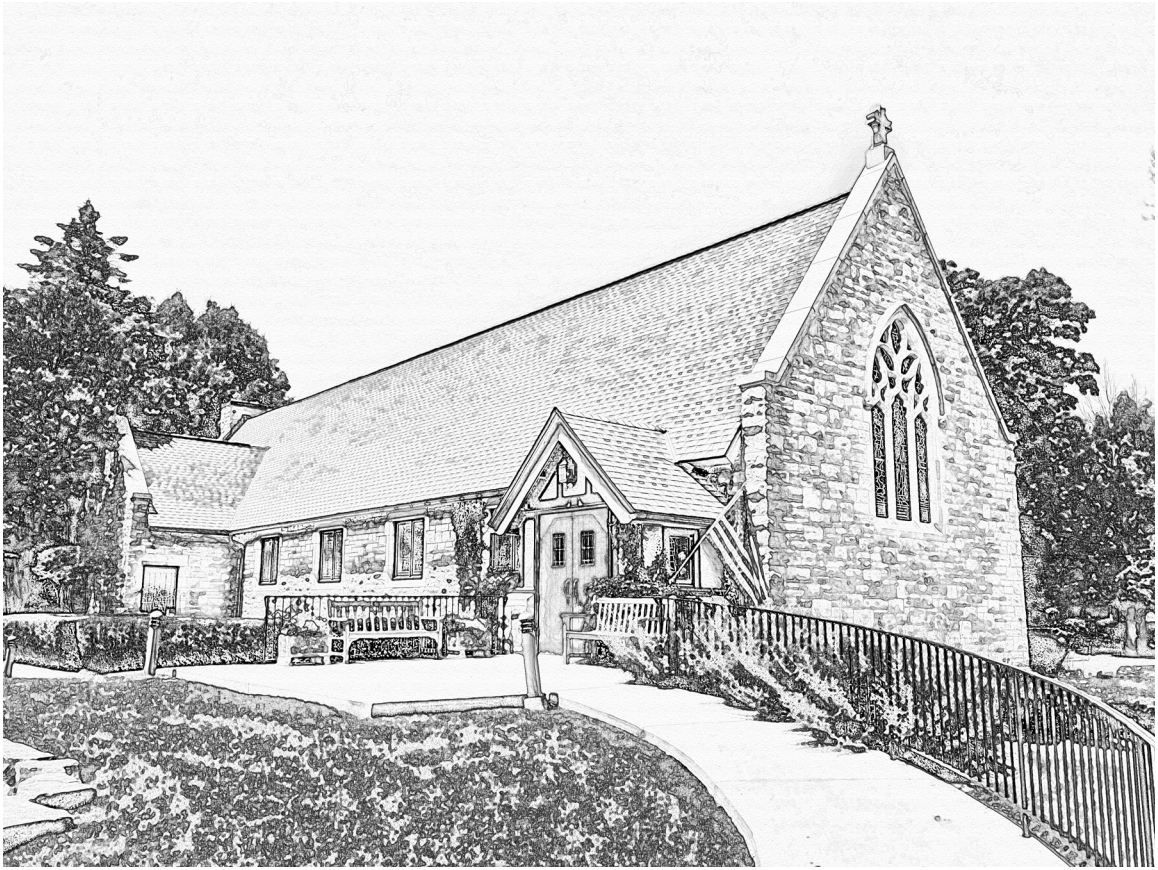
St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025 4:00 PM

Welcome to Saint Elisabeth's. We are delighted to have you with us today.



This faith community invites all persons to all levels of participation, leadership and decision-making within the church regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, physical or mental capacity, education, socioeconomic and marital status. We seek to establish meaningful connections with one another through work and play and worship as we strive to understand God's purpose for us in the church and in the world.

Welcome to St. Elisabeth's Episcopal Church

We are glad that you are here this evening, celebrating the love of God for all of creation in the birth of Jesus.

St. Elisabeth's is a faithful, vibrant, inclusive, and affirming congregation in the Episcopal tradition, and we are excited to welcome you to our community. We invite you to join us for worship and to get involved in our service and community ministries.

Sunday Mornings at St. Elisabeth's

You are most welcome to join us on a regular Sunday morning. Our community gathers each Sunday at 8:00 am for a spoken, traditional language service. Our 10:00 am sung service is led by the St. Elisabeth's Choir and includes contemporary language. Following the 10:00 am service, we enjoy a cup of coffee or tea as the children join their teachers for Sunday School and the adults meet in the Guild Room to discuss the day's lessons, sermon, or whatever else is on folks' minds.

Music at St. Elisabeth

Music has the power to affect and to change us, and it is a foundational part of our ministry at St. Elisabeth's Church. It is a universal act of prayer through which we can find deeper meaning in our spiritual practice, and greater connection in our community. Our choir meets on Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. for rehearsal

Adult Formation

We have several opportunities for Adult Formation. In addition to the Adult Forum on Sunday mornings, our Bible Study meets on Thursday afternoons at 1:30 p.m. They are currently studying the letters of Paul. Our monthly book group reads and discusses selections from the *Great Conversations* series.

Pastoral Care & Support

Our parish clergy are always available for spiritual conversation or pastoral support, providing a companion on the way: who will share with you in times of joy and sorrow; who can help you discern God's will for you; who will pray

with you and seek Christ with you; who will support your practice of the faith, your prayer, your life in Jesus.

Children and Family Ministries

Children of all ages are welcome at St. Elisabeth's, and invited as full participants in our worship and programs. Sunday School for children is offered every Sunday after the 10:00 a.m. service, and young people of all ages are invited to participate. Once a month we gather on Sunday evening at 4:30 p.m. for Sunday Supper and Family Worship. Other activities for families are planned throughout the year.

Community Engagement & Outreach

We are keenly aware of our responsibility to serve others in Christ's name. We partner with the Interfaith Action Soup Kitchen in Evanston to provide meals to those in need, and we partner with St. Augustine's, Wilmette and North Shore United Methodist Church, Glencoe, to offer Family Promise, a program helping homeless families with children, in our community. We provide ongoing support to agencies in our area including the New Trier Township Food Pantry, Revive Center for Housing & Healing, and Episcopal Charities, in addition to a quarterly Outreach project focusing on a particular agency. This fall we supported The Grace Network as well as a local immigrant family.

May God bless you in this season of Christmas and in the new year.

In the Church Year: Christmas

For the church, Christmas is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. We celebrate this birth not because Jesus was simply a "good man" but because we believe Jesus was — and is — both the human son of Mary and the divine Son of God. That makes Christmas a time to reflect on a mystery that the church calls the doctrine of the Incarnation. This important theological term comes from the Latin word carne, which means "flesh," and has to do with the divine taking on human flesh and coming among us in human form.

In one of his Christmas sermons Augustine, the fifth-century bishop of Hippo, described the mystery of the Incarnation this way: "Beloved, our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal creator of all things, today became our Savior by being born of a mother. Of his own will he was born for us today, in time, so that he could lead us to his Father's eternity. God became human like us so that we might become God. The Lord of the angels became one of us today so that we could eat the bread of angels." *Daily Prayer for All Seasons*

Entering In

The following thoughts as well as the image are intended to reflect something in today's service. The Practice is intended to offer one practical way of living these reflections.

By virtue of Creation, and still more the Incarnation, nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see. -- *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*

Enjoy every moment of this Christmas as sacred – the wondrous story, the children's joy, the deep satisfaction brought by family and friends, and even in times of aloneness and grief. They are sacred and a way into the holiness of life.

