



Christ Lutheran CHURCH

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December 4, 2022

WELCOME TO CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH!

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

At Christ Lutheran people of all backgrounds and experiences gather to worship because we all share a common hope: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ makes all things new, even us.

You will find everything that happens in worship printed in this bulletin. If you have a prayer request, the yellow cards in the seatback holders have a place for them; the other side is for any information you would like about Christ Lutheran. Please feel welcome to remain seated as necessary during the service.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN CHURCH!

God's people come in all shapes and sizes – it is a gift to the whole community when the smallest of us are present! Sitting with parents and learning to treasure times of worship is the foundation for helping build a growing faith in a child's life. There's some noise and movement that we expect from little ones - feel free to make use of the **activity bags, doodle pads, bookshelf in the overflow area and cry room at the back of the sanctuary** as needed. Whatever sacrifice of energy and effort you make to include your children in worship is multiplied as the good news of God's love takes root in their lives!

WHEN NURSERY CARE IS NEEDED DURING WORSHIP

A fully equipped and staffed Nursery is available for both infants and toddlers during all services. The Nursery is located west of our gathering area in **Room 110**.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. **WINE** is lighter-colored, and **GRAPE JUICE** is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays. **USED GLASSES** are placed in the basket located near the ramp. **GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE**, please indicate to the server that you require this.

COVID Procedure Update

Masks are encouraged but optional during worship. Naturally if you prefer to stay masked throughout the service, you are of course welcome to do so. Masks are not required for singing but suggested.

Our services are on video, and occasional photographs are taken for our website and e-mail news. If you have concerns, please speak to a church staff member.

Hearing assistance devices are available to those who need help with listening to the service and are located at the entrance to the sanctuary, or please see an Usher for assistance.

A Reminder: Please turn off all cell phones during worship services.

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Rejoice, Rejoice Believers

Peery

WELCOME

If you are joining us for the first time, welcome! We'd love to meet you, or if there's anything you'd like to know about the ministry of Christ Lutheran Church, please consider [filling out a Connection Card online](#) (you can point your phone at the graphic to the right) or using a yellow Connection Card in the pew holders.



***Prayer requests** can be posted to the livechat or use a yellow Prayer Request (backside of the Connection Card) and give them to an usher.*

*If you are worshipping with us via livestream, consider **preparing your space for Communion**: light a candle (if appropriate and safe), and have a plate with bread/cracker/tortilla and a cup for wine or grape juice (or an empty cup as a sign Jesus is sufficient in one or both elements).*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

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.

A brief silence for reflection.

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.

God knows we can never undo our sins.
 We cannot ignore painful history
 as though it does not affect us today.
 Yet from the very beginning,
 God's will has been the salvation of all creation.
 That salvation comes to each of us today:
 Receive ✠ God's forgiveness.
 This forgiveness is total.
 No sign of your old life remains,
 And if God has moved beyond your sin,
 you have no reason to return to it again.

**We are healed, by the one who makes all things new.
 Thanks be to God!**

GATHERING HYMN ELW #264 *Prepare the Royal Highway*

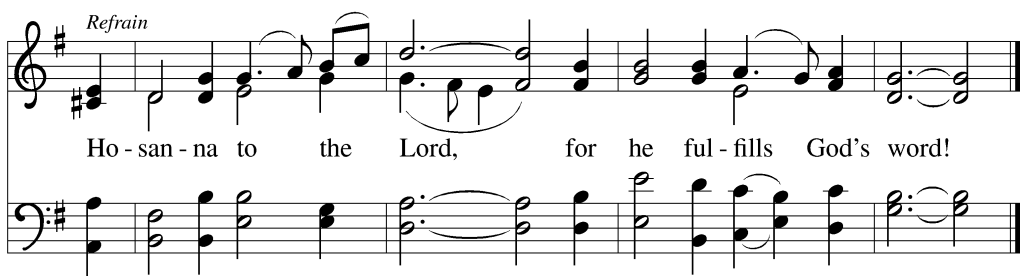
1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
 2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.

