This Sunday

8:30am Isaiah Study
(Fellowship Hall)

9am Sunday Discussion Group
(Bethlehem Res. Center)

9am Family PALS
(Downstairs Kids Room)

9:30am Fellowship Time

10:10am Worship

11:30am Grace Advisory Board Meeting (Fellowship Hall)

Connect With Us

www.gracedurham.org

Copies of the week's announcements are located in the Narthex.

If you'd like to receive our eNews via email, please contact office@gracedurham.org

Welcome to Grace Lutheran Church

Sunday, December 21, 2025

Fourth Sunday of Advent



We go with Good News, teaching, serving, and sharing Christ with our neighbors.

VERSE OF THE DAY:

"[Mary] will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." - Matthew 1:21

Welcome to Grace Lutheran Church!

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." -John 10:10

Worshiping with us for the first time?

If you are a first time visitor, welcome! We're glad you're here!
We encourage you to review our Statement of Communion on page 16.
If you have any questions, please take a moment to speak with Pastor Brooks or one of our ushers.

Please fill out a guest card in the pew racks and tell us about yourself, or scan the QR code. If you have any questions, feel free to visit our Welcome Center in the Narthex.

We welcome children in worship services.
Age-appropriate activity bags are located in the Narthex.

INSIGHT INTO THE READINGS

God's Word Is Fulfilled for Us in the Flesh and Blood of Christ Jesus, the Son of Mary

The Fourth Sunday in Advent turns our attention toward the Nativity of Our Lord. With the blessed virgin Mary, we await the coming of the Christ, her Son, conceived in her womb by the Word and Spirit of God. This fulfillment of the sign once given to the house of David, that "the virgin shall conceive and bear a son" (Is. 7:14), is now given to us in the Gospel. It declares that salvation is by His grace alone, entirely His work and a free gift. It also is the way and means by which the Lord our God is Immanuel, "God with us." The almighty and eternal Son of God is conceived and born of Mary, and is thus "descended from David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3–4). He comes in this way to save us with His own flesh and blood; wherefore, He is called "Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). As Joseph received this sign in faith and immediately "did as the angel of the Lord commanded him" (Matt. 1:24), we also live by faith in this Holy Gospel.

The congregation is asked to join in with the bold-faced text.

Prelude

CALL TO WORSHIP

Confession and Absolution

P In the name of the Father and of the ✢ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

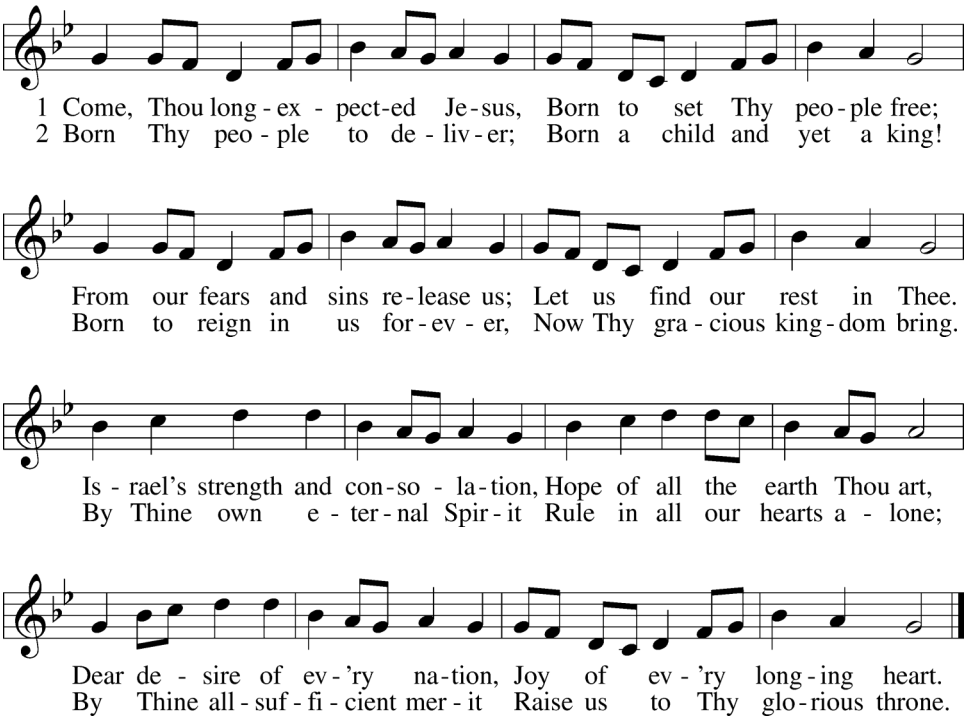
P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
C **But if we confess our sins, God, Who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.** *(1 John 1:8)*