Adoration of the Child, Gerrit van Honthorst, 1590-1656

The Holy Eucharist: Rite II
The Word of God

The Prelude

Introit "The Holly and the Ivy"

The holly and the ivy when they are both full grown
Of all the trees that are in the wood, the holly bears the crown.

Oh, the rising of the sun, and the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ sweet singing in the choir!

The holly bears a blossom as white as any flower;
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ to be our sweet Saviour.

Oh, the rising of the sun, and the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ sweet singing in the choir!

The holly bears a berry as red as any blood;
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ to do poor sinners good.

Oh, the rising of the sun, and the running of the deer,
The playing of the merry organ sweet singing in the choir!

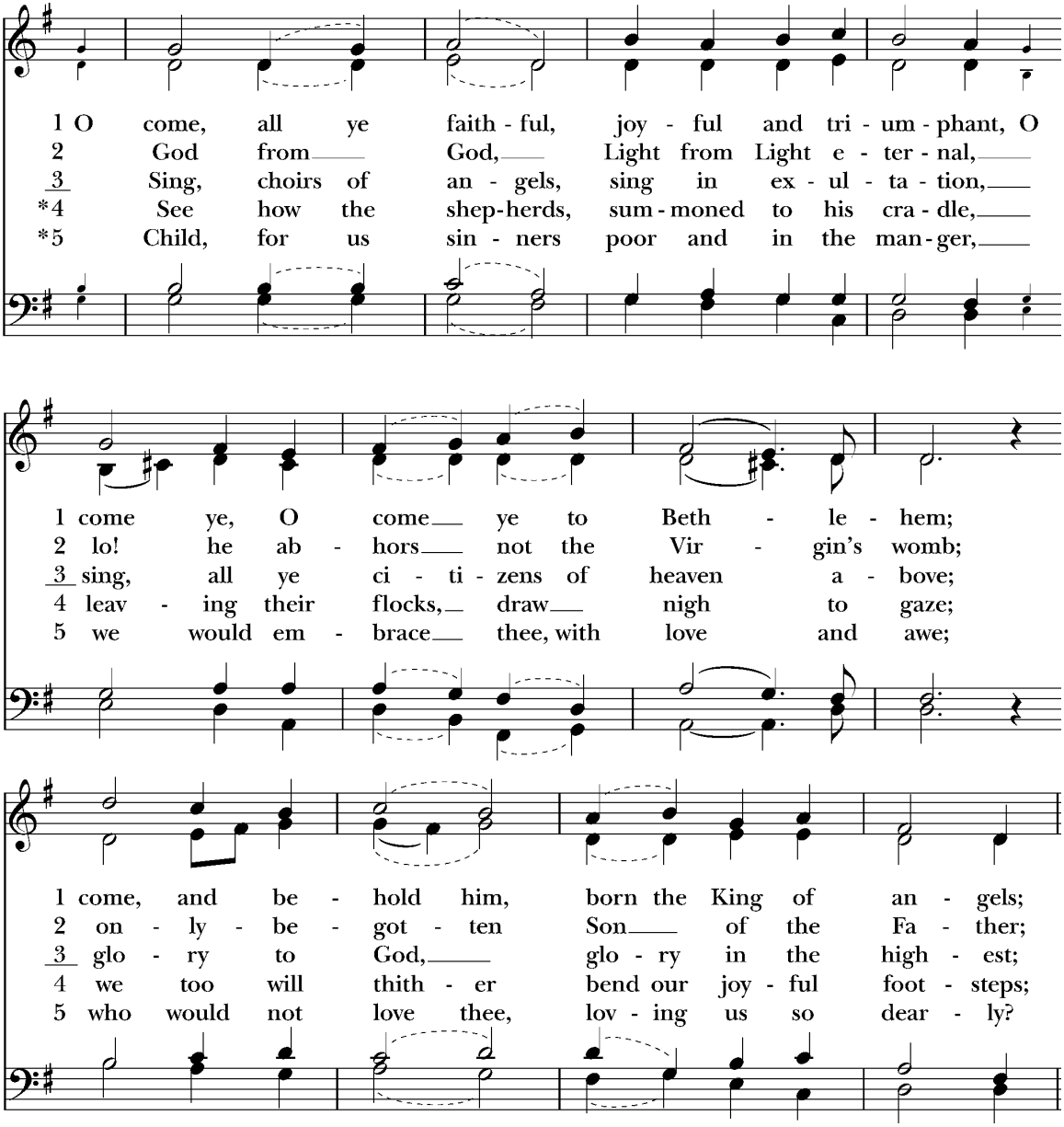
Traditional English Carol

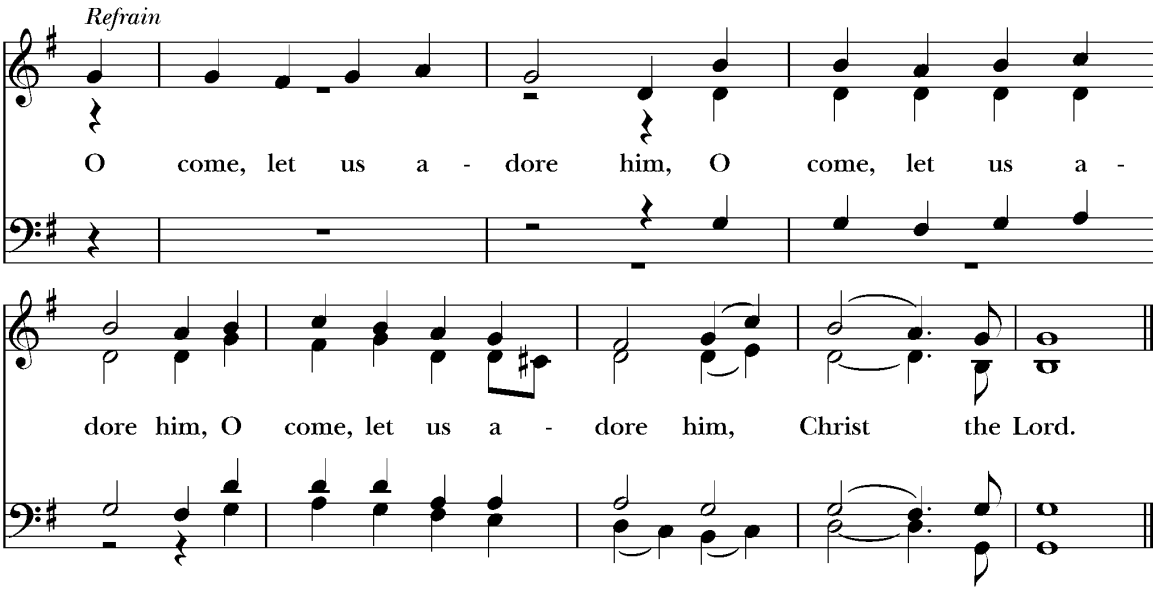
Please stand at the ringing of the bell.

The Opening Acclamation *Common Worship*

Presider Blessed be God: most holy, glorious, and undivided Trinity.
Assembly **And blessed be God's reign, now and for ever. Amen.**

The Hymn "O Come, All Ye Faithful"





6 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing;

The Hymnal 1982 #83, Text: John Francis Wade (1711-1786), Music: *Adeste fideles*

The Collect of the Day

Presider God be with you.
Assembly **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of the Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting.

Assembly **Amen.**

Prayer for a Christmas Pageant

Presider Most holy God, eternal source of life and love and peace, draw near as we gather to tell the story of Jesus' birth. You who inhabit the majesty and mystery of heaven, weave the stories of our lives with the story of your love made flesh and come among us. Bless the children who will tell this story, and keep us ever mindful that it is to these that your Kingdom belongs. Fill us with awe, wonder, and joy as we remember your eternal Love, humbly born and revealed to shepherds and sages alike. Be born in us again and again, that we may ever be vessels of your presence in a world that now, as then, needs the healing of such love.