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:

Refrain



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

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
 Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.
 Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

GATHERING

For God, change can be small, evolutionary, atomic.
 A crumbled resistance, a slightly different direction,
 a fresh idea in the middle of the night.

For God, change can rain down like a tempest,
 a flood in every street that sweeps into our lives
 with energy that does not yield or listen.
God is urgently waiting to finally arrive.

God, we have been waiting for you, too.
Yet you often arrive before we notice:
in the place we did not expect,
in the word we did not hear.

Do not be afraid, your angels always say,
 right before you change a life.
You are here to change this place. We are not afraid.

GREETING


Peace to you and welcome,
 from the God who fills life with resilience,
 the Savior who rushes to offer forgiveness,
 the Spirit who supports us with endurance.
Amen.

Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

*We sing verses one and two of "God of the Starlight and Moon",
 then the last verse after the Prayer of the Day*

God of the Starlight and Moon: Lighting the Advent Candles



1. God of the star-light and moon, mys-ter-y God of the
 2. Beau-ty be-yond what we know, shap-ing a world that we
 3. Out of the blue you ar-rive, weav-ing our lives with your

mid-night blue skies. Love draw-ing near, dream-ing new
 can-not quite see. Form of a child, reach-ing to
 con-stant sur-prise. Flick-er-ing flame, spark-ling with

fu-tures: fire of our hearts, a-rise.
 greet us: time in e-ter-ni-ty.
 prom-ise: God of the star-lit skies.

When deep blue darkness
steps aside for softly spreading flame,
we take comfort from the warmth of living light.
This candle
on our Advent wreath
Reminds us of the joy of life,
which spreads as we share it.
Godly cheer can comfort us,
even when our surroundings
remain a mystery.

In time every person
will know the warmth
of God's love.
But not yet,
not fully.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

God of the keen blade,
which cuts the roots
of arrogant power:
you raise
voices of promise
in the dry lands of our desire,
children of faith
from the stones of the earth;
make us ready to receive
the Spirit and the fire of love,
wild and fierce and free;
through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come.
Amen.

We sing verse 3 of God of the Starlight and Moon.

WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.
When children read, they may read a version that is appropriate to their reading level and voice, which may vary from the printed texts.*

CHILDREN'S TIME

The assembly is seated as children come forward for a time together.

SPECIAL MUSIC

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

Peery

READING: Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David's royal line (the stump of Jesse). Gifted by the spirit of God, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peaceful coexistence.

¹A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

²The 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.

³His 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;

⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek 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.

⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶The 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.

⁷The cow and the bear shall graze,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹They 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.

¹⁰On 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.

PSALM 72:1-7, 18-19

¹Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;

²**that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;**

³that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.

⁴**Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**

⁵May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.

⁶**Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.**

⁷In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

¹⁸**Blessed are you, LORD God, the God of Israel;
you alone do wondrous deeds!**

¹⁹And blessed be your glorious name forever,
and may all the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. Amen.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.



HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 3:1-12

Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming,

²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³This 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.’ ”

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

⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹Do 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. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His 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.

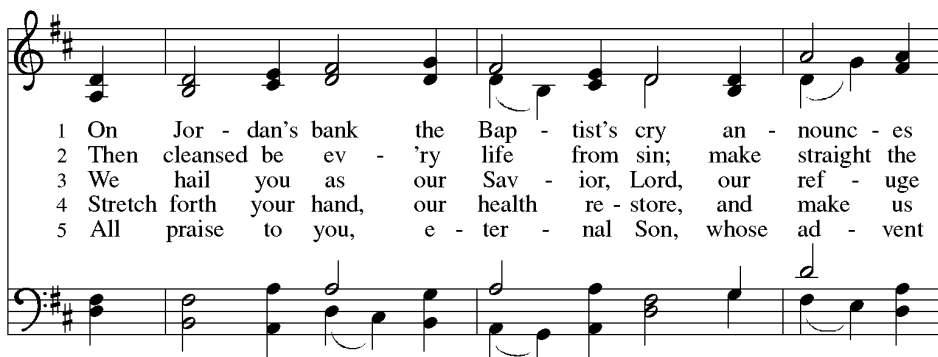
SERMON

The assembly is seated. Time for reflection follows the sermon.

