



Christ Lutheran CHURCH

2610 Campbell Street
Valparaiso, Indiana 46385
(219) 462-6660 • clcvalpo.org



November 30, 2025

We welcome you to Christ Lutheran Church! We are a community of people sharing God's love through Christ and growing together in faith.

We celebrate all the ways we are made in the image of God, seeking to see God in everyone. We honor and respect each person's age, ethnicity, family composition, gender identity, gender expression, life history, mental well-being, physical ability, relationship status, sexual orientation, skin color, and socioeconomic standing. Together, we strive to love and serve our neighbor and all creation, including working toward racial and social justice. We would love to walk with you on this creative adventure* of faith, grace, and love.

** The first sermon ever preached at Christ Lutheran was titled "A Call to Creative Adventure."*

ABOUT WORSHIP

We gather to worship weekly to hear and remember our shared 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, with hymns found in the red hymnals ("ELW") in the seats in front of you.

If you have a prayer request, note it on a yellow card from the seatback holder and pass it to an usher; 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**.

RESTROOMS

Men's and women's restrooms off the Gathering Area and Church Hall have changing tables, as does the all-gender restroom near the nursery. A second all-gender restroom is through the Vestry off the East hallway, past the Welcome Center.

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.

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.

The new church year begins with a wake-up call: Christ is coming soon! In today's readings both Paul and Jesus challenge us to wake from sleep, for we know neither the day nor hour of the Lord's coming. Isaiah proclaims the day when God will gather all people on the holy mountain and there will be no more war or suffering. Though we vigilantly watch for the promised day of salvation, we wait for what we already have: Christ comes among us this day as the word and meal that strengthens our faith in the promises of God.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

PRELUDE

Fantasia on 'What Child is This?'

Purvis

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.



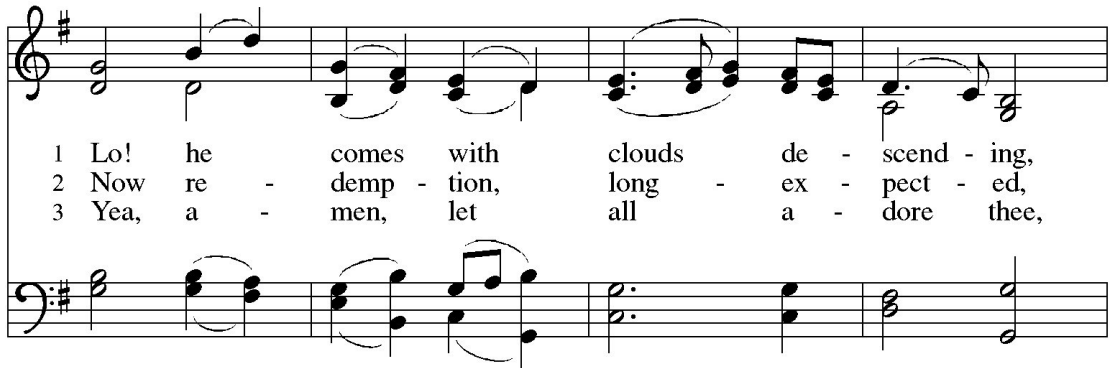
***Prayer requests** can be posted to the live chat or use a yellow Prayer Request (on the backside of the Connection Card) and give them to an usher.*