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father,
C **Almighty and gracious Father, we have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Your holy laws.**
We did not do those things which we ought to have done,
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;
apart from You, there is nothing good in us.
O Lord, have mercy upon us in our pride and our misery. In Your love, spare those who confess their faults, restore those who are penitent, and lift up those who are lowly; according to Your promises declared unto us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Grant that we may go forth to live a godly, righteous, and sober life; to the glory of His name.
Amen.
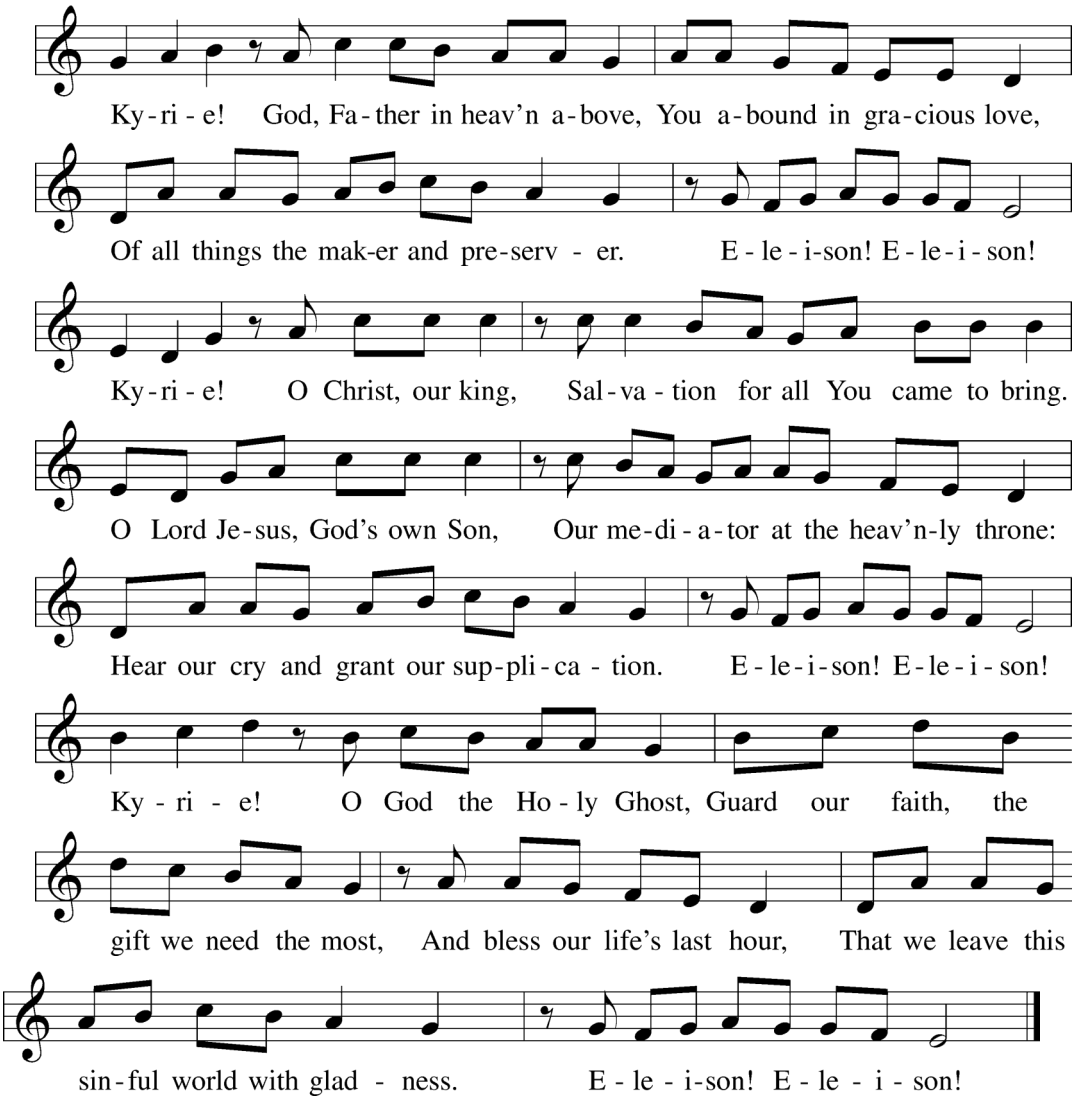
P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✢ Son and of the Holy Spirit. *(John 20:19-23)*
C **Amen.**

Opening Hymn — *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* (LSB 338)



Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–88, alt.
Tune: Southern Harmony, 1835, New Haven
Text and tune: Public domain

Kyrie



Text: German version, Ordenung der ceremonien, 1537/38, Naumburg; tr. W. Gustave Polack, 1890–1950, alt.; Text and tune: Latin, 9th cent.; Tune: adapt. Kirchen ampt Deutsch, 1525, Erfurt; Text: © 1941 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110004227; Tune: Public domain

Salutation and Collect for the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray . . .
Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

OUR LORD SPEAKS TO US

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Isaiah 7:10–17 (Pew Bible, pg. 572)

The Old Testament Lesson is from the 7th Chapter of Isaiah.