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW #249

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

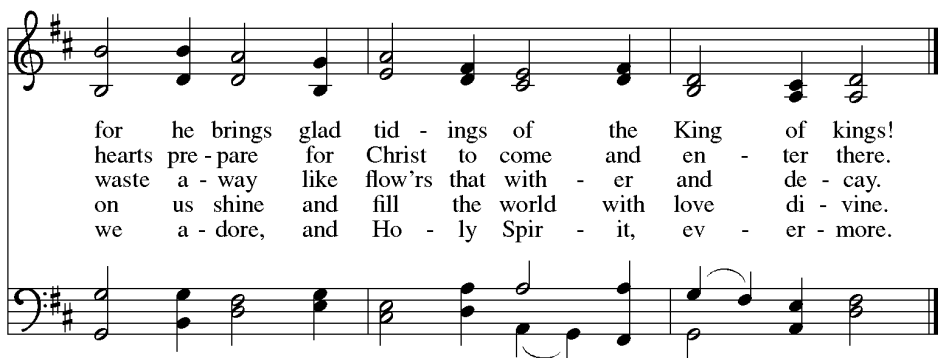
The assembly stands to proclaim the Word of God in song.



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
 2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
 5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
 way for God with - in, and let us all our
 and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
 rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
 has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite
 Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

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.

PRAYERS

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

A brief silence.

God, you renew the church in every age. We give thanks for hymn writers and theologians, especially John of Damascus, whom we commemorate today. Inspire teachers, writers, and musicians to delight and instruct your people. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You give us a vision of creation in harmony, when hurting and destruction will be no more. Teach us to be stewards of the earth and companions to its creatures. Restore to balance and wholeness what human greed has harmed. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You defend the cause of all who are poor and oppressed. Raise up leaders who will govern with equity and serve the common good. Guide judges, lawmakers, and public officials to protect the rights of those who cannot advocate for themselves. In Myanmar and Thailand, raise up advocates for victims of injustice and bless the work of all who seek peace, stability, and democracy. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You deliver those in need from suffering and fear. Come to the aid of any who are exploited or abused, especially children, elders, and victims of human trafficking. Provide safety and help to our neighbors without shelter, refugees, and those fleeing violence. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You urge your people to welcome one another as you have welcomed us. Nurture ministries of hospitality and care in this and every congregation; bless the work of Tony and Ed our Building Attendants and Nikki our Nursery Coordinator, that their hospitality might be a sign of your love. We pray for people who are homebound, hospitalized, or separated from loved ones. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You embrace all who have died trusting in your promises, and we give thanks for their faithful witness. Sustain us in hope until we are united with Nicholas, Ambrose, and all your saints in the joy of your eternal presence. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

*We invite those worshipping by livestream to share a sign of peace in the chat, and for those in person we turn to offer them our greeting of peace before sharing a sign of peace with one another: **Peace be with you!***

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

*Throughout this pandemic our congregation has never stopped serving our neighbors, our community, our world -- all because of your participation and support. This month we are sharing a portion of our offerings for the support of **Bethel Lutheran Church – Miller/Gary***

If you prefer to give electronically use [our CLC app](#) or browse to our secure on-line portal at clcvalpo.org/give.

OFFERTORY (8:00 a.m.) *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came*

Manz

OFFERTORY ANTHEM (10:30 a.m.) *Child of Light*

Pethel

Child of Light, we wait for you now, beneath the stars of heaven we bow; Child of Wonder, be our guide. Lead us on through the dark of the night. Child of Truth, we seek your face, how we need your love and grace; Be unto us our Savior, King, from our hearts these gifts we bring. Child of Light, come live within, let your joy on earth begin; Lift our eyes and fill our hearts; nevermore from us depart. Shine your Holy Light on us now, help us understand somehow; This matchless gift from heaven above, Child of Light and Child of love.