*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).*

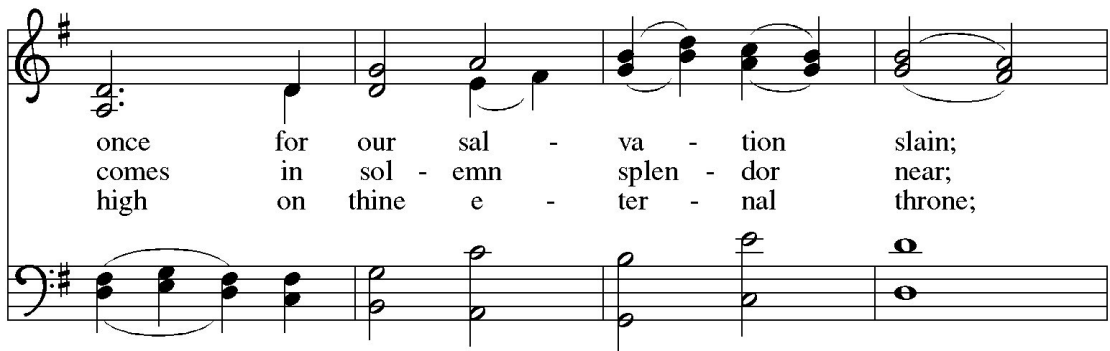
GATHERING HYMN

ELW #435

Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending



1 Lo! he comes with clouds de - scend - ing,
 2 Now re - demp - tion, long - ex - pect - ed,
 3 Yea, a - men, let all a - dore thee,



once for our sal - va - tion slain;
 comes in sol - emn splen - dor near;
 high on thine e - ter - nal throne;



thou - sand thou - sand saints at - tend - ing
 all the saints this world re - ject - ed
 Sav - ior, take the pow'r and glo - ry,

join to sing the glad re - frain:
thrill the trum - pet sound to hear:
claim the king - dom as thine own.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -

lu - ia! Christ the Lord re - turns to reign.
lu - ia! See the day of God ap - pear!
lu - ia! Thou shalt reign, and thou a - lone!

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.

Children: This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

THANKSGIVING FOR LIGHT FOR ADVENT (*Advent Wreath is lit*)

3 Leader

We give you thanks, O

God, for it is you who called forth light, and you

led your peo-ple Is - ra - el with won - ders and with signs.

Assembly

Lead us in this sea - son's wait - ing with won - ders speak - ing

hope and signs of Je - sus' in - car - na - tion;

Leader

for your mer - cy is our light and your com - pas - sion is our guide,

Assembly

and with cre - a - tion we glo - ri - fy you through the Son and

in the Spir - it now and ev - er - more.

A - men.

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It consists of nine staves of music. The first staff begins with a 3-measure rest, followed by the lyrics 'We give you thanks, O'. The second staff continues with 'God, for it is you who called forth light, and you'. The third staff continues with 'led your peo-ple Is - ra - el with won - ders and with signs.' The fourth staff begins with a 3-measure rest, followed by the lyrics 'Lead us in this sea - son's wait - ing with won - ders speak - ing'. The fifth staff continues with 'hope and signs of Je - sus' in - car - na - tion;'. The sixth staff begins with a 3-measure rest, followed by the lyrics 'for your mer - cy is our light and your com - pas - sion is our guide,'. The seventh staff continues with 'and with cre - a - tion we glo - ri - fy you through the Son and'. The eighth staff continues with 'in the Spir - it now and ev - er - more.' The ninth staff begins with a 3-measure rest, followed by the lyrics 'A - men.'.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

God, who is faithful
when all the foundations crumble:
in the time of crisis,
as holy places fall
and nations stumble,
give us the conviction
to bear witness to love,
whatever the cost;
through Jesus Christ, the Word and Wisdom of God.
Amen.

WORD

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

CHILDREN'S TIME

The assembly is seated as children are invited for a time together.

READING: Isaiah 2:1-5

The visionary message presented in this reading focuses on a future day when God establishes a universal reign of peace. Divine decisions will make war obsolete, and the worshiping community responds: "Let us walk in the light of that Lord now!"

¹ The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

² In days to come
the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

³ Many peoples shall come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

⁴ He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

neither shall they learn war any more.
⁵ O house of Jacob,
 come, let us walk
 in the light of the LORD!

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 122

The congregation is invited to sing the psalm refrain when indicated (R). Verses will be chanted alternately by the leader and the people.

