and holy Trinity, God the Sovereign, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always.

**Amen.**

### \*SENDING SONG *When Our Song Says Peace* (ELW 709)



1 When our song says peace and the world says war, we will  
2 When our song says free and the world says bound, we will  
3 When our song says home and the world says lost, we will



sing de-spite the world. We will trust the song, for we sing of God,  
sing de-spite the world. We will trust the song, for we sing of God,  
sing de-spite the world. We will trust the song, for we sing of God,



who breaks the spear and sword and stills the storm of war.  
who o - pens pris - on doors and sets the cap - tives free.  
who brings us home at last, and gives a song to all.

### \*DISMISSAL

“Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you; as the Father has sent me, I also send you.”

*John 20:21*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**The flowers on the altar today were supplied by Jeff and Deb Martin in celebration of their daughter Jessica's birthday.**

**Assisting in worship today:**

**Assisting Minister: Denise H**

**Acolyte: Josie W**

**Offering: Jules K and Eva K**

**Greeters:**

**Attendance from last week: 87**

### **Notes for the day's texts:**

John the Baptist is a fitting messenger for the season of Advent. John's call to repentance in preparation of Jesus' arrival carries a challenge for us to rid ourselves of everything that obstructs our view. His proclamation is filled with images of cleansing: straightening paths, cutting down useless trees, and burning away chaff. John's baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins means cleansing as well as a changing of the mind, a turning toward Jesus.

John points to Jesus, never to himself, and in so doing becomes a model for discipleship. Having heard John's cry, we join the chorus, becoming messengers in turn. All our efforts in worship and evangelism, education and social ministry point, not to ourselves, our programs, our skill or our saintliness, but only to Jesus. Preparing the way of the Lord is very much about pointing others to his real presence in and among us.

### **Today's Music**

*Prepare the Royal Highway.* Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772-1847; tr. Lutheran Book of Worship, Music: Swedish folk tune, 17th cent. Augsburg Fortress / Public Domain.

*We Light a Candle.* Text and Music: Richard Bruxvoort Colligan, Arr. Sherri Hansen. © 2016 Worldmaking.net (ASCAP) Used by permission. Licensed via CCLA, OneLicense.net and Worldmaking.net

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

*He Came Down.* Text: Cameroon traditional, Music: Cameroon traditional; arr. John L. Bell, b. 1949. Public Domain / GIA Publications, Inc.

*Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful.* Music: Richard W. Hillert, 1923-2010. Augsburg Fortress / Lutheran Book of Worship.

*O Day of Peace.* Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944, Music: C. Hubert H. Parry, 1848-1918. Hope Publishing Company (ASCAP) / Public Domain.

*Filled with Hope and Gratitude.* Text: Paul Damico-Carper, b. 1981, based on Luke 1:46-55, Music: Paul Damico-Carper. Augsburg Fortress.

*When Our Song Says Peace.* Text: Richard Leach, b. 1953, Music: Thomas Pavlechko, b. 1962. Selah Publishing Co., Inc. / Augsburg Fortress.

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### **Next Week's Readings**

Isaiah 35:1-10 *The desert blooms as God's people return from exile*

Psalms 146:5-10 *The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)*

James 5:7-10 *Patience until the coming of the Lord*

Matthew 11:2-11 *The forerunner of Christ*