OFFERING PRAYER

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

We pray:

**God, we have labored and toiled
for our money, and our time,
and our families, and our freedom.**

We have cherished what we thought was ours.

Yet in a moment, we recognize that every truly good thing
was a treasure we had received from your open hand.

**We give you these gifts as a sign of your love and faithfulness.
Use them to grow more hope in this world. 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.

The pastor begins the prayer and all join in singing:

SANCTUS

(An ancient practice invites us to make the sign of the cross in honor of Jesus at the words "Blessed is he.")



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.

TABLE PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Children: The Spirit makes us one. We 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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God, who has come to save you.
Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION

The assembly is seated.

Holy Communion is the family meal of God's people, to which we come at Jesus' invitation. The body and blood of Christ, in the bread and wine, are his real presence with us and offer the gift of forgiveness because of his death and resurrection. Drawn together and strengthened by this meal, we are given a taste of the fullness of God's coming kingdom, and are equipped to be the hands and feet of God's love in the world. All baptized Christians are always welcome at the Lord's table.

*The pastor invites those worshipping via **livestream** to commune:*

The body of Christ, given for you.
Amen (receive the bread)

The blood of Christ, shed for you.
Amen (receive the cup)

In-person distribution: When indicated by the ushers, come up the right-hand ramp to approach the altar rail. When finished you may leave individually without being dismissed. **WINE** is lighter-colored and **GRAPE JUICE** is dark; they are received via individual cups in the trays. **USED GLASSES** are placed in the basket located near the ramp. **GLUTEN-FREE BREAD IS AVAILABLE**, please indicate to the server that you require this.

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.

Come to the ta - ble of mer - cy, pre - pared with the wine and the bread.

The first system of music consists of a treble and bass staff in B-flat major (two flats). The treble staff features a melody with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

All who are hun - gry and thirst - y, come, and your souls will be fed.

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The treble staff melody includes a half note followed by a quarter note. The bass staff accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern.

Come at the Lord's in - vi - ta - tion; re - ceive from his nail - scarred hand.

The third system continues the musical setting. The treble staff melody has a descending line. The bass staff accompaniment maintains the harmonic support with chords and moving lines.

Eat of the bread of sal - va - tion; drink of the blood of the Lamb.

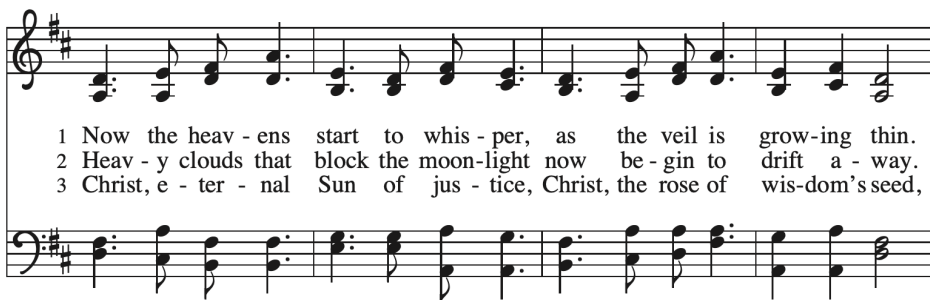
The fourth system concludes the hymn. The treble staff melody ends with a final chord. The bass staff accompaniment also concludes with a final chord. The system ends with a double bar line.