Refrain



Psalm Tone



I was glad when they | said to me,
 "Let us go to the house | of the LORD."
²**Now our | feet are standing**
within your gates, | O Jerusalem.
³Jerusalem is built | as a city
 that is at unity | with itself;
⁴**to which the tribes go up, the tribes | of the LORD,**
the assembly of Israel, to praise the name | of the LORD. R
⁵For there are the | thrones of judgment,
 the thrones of the | house of David.
⁶**Pray for the peace | of Jerusalem:**
"May they pros- | per who love you.

⁷Peace be with- | in your walls
 and quietness with- | in your towers.
⁸**For the sake of my kindred | and companions,**
I pray for | your prosperity.
⁹Because of the house of the | LORD our God,
 I will seek to | do you good." **R**

READING: Romans 13:11-14

Paul compares the advent of Christ to the coming of dawn. We live our lives today in light of Christ's coming in the future.

¹¹ Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹² the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³ let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the Gospel.

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al- le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 24:36-44

Jesus describes his second coming as a sudden, turbulent event that will bring about deep change to our normal, day-to-day lives. Therefore, he urges people to stay awake, be aware, and wait expectantly, because the Son of Man will come unannounced.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples,] ³⁶ “About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴² Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.”

The gospel of the Lord.

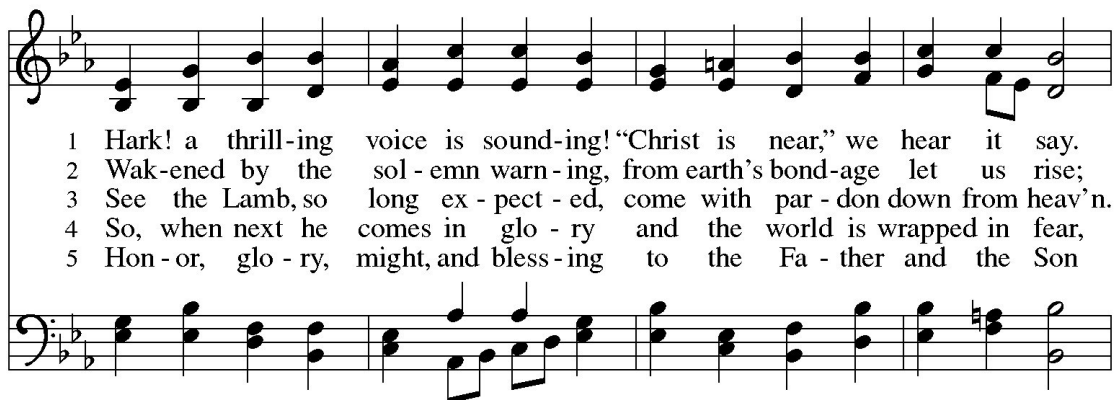
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

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

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW #246 Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!

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



1 Hark! a thrill-ing voice is sound-ing! "Christ is near," we hear it say.
2 Wak-ened by the sol - emn warn-ing, from earth's bond-age let us rise;
3 See the Lamb, so long ex - spect - ed, come with par - don down from heav'n.
4 So, when next he comes in glo - ry and the world is wrapped in fear,
5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, and bless-ing to the Fa - ther and the Son



"Cast a - way the works of dark-ness, all you chil-dren of the day!"
Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling, shines up - on the morn-ing skies.
Let us haste, with tears of sor - row, one and all, to be for - giv'n;
he will shield us with his mer - cy and with words of love draw near.
with the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it while un - end - ing a - ges run!

APOSTLES' CREED

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.*

PRAYERS

Our prayers draw on the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle and the Church's calendar of Commemorations. Further information is found each week at the end of the bulletin.