Assembly **Amen.**

Please be seated.

The Christmas Pageant

Please remain seated as the children tell the story of Jesus' birth.
The congregation is invited to join in singing the carols.

"O little town of Bethlehem"

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
Yet in the dark street shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

"Away in a manger"

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
close by me for ever, and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

"The first Nowell"

The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields as they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. *Refrain*

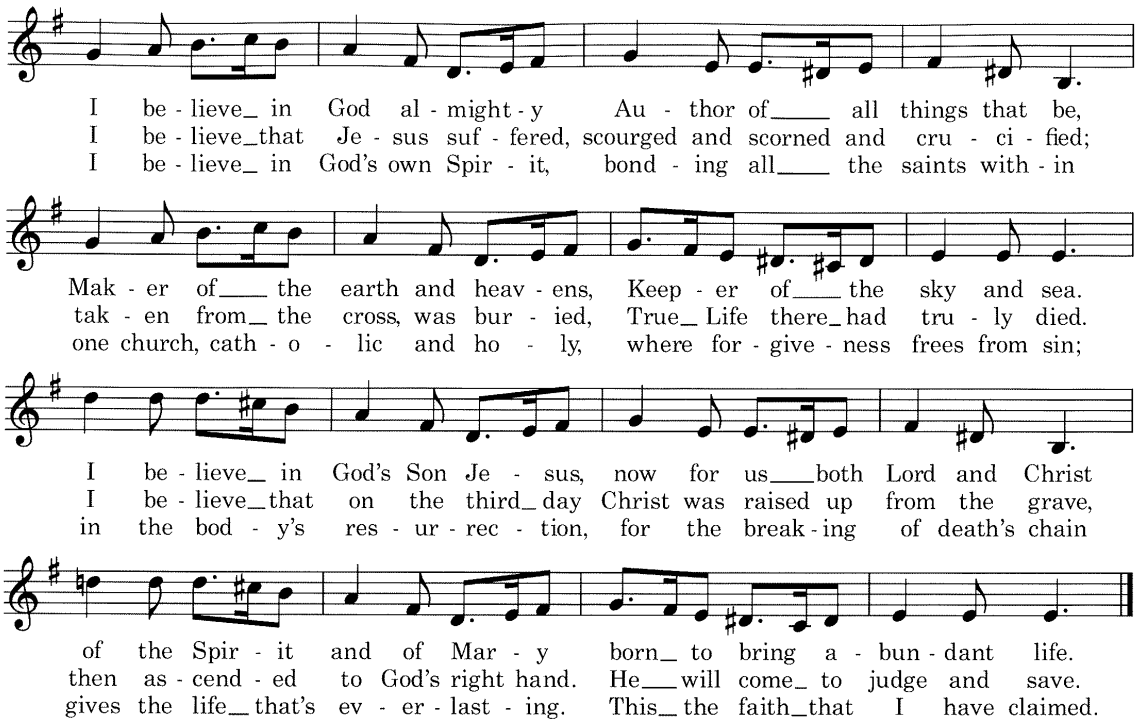
Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood our life hath bought. *Refrain*

The Sermon — The Rev. Adam Spencer

A period of silence follows the Sermon, beginning and ending with a chime.

Please stand as you are able for the Creed and the Prayers.

The Creed — "I Believe"



Aldrich/Spencer; Text: Apostles Creed paraphrased, Music: *Greensleeves*

The Prayers of the People

Written by the Rev. Adam Spencer

Intercessor God be with you,
Assembly **And also with you.**
Intercessor Let us pray.

Intercessor Wonderful Counselor, your saving wisdom is that of the mustard seed, of the yeast in the dough, of the distant star barely glimpsed between the thick clouds of night, the wisdom of a tiny infant born in a feed trough in a backwater town. Teach us and all who follow you to seek and to find this wisdom, to listen and hear your good counsel, your incarnate Word spoken into the midst of our lives in those small wonders and signs of your glory that we might otherwise overlook but which offer us your insight, your way, your very Self. Inspire us with courage and boldness to offer ourselves generously in your service and in service to a wide, wounded world in sore need of small things done with great love.

Intercessor God in your mercy,
Assembly **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Mighty God, we lift to you all who are sick or struggling or in need of your healing grace this night particularly those we now name, silently or aloud…

For Sally Graver
Sherry Schellenbach
Aidan Thomson
Ben Whipple, son of Larry & Susan Whipple
Sam Weisbard, friend of Fred & Annette Johnston
Lexi Valasek, mother of a Montessori student
Charlotte Margolis, baby sister of a Montessori student
James Green, sibling of a Montessori student
Chuck Southwick & family, friend of Susan & Larry Whipple
Cheryl, friend of Adrienne Zimmerman

Griffin, friend of Adrienne Zimmerman
Are there others?

Shine your great light on all who walk in darkness. Illumine, transfigure, heal, and save.

Intercessor God in your mercy,
Assembly **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Everlasting Father, we pray to you for those who have died, especially Polly Kasey and those we now name silently or aloud. (*Silence)* Receive them into the realms of unending day and enfold them in your eternal peace.

Intercessor God in your mercy,
Assembly **Hear our prayer.**

Intercessor Prince of Peace, in your perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under your banner, as children of one God. Enkindle with the fire of that same Spirit the hearts of the leaders of the nations particularly our own leaders here in America and those in places of conflict - in Sudan, in Ukraine, in Venezuela - that we might, all of us, join in the heavenly chorus of peace and goodwill sung by the angels at your holy birth.

O Jesus, the hopes and fears of all the years are met in you tonight. We offer you all that we are able: to serve you, to care for all those who suffer and to strive for the peace you came to bring. Give us only your love and your grace. That is enough.

Intercessor God in your mercy,
Assembly **Hear our prayer.**

Presider Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth: accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you, our savior and our eternal God. *Common Worship*

Assembly **Amen.**

The Peace

Presider This holy night the angels said, "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to all in whom he delights."

The peace of God be always with you.

Assembly **And also with you.**

Please offer one another a sign of God's Peace.