Text: Claire Cloninger, b. 1942


Music: COME TO THE TABLE, Martin J. Nystrom, b. 1956

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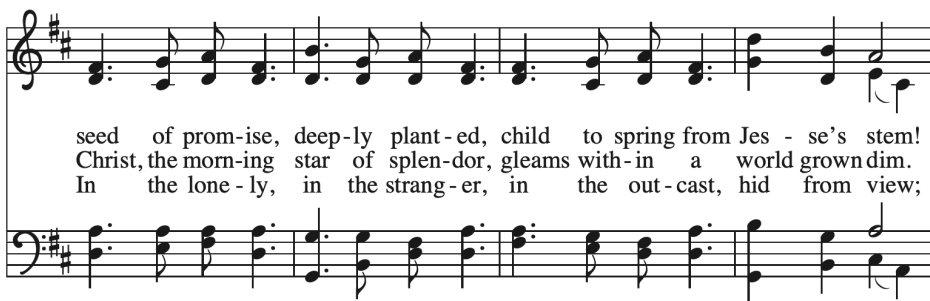
ACS #901 *Now the Heavens Start to Whisper*



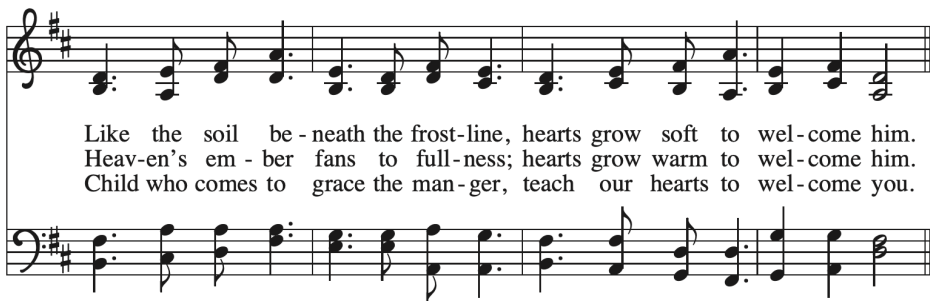
1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.
2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to drift a - way.
3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis - dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in:
Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness shines the hope of com - ing day.
come to bless with fire and fra - grance hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need.



seed of prom - ise, deep - ly plant - ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!
Christ, the morn - ing star of splen - dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim.
In the lone - ly, in the strang - er, in the out - cast, hid from view;



Like the soil be - neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.
Heav - en's em - ber fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come him.
Child who comes to grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come you.

After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands as the minister continues.
The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

The meal has ended. Now let the remembering begin.
Remember you have met God in this place.
Remember that no person who meets God
can ever be the same.

We pray:

You have called us. We have listened.
You invited us. We took our place at the table.
You have sat with us so we might follow you.
Now there is nowhere else we can go,
because you alone have the words of life. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

INVITATIONS

Brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.

BLESSING

God the eternal,
who dwells with us in Jesus,
and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit,
✠ bless you now and forever.
Amen.



To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra al Sal - va - dor
 1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
 2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell;
 3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;
 4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



y el sur - co a - bier - to, la ob - ra del Se - ñor; es el
 Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task; this, the
 "A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -
 new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most
 This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -
 la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
 ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -
 here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All
 world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad. dar - nos li - ber - tad.
 God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
 stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.
 clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!
 Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

- 2 *Dice el profeta al pueblo de Israel:*
"De madre virgen ya viene Emmanuel,"
será "Dios con nosotros," hermano será,
con él la esperanza al mundo volverá.
- 3 *Montes y valles habrá que preparar;*
nuevos caminos tenemos que trazar.
Él está ya muy cerca, venidlo a encontrar,
y todas las puertas abrid de par en par.

4 *En una cueva Jesús apareció,*
pero en el mundo está presente hoy.
Vive en nuestros hermanos, con ellos está;
y vuelve de nuevo a darnos libertad.

Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946

Music: TODA LA TIERRA, Alberto Taulé

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is near.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

As worship concludes we move to the Gathering Place, where we are invited to greet one another and share in fellowship.