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 of all, your children everywhere cry out for mercy. Awaken the global church to the urgent needs of our time. Break down barriers of culture and custom and unite people of all faiths in your redemptive and healing work. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of wonder, the earth's beauty and abundance is your gift. Teach us your ways of sharing resources and caring for life. Guard fragile habitats, preserve the wild places, and protect endangered plants and animals. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of peace, you judge the nations. Beat our weapons into tools for serving the neighbor. Strengthen the resolve of all who work for an end to war. We pray for lasting peace in the land of Jesus' birth. In Brunei, Malaysia, and Singapore, tend to the needs of your creation and all people, that all may flourish. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of lovingkindness, you desire fullness of life for everyone. Fill those who hunger. Comfort the grieving and attend to those near death. Bring help and hope to any who are sick or needing your care. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of community, you are present when we gather in your name. Guide congregations in transition or conflict, especially our neighbors at Griffith Lutheran and Gloria Dei Lutheran as they seek pastors. Give wisdom to congregational councils, call committees, and ministry leaders. Keep us alert to unexpected opportunities for mission. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of promise, your goodness is everlasting. We give thanks for the lives of the faithful who now rest in you, including Andrew, Francis Xavier, John of Damascus, and Nicholas. We trust that you will bring us into the company of all the saints with rejoicing. 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 live 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

*This congregation serves our neighbors, community, and the world through the participation and support of its members and guests. Because offerings are never just about us, this month we are sharing a portion of your gifts with **Daybreak Shelter (including Men's Resale Shop)** daybreakshelter.org and **Gabriel's Horn (in conjunction with Family Promise of P.C.)** www.gabrielshester.org*

If you wish to give electronically, use the QR code, browse to our secure on-line portal at clcvalpo.org/give or use [our CLC app](#) (download at clcvalpo.org/app).



OFFERTORY

What is This Lovely Fragrance

Manz

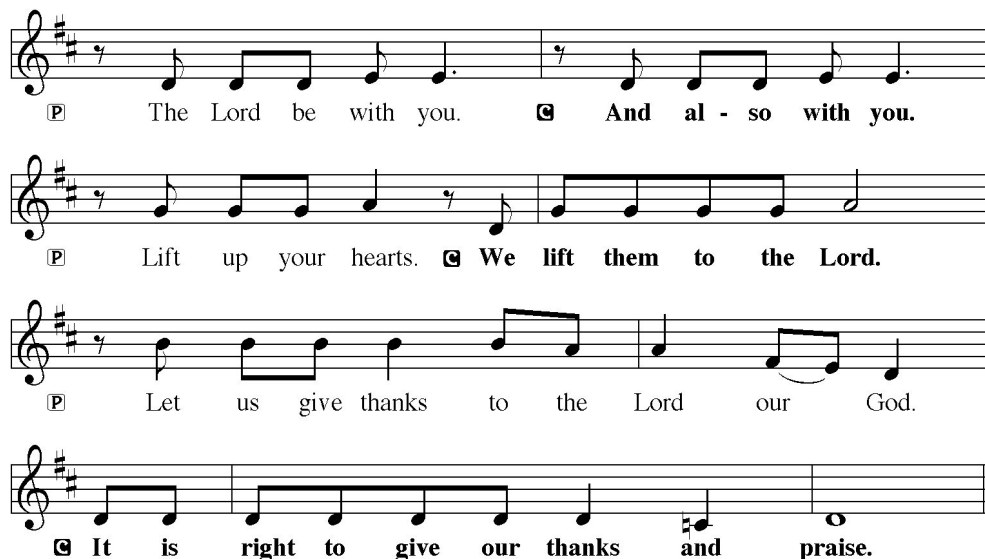
PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

The assembly stands as the gifts are brought forward.

The musical score is written on six staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It begins with a common time signature 'C' and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The lyrics are: 'Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, 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, 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 score ends with a double bar line.

C Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, 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, 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.

GREAT THANKSGIVING



P The Lord be with you. **C** And al - so with you.

P Lift up your hearts. **C** We lift them to the Lord.