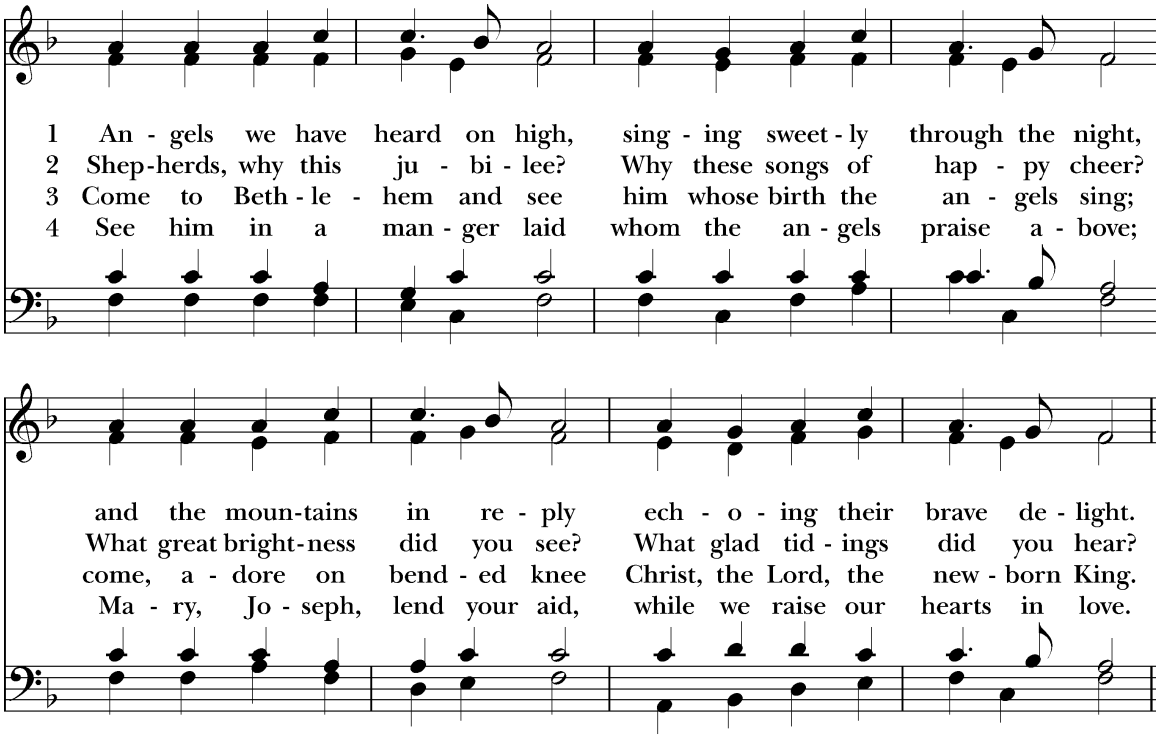
Holy Communion

The Offertory Sentence

Presider Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. *Ephesians 5:2*

Thank you for your generous giving to the mission and ministry of St. Elisabeth's church. You can leave a donaton in the offering plate or use your phone to scan the OR code to donate online.

The Offertory Hymn "Angels We Have Heard on High"



Refrain

Glo - - - - - - - - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - - - - -

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

The Hymnal 1982 #96, Text: French carol, Music: *Gloria*, French Carol

The Doxology

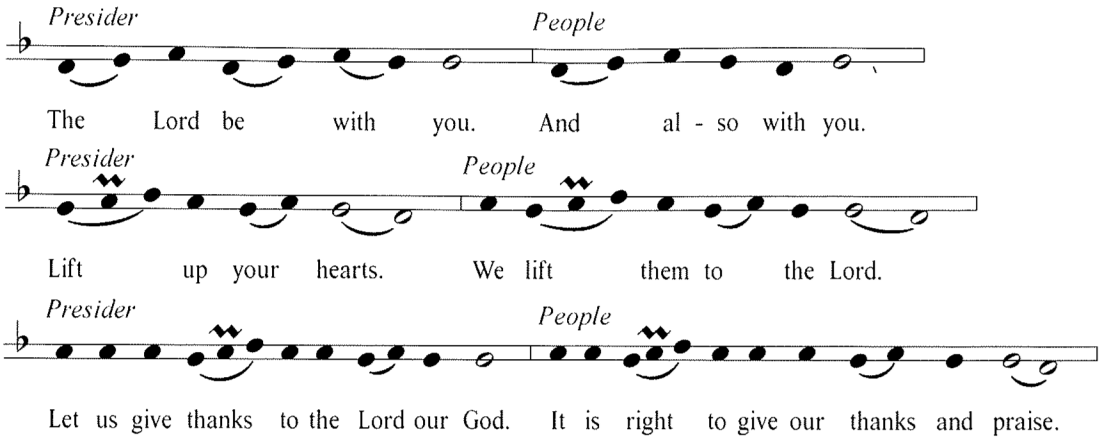
To God, all glor - ious heav - enly light; To Christ, re - vealed in earth - ly night;

To God, the Spir - it now we raise; Our joy - ful songs of thank - ful praise.

Music: *Old 100th*

The Great Thanksgiving

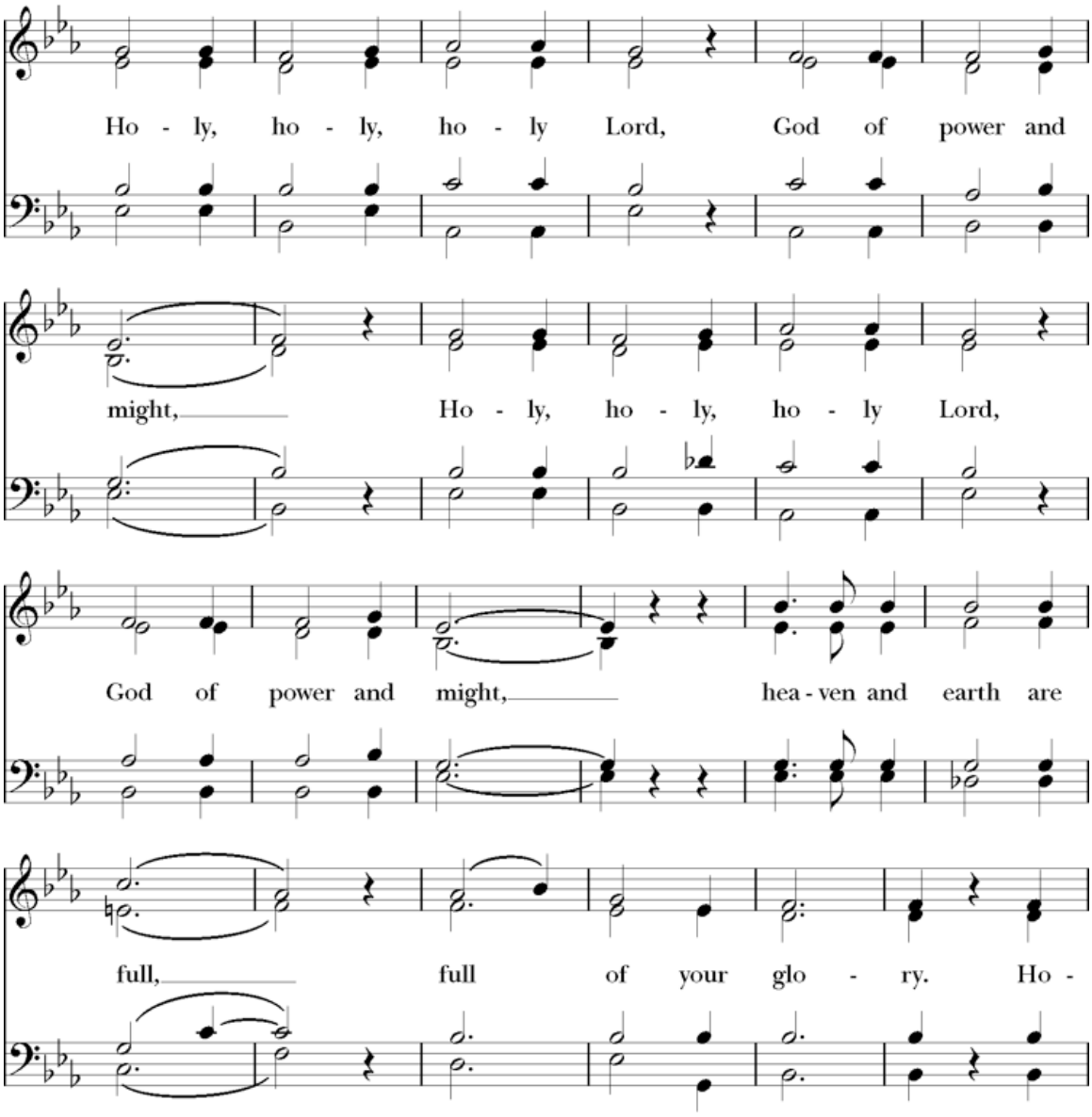
Book of Common Prayer, Prayer B, Expansive Language