Worship Leaders

	<u>8:00 a.m.</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
Acolyte	Sara McDaniel	Magdalena Gibson-Even
Lector	Tammy Hofer	Becky Fry
Prayer Assistant	Paige Reichardt	Sheila Burnside
Communion	Barbara Clements Andrew Teeple	Amy Knauff Phil Hahn
Ushers	Luke Venstrom Don MacMillan	Jerry Bohacik
Sound/Light	Tony Reinhold	Jeff Peiffer
Video/Livestream	-----	
Pastors:	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr. Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries:	Brian Bartusch	
Worship Participant:	Angy Moore, harpist	

December Altar Gifts

Communion Baker	Karen Hernes
Communion Wine:	Ellen Swayne ~ In Memory of Charles Swayne Barb & Bill Lieske ~ In Memory of Stella and Clarence Moss
Altar Candles:	Becky Bakalyar—In Memory of my parents' wedding anniversary
Eternal Lamp Candles:	The Wehner Family ~ In Memory of Pastor Thomas C. and D. Diann Rick

COMMEMORATIONS

Week of December 4, 2022

December 4

John of Damascus, theologian and hymnwriter, died around 749

A monk in an abbey near Jerusalem, John wrote many hymns as well as theological works. One of his works, *The Fount of Wisdom*, remained influential for centuries.

December 6

Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died around 342

Little is known about Nicholas, except that he was a bishop in present-day Turkey. According to legend, he was famous for his giving to the poor, and so has become a symbol of anonymous gift-giving.

December 7

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, died 397

While a governor of northern Italy, Ambrose was elected bishop of Milan on the same day he was baptized. He was a famous preacher, a writer of hymns we still sing today, and helped lead St. Augustine to faith.

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Myanmar and Thailand**.

We give thanks for:

- the beauty of these countries and their people, and their many distinctive Buddhist temples
- those who long have struggled that these countries might become more democratic
- the faithful witness of churches, which have advocated with others for greater justice efforts to protect the environment and resources in these countries.

We pray for:

- minority ethnic and religious groups who continue to experience discrimination, persecution or even genocide (such as the Rohingyas), and for greater interfaith understanding and tolerance for ethnic and religious diversity
- those victimized by sex tourism and exploitation, and those who perpetuate such acts
- political stability and progress toward democratic rule
- economic justice for all people, and environmental protection, as these countries undergo development.

Advent Message

Imagine that you're driving down the highway. You miss your exit. With a little tug in the pit of your stomach, you realize that you're now heading somewhere new.

Imagine that you're at a concert. A piece of music keeps surprising you with fresh chords and new sounds. The composer leads you somewhere you didn't expect, and you can't help but follow, curious to discover what comes next.

Imagine that you've gathered with a group of people for ballroom dancing. The music shifts; it's time to change partners. You're ready to sit this one out, but someone meets your eyes and holds out their hand. The moment is electric. You accept the wordless invitation and spin into motion.

Change is at hand. Something unexpected is happening, and we're in the midst of it. Out of the blue, something new is arriving like lightning: transformation, wonder, justice, joy. From generation to generation, God has been dreaming of this moment. Inevitably, it catches us by surprise, just like it surprised our ancestors in faith: Sarah, Abraham, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Mary, Joseph. God's time is now. It's here to reorient our expectations and to sweep us into a future of hope and promise, even if we didn't expect it, even if it wasn't part of our plans.

We are invited to join the flow of an Advent season that sweeps us off our feet, carries us forward, and invites us to join God in God's creative work. We'll trace God's plans for justice and peace with the genealogy of Jesus and the witness of the saints who followed him. We'll be surprised by a thicket of new shoots from the stump of Jesse. We'll find God beguiling us by inviting us to imagine something new, regardless of what came before. And if we're worried about the future and afraid of letting go of the familiar outlines of our lives, God will meet us there too.

The highway has always extended past the familiar exit. The music is already written. The dance is underway. But the moment of change seems to come out of the blue, altering our expectations and creating a future we never thought possible. It's Advent, and change is coming out of the blue. What will God reveal to us this season?

Stewardship Snippet

Romans 15:13 – 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.

Let Paul's words be your call not only to find joy and hope, but also to share it with the world – especially those for whom the season brings sadness. That is good stewardship of your Christmas cheer!

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Portions from *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* by Steven Shakespeare.

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