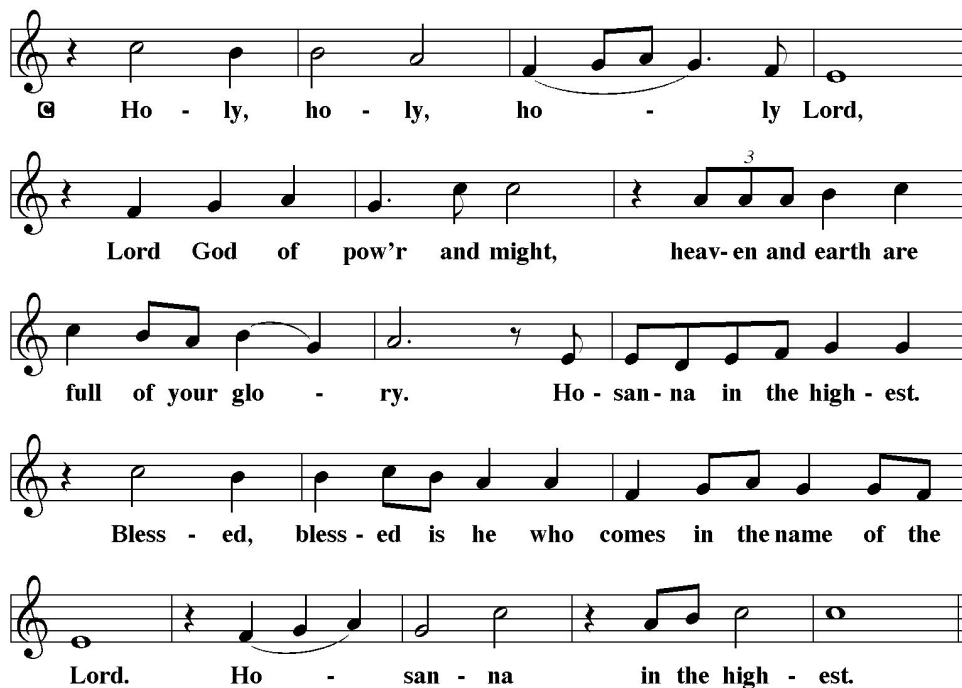
P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The pastor continues the prayer then 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.")



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,

Lord God of pow'r and might, heav-en and earth are

full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed, bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the

Lord. 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 in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those
 who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours,
 now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life. God is with us.
Come, receive what God has promised.
Thanks be to God!

DISTRIBUTION


*The assembly is seated. 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; wine is received either by Common Cup or from 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


Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;


have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us, have mer - cy.


Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;


have mer-cy on us, have mer-cy on us, have mer - cy.


Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; grant us peace.



COMMUNION MUSIC

ELW # 252 *Each Winter as the Year Grows Older*



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



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



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

ELW # 737 *He Comes to Us as One Unknown*



1 He comes to us as one un-known, a breath un - seen, un -
 2 He comes when souls in si - lence lie and thoughts of day de -
 3 He comes to us in sound of seas, the o - cean's fume and
 4 He comes in love as once he came by flesh and blood and
 5 He comes in truth when faith is grown; be - lieved, o - beyed, a -



heard; as though with - in a heart of stone, or shriv - eled seed in
 part; half - seen up - on the in - ward eye, a fall - ing star a -
 foam; yet small and still up - on the breeze, a wind that stirs the
 birth; to bear with - in our mor - tal frame a life, a death, a
 dored; the Christ in all the scrip - tures shown, as yet un - seen, but



dark - ness sown, a pulse of be - ing stirred, a pulse of be - ing stirred.
 cross the sky of night with - in the heart, of night with - in the heart.
 tops of trees, a voice to call us home, a voice to call us home.
 sav - ing name, for ev - 'ry child of earth, for ev - 'ry child of earth.
 not un - known, our Sav - ior and our Lord, our Sav - ior and our Lord.

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.