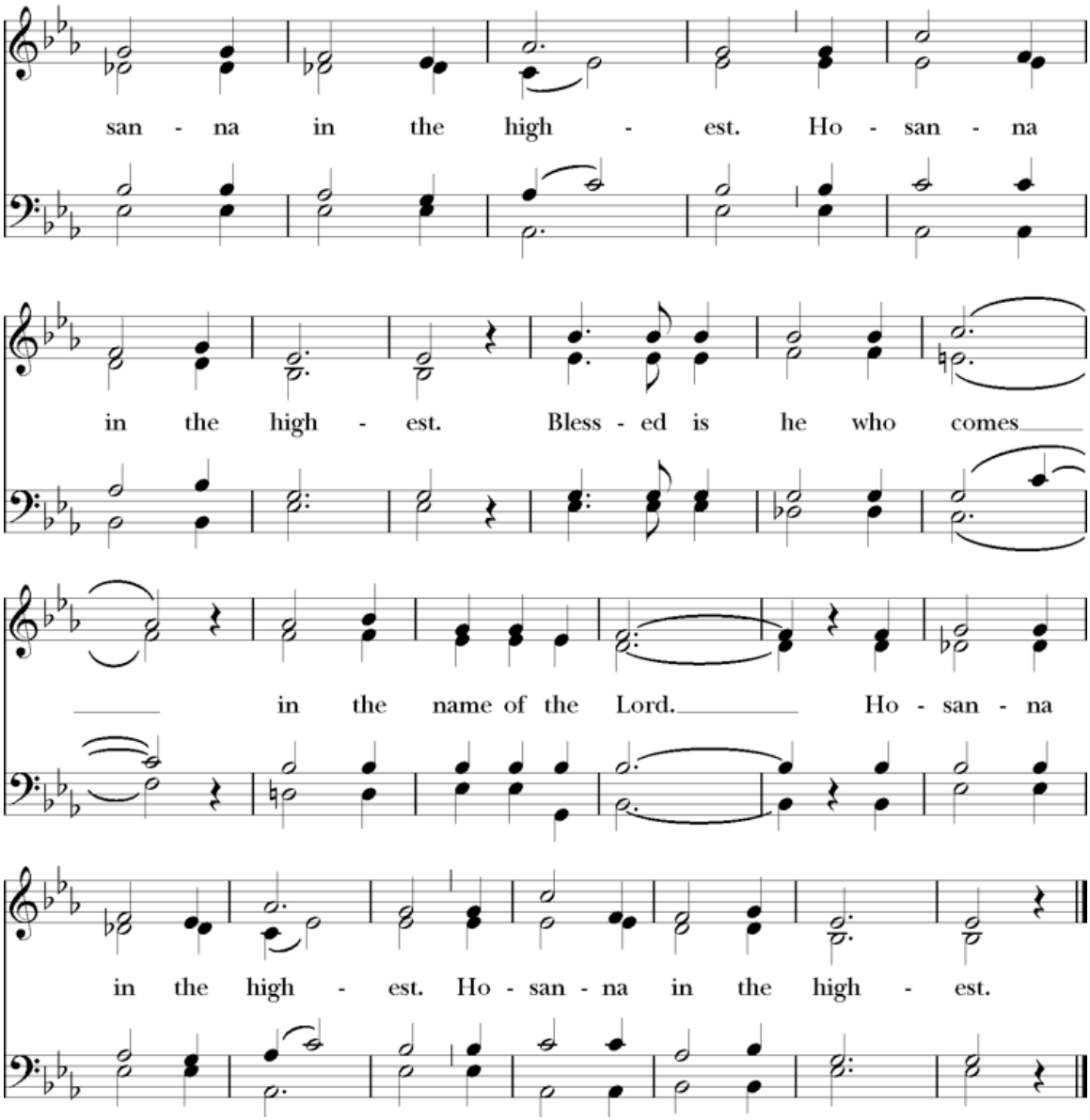


Presider It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, O God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Because you gave Jesus Christ, your only Son, to be born for us; who, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, was made perfectly human of the flesh of the Virgin Mary his mother; so that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin, and receive power to become your children.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:


Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and
might, Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,
God of power and might, hea - ven and earth are
full, full of your glo - ry. Ho -



The Hymnal 1982 #S130, *Franz Schubert/arr. Richard Proulx*

Presider We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. For in these last days you sent Jesus to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In Christ, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In Christ, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Savior Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Assembly **We remember Christ's death.**
We proclaim Christ's resurrection,
We await Christ's coming in glory.

Presider And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, through whom we are acceptable to you, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly

country where, with Elisabeth and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your children; through Jesus Christ our Savior, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and for ever.

Assembly **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Presider And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Assembly **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,
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Presider breaks the consecrated bread. A period of silence is kept.