10 Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz,
11 "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it
be deep as Sheol or high as heaven."
12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I
will not put the Lord to the test."
13 And he said, "Hear then, O house
of David! Is it too little for you to weary
men, that you weary my God also?
14 Therefore the Lord himself will give
you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall
conceive and bear a son, and shall call
His name Immanuel.
15 He shall eat curds and honey when He
knows how to refuse the evil and choose
the good. 16 For before the boy knows how
to refuse the evil and choose the good,
the land whose two kings you dread will
be deserted. 17 The Lord will bring upon
you and upon your people and upon your
father's house such days as have not come
since the day that Ephraim departed from
Judah—the king of Assyria."

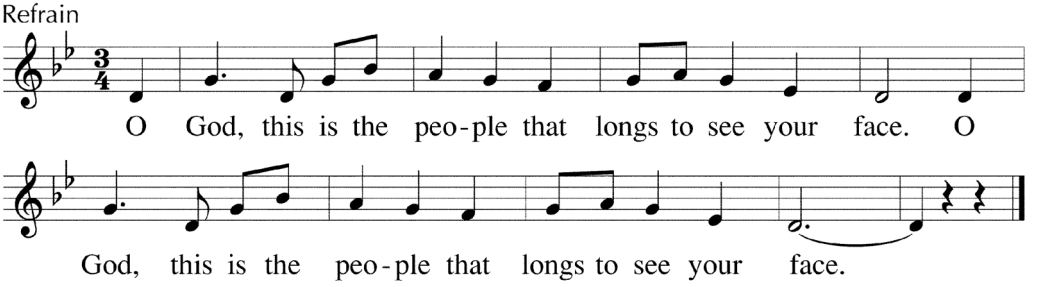
L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 24 — *We Long to See Your Face* (Gather 34)

(Congregation sings refrain after verses)

Refrain



Verses

1. All the earth is yours, O God, the world and those who dwell on it.
   You have founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

2. Who can ascend your mountain, God? Or who may stand in this holy place?
   Those whose hands are sinless, hearts are clean, and desire not the vanity of earth.

3. They shall receive your blessing, God, their Savior shall reward them.
   Such is the face that seeks for you, that seeks your face, O God of Jacob.

Text: Psalm 24; Kevin Keil, © 1993, GIA Publications, Inc.; refrain trans. © 1969, ICEL
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THE EPISTLE LESSON

Romans 1:1–7 (Pew Bible, pg. 939)

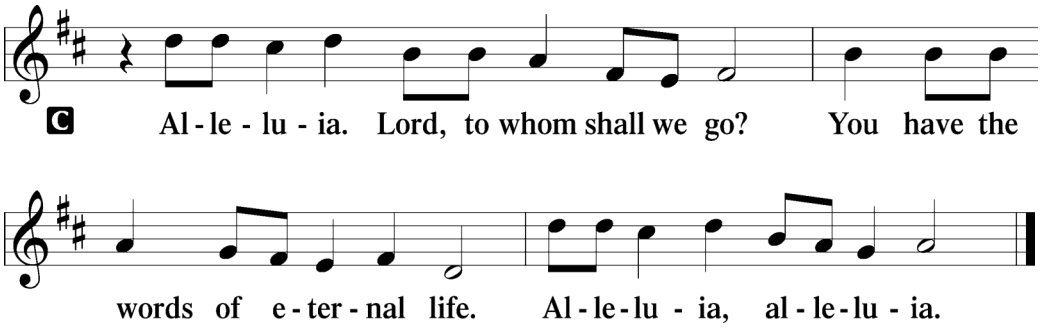
The Epistle Lesson is from the 1st Chapter of Romans.

[1]Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to
be an apostle, set apart for the gospel
of God, [2]which He promised beforehand
through His prophets in the holy
Scriptures, [3]concerning His Son,
Who was descended from David
according to the flesh [4]and was
declared to be the Son of God in power
according to the Spirit of holiness by
His resurrection from the dead, Jesus
Christ our Lord, [5]through Whom we have
received grace and apostleship to bring
about the obedience of faith for the sake
of His name among all the nations,
[6]including you who are called to belong
to Jesus Christ,
[7]To all those in Rome who are loved by
God and called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

ALLELUIA AND VERSE



HOLY GOSPEL Matthew 1:18–25 (Pew Bible, pg. 807)

℗ The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 1st Chapter.
℃ **Glory to You, O Lord.**

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place
in this way. When His mother Mary had
been betrothed to Joseph, before they
came together she was found to be
with child from the Holy Spirit.
19 And her husband Joseph, being a just
man and unwilling to put her to shame,
resolved to divorce her quietly.
20 But as he considered these things,
behold, an angel of the Lord appeared
to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son
of David, do not fear to take Mary as
your wife, for that which is conceived in
her is from the Holy Spirit.
21 She will bear a son, and you shall call
His name Jesus, for He will save His
people from their sins." 22 All this took
place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken
by the prophet:
23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and
bear a son, and they shall call His name
Immanuel" (which means, God with us).
24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did
as the angel of the Lord commanded him:
he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until
she had given birth to a son. And he called
His name Jesus.

℗ This is the Gospel of the Lord.
℃ **Praise to You, O Christ.**