POST COMMUNION CANTICLE ELW #200 *Now Lord*



Now, Lord, you let your ser - vant go in



peace: your word has been ful - filled. My



own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre -



pared in the sight of all peo-ple: a light to re -



veal you to the na-tions and the glo - ry of your



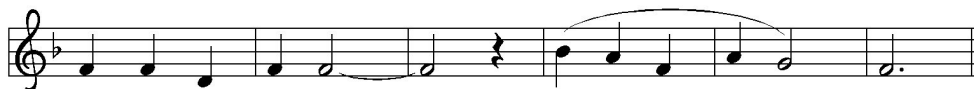
peo-ple Is - ra - el. Glo - ry to the Fa-ther,



and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spir - it,



as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and



will be for - ev - er. A - men.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

INVITATIONS

The assembly is seated as brief invitations are shared, especially those related to the assembly's participation in God's mission in the world.

BLESSING

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

Amen.

SENDING HYMN ELW #244 *Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers*



- 1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
- 2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
- 3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'ring bore,
- 4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.
shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.
a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.
in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

Children join the pastors to send us in mission.

DISMISSAL

Children: Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

Manz

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		Noah DeJesus
Lector	Paul Conover	Phil Hahn
Prayer Assistant	Paige Reichardt	Heather Budnik
Communion Assistants	Scott Steinwart	Phil Hahn Amy Knauff
Ushers	Bill Scheiderich Ben Lieske	
Sound/Light		Tony Reinhold
Video/Livestream	_____	
Pastors	Rev. Timothy Knauff, Jr Rev. Erica Gibson-Even	
Director of Music Ministries	Brian Bartush	
Cantor	Kathy Stefans	
Communion Baker	Bull Family	

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

This week we pray for the churches and people of **Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore.**

We **give thanks** for:

- Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox and evangelical churches and councils of churches in Malaysia and Singapore which have witnessed to the gospel and ministered to groups who are discriminated against and marginalized
- economic developments that have enhanced the standard of living for many
- policies and practices that seek to sustain the environment and its resources
- those who have sought to further ethnic and religious harmony.

We **pray** for:

- more just, participatory and democratic rule
- locally-determined economic development that lessens inequalities and protects natural resources
- greater ethnic and religious understanding and cooperation
- the forging of national identities and visions that genuinely include all the diverse people in these countries.

COMMEMORATIONS Week of November 30, 2025

November 30

Andrew, Apostle

The first of the disciples to be called by Jesus, Andrew quickly began to bring others to the Savior, including Simon Peter. The Bible also shows him leading some Greeks to meet Jesus, and he brought forward the boy with five loaves and two fish, with which Jesus fed thousands.

December 3

Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, died 1552

A native of the Basque region of Spain, Xavier became a missionary to India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and the Philippines. He also helped to found the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

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.

Advent Signs

Few things in life are as jarring as awakening to the shriek of a fire alarm. Of course, that is by design. The safety of those gathered indoors calls for a blaring warning of impending danger so that all might be delivered from harm. Jesus offers a similar signal to his beloveds today, begging us to pay attention to the seriousness of the message he bears: *Be ready! Keep awake! Pay attention to your surroundings! Deliverance is coming soon!*

Advent is a season of preparation, directing our focus toward the incarnation, toward Christmas, when God becomes human and the weary world rejoices. Sometimes preparations take the form of monthslong laborious planning, as we might do for an international trip or the renovation of a home. Other times, preparations must happen immediately, within hours, minutes, or seconds. When a fire alarm sounds, there's no time to plan: We must act quickly, gathering what is most important to get to safety together.

This first Sunday of Advent is a chance to take stock of what is most important in life, to attune our spirits to the reign of heaven that God is birthing in our world. We may be unsettled by these gospel images of the great flood and of field workers being disappeared. Such stories indeed may spark fear, anxiety, and distrust. Yet God comes to be with us amid all the great uncertainties of life, amid the atrocities of human violence, amid the worst of our losses and fears. Jesus reminds us that God is always drawing near to the world, always extending mercy, always acting with love. Mercy and love are Advent signs worth paying attention to, worth staying awake for. Be ready, beloveds, and fear not! God's deliverance is coming soon.

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2025 Augsburg Fortress.

All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #26201.

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Portions printed under OneLicense.net License #A-711129.