Presider The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

Assembly **We who are many are one body, for we all share the one bread.**

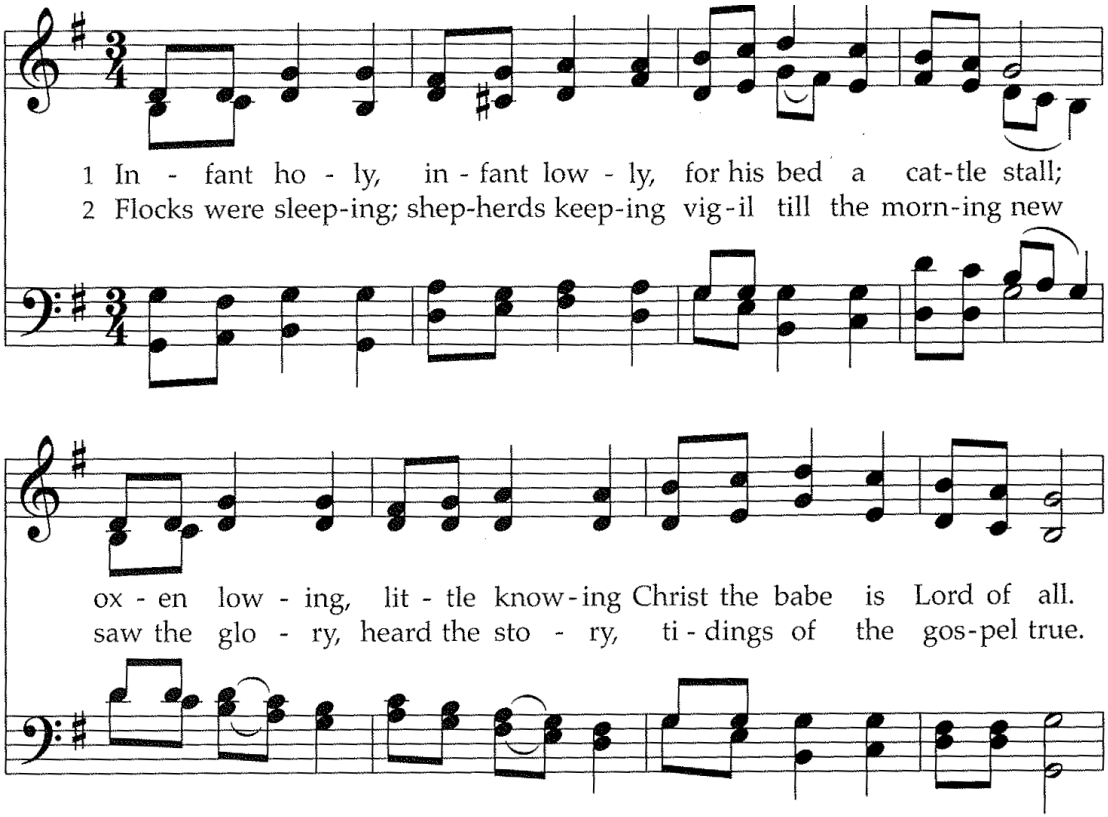
The Invitation to Communion

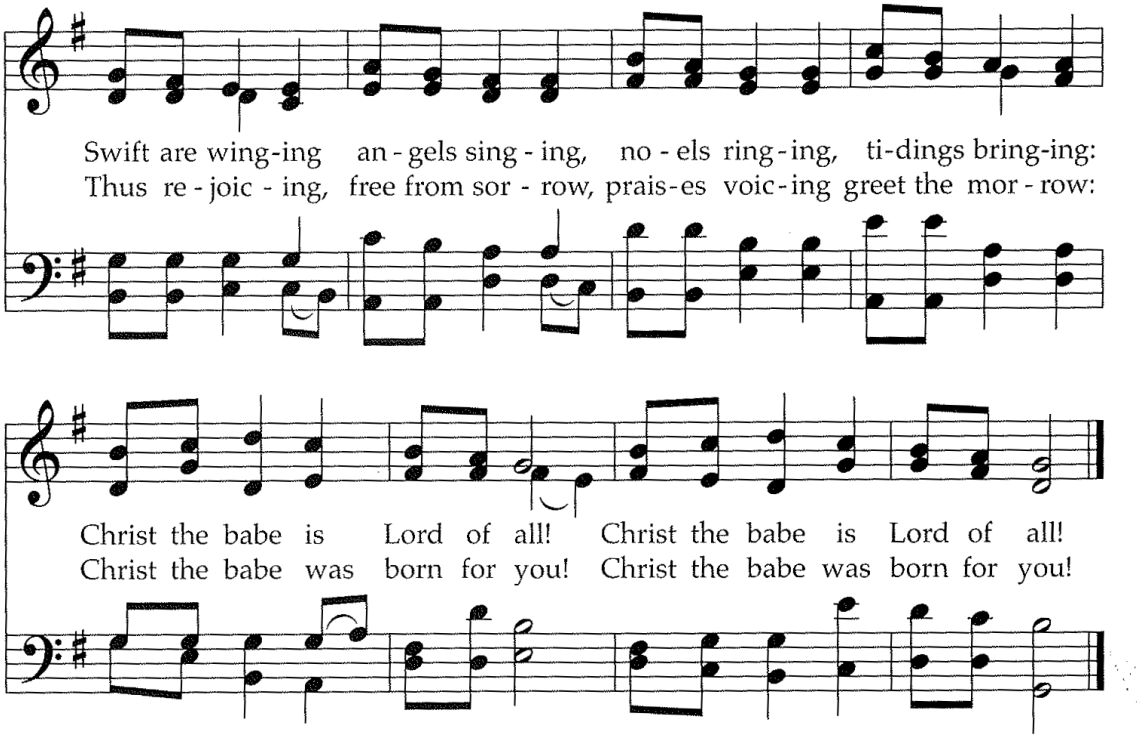
Presider The Gifts of God for the People of God.

All are welcome to come forward to receive Communion or a blessing. Please stand or kneel at the altar rail as the choir does. Assist the minister to guide the chalice to your lips. If you would prefer to receive a blessing, please cross your arms over your chest. Gluten-free host available upon request.

Music during Communion

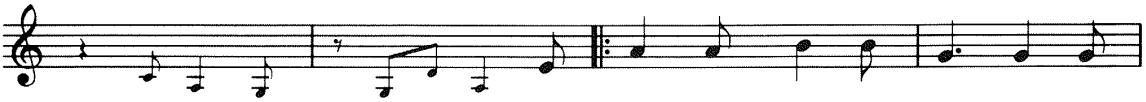
"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"



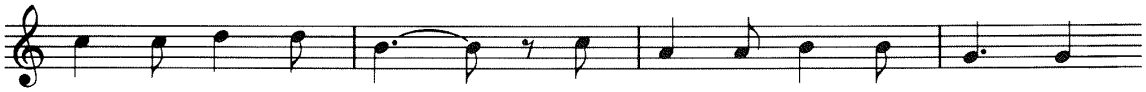


Glory to God #128, *Text and Music: Polish Carol*

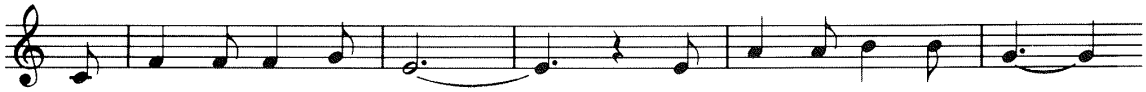
"A Stable Lamp is Lighted"



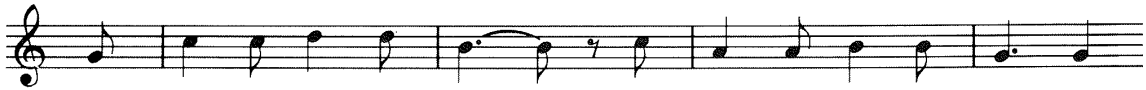
1 A sta - ble lamp is light - ed Whose
2 (This) child through Da - vid's ci - ty Shall
3 (Yet) he shall be for - sak - en, And
4 (But) now, as at the end - ing, The



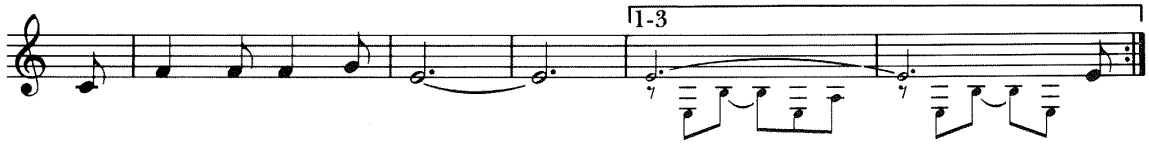
glow shall wake the sky; The stars shall bend their voic - es,
ride in tri - umph by; The palm shall strew its branch - es,
yield - ed up to die; The sky shall groan and dark - en,
low is lift - ed high; The stars shall bend their voic - es,



And ev - ery stone shall cry. And ev - ery stone shall cry,
And ev - ery stone shall cry. And ev - ery stone shall cry;
And ev - ery stone shall cry. And ev - ery stone shall cry,
And ev - ery stone shall cry. And ev - ery stone shall cry,



And straw like gold shall shine; A barn shall har - bor hea - ven,
Though hea - vy, dull, and dumb, And lie with - in the road - way
For ston - y hearts of men: God's blood up - on the spear - head,
In prais - es of the Child By whose de - scent a - mong us



A stall be-come a shrine.
To pave his king-dom come.
God's love re-fused a - gain.
The worlds are rec - on - ciled.

2 This
3 Yet
4 But

The Hymnal 1982 #204, Text: Richard Wilbur, Music: *Andujar,* David Hurd

The Post Communion Prayer

Book of Common Prayer, Expansive Language

Please stand as you are able.

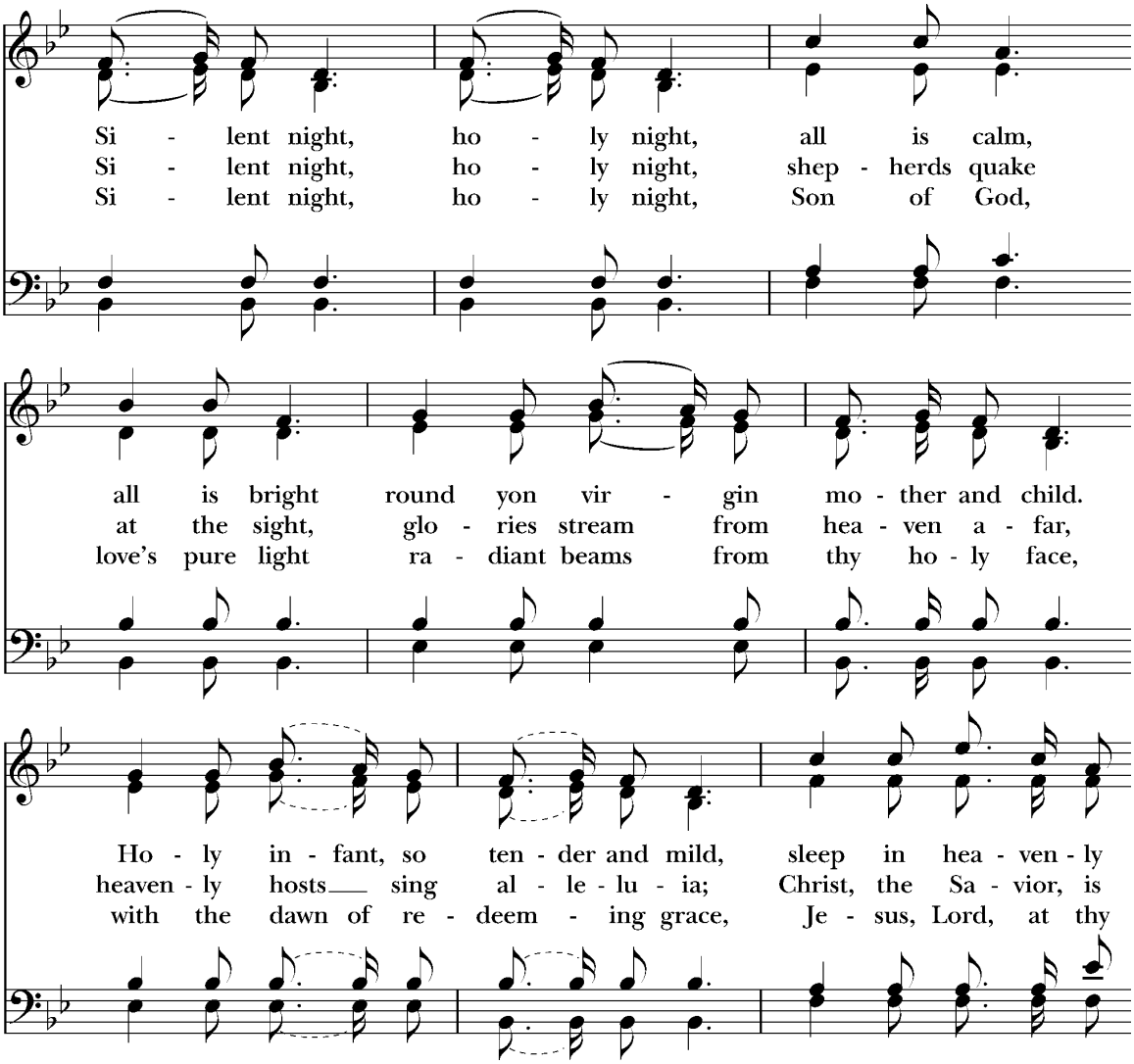
Presider Let us pray.

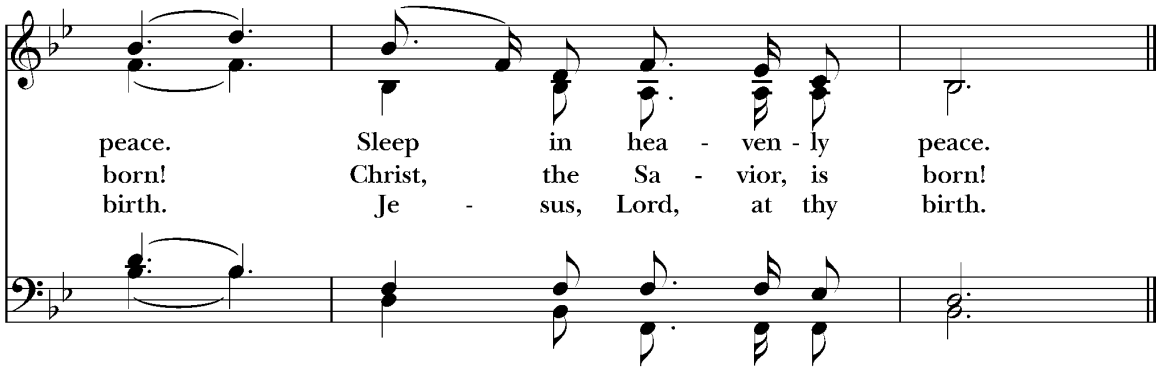
Assembly **Eternal God, you have graciously accepted us as living members of our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Carol and Candlelighting

Receive the light from an usher/priest and share it with those around you, tipping the unlit candle to the lit candle so not to spill wax.

"Silent night, holy night"
The Hymnal 1982 #111, *Stille Nacht*





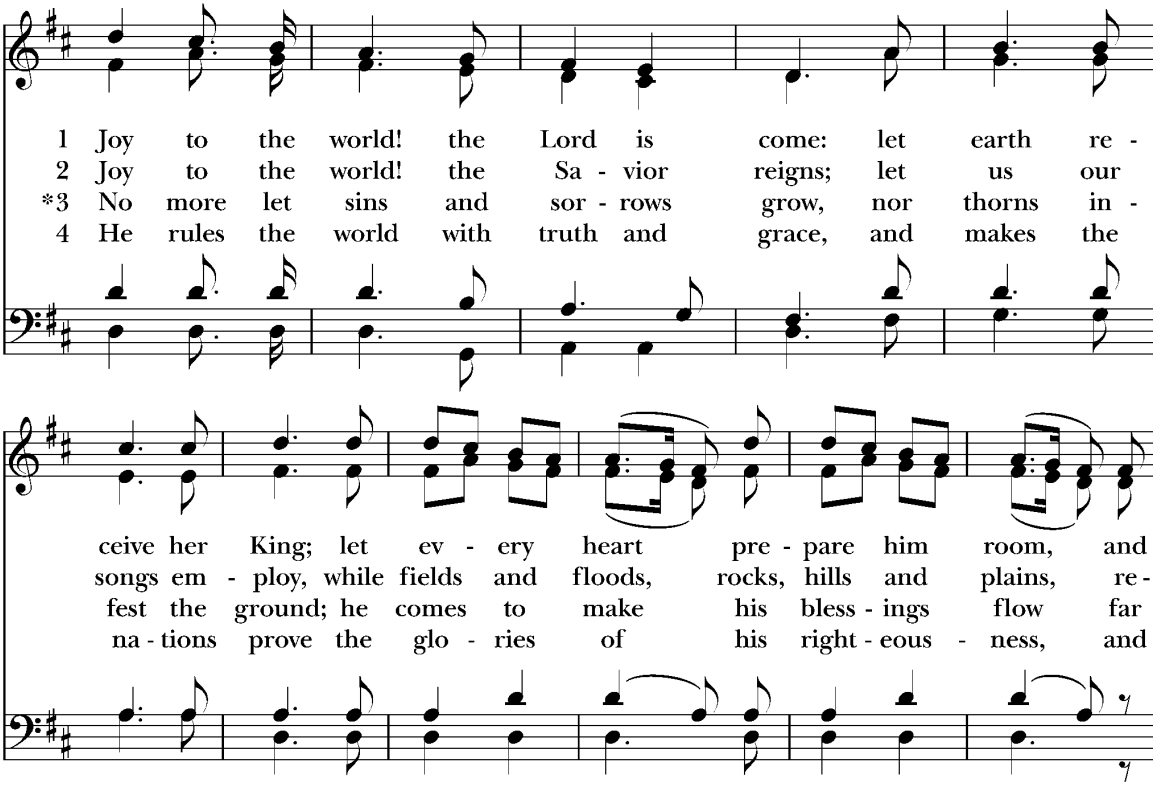
The Hymnal 1982 #111, *Stille Nacht*

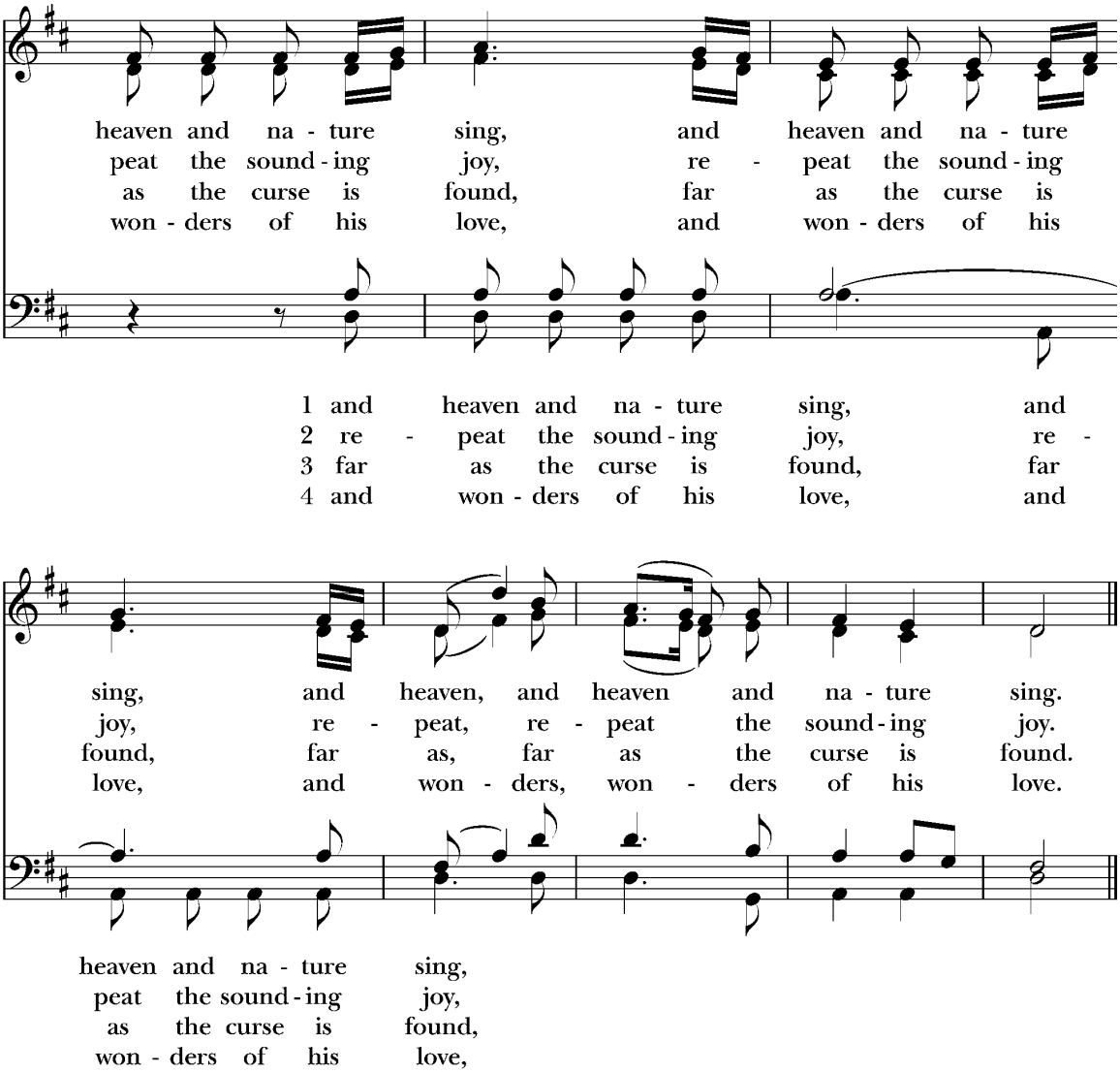
The Blessing

Presider May Christ, who by his Incarnation gathered into one all things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be among you, and remain with you always.

Assembly **Amen.**

The Closing Hymn "Joy to the world! The Lord is come"





The Hymnal 1982 #100, *Text: Isaac Watts (1674-1748), Music: Antioch, George Frederic Handel (1685-1759)*

Dismissal

Presider Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Assembly **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Christmas Pageant Cast

Narrators: Carter Superfine, Bryan Tangri, Ryder Edelston

Mary: Summer Mygatt

Joseph: Dorian Kutko

Innkeeper: Oscar Miller

Shepherds: Victor Kim, Brandon Tangri

Angels: Jocelyn Miller, Amelia Superfine, Maeve Edelston

Sheep: Shields Kutko, Valoria Kim, Hero Kim

Christmas Flowers and Music Dedications

The Baur Family

The Briggs Family
In memory of Eleanor and William Briggs

Barbara & Jamie Ferry
In thanksgiving for our family, especially our newest member, Grainne.

Hall & Anne Healy
In thanksgiving for Katherine, Dan, Maren, Ethan, and Avery Darnell

Libby Hinds

Phil Miller
In memory of Nancy Miller

Joyce Newcomb
In memory of Norman Rickards & Alicesnow Rickards, Michael, Charlie, & Sarah Newcomb

Jim O'Neil
In memory of Jim & Sally O'Neil

Sara Pfaff

Kay & Pete Rossiter
In thanksgiving for Church and Family

Margaret Samuelsen
In memory of Karen J. Samuelsen

Robert Seccombe
In memory of Charles Seccombe

Sherry & Gary Spencer
In memory of the Banyard Family -- Jim, Margie, Bonni & Danny

John & Anne Tuohy

Larry & Susan Whipple

The Episcopal Diocese of Chicago

The Rt. Rev. Paula Clark, *Bishop*

Saint Elisabeth's Episcopal Church

Clergy & Staff

The Rev. Adam Spencer	*Rector*
The Rev. Larry Handwerk	*Priest Associate*
Walter Aldrich	*Director of Music*
Caryl Medsker	*Director of Administration*
Abigail Pribble	*Director of Children's Formation*
Elizabeth Clemmitt	*Associate for Spiritual Wellness*

2025 Vestry

Robert Fischer, *Warden*
Fred Johnston
Jamie Kim

Carrie Miller-Mygatt
Warden

Kara Superfine
Mark Tilton, *Treasurer*
John Tuohy, *Asst. Treasurer*

Sunday Schedule

8:00 a.m.	Spoken Eucharist: Rite I
9:00 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal
10:00 a.m.	Sung Eucharist: Rite II
11:00 a.m.	Coffee Hour, Forum, and Sunday School

Office Hours

Tuesday - Thursday – 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

We at St. Elisabeth's share an adventurous spirit and a commitment to radiate God's love within and beyond our red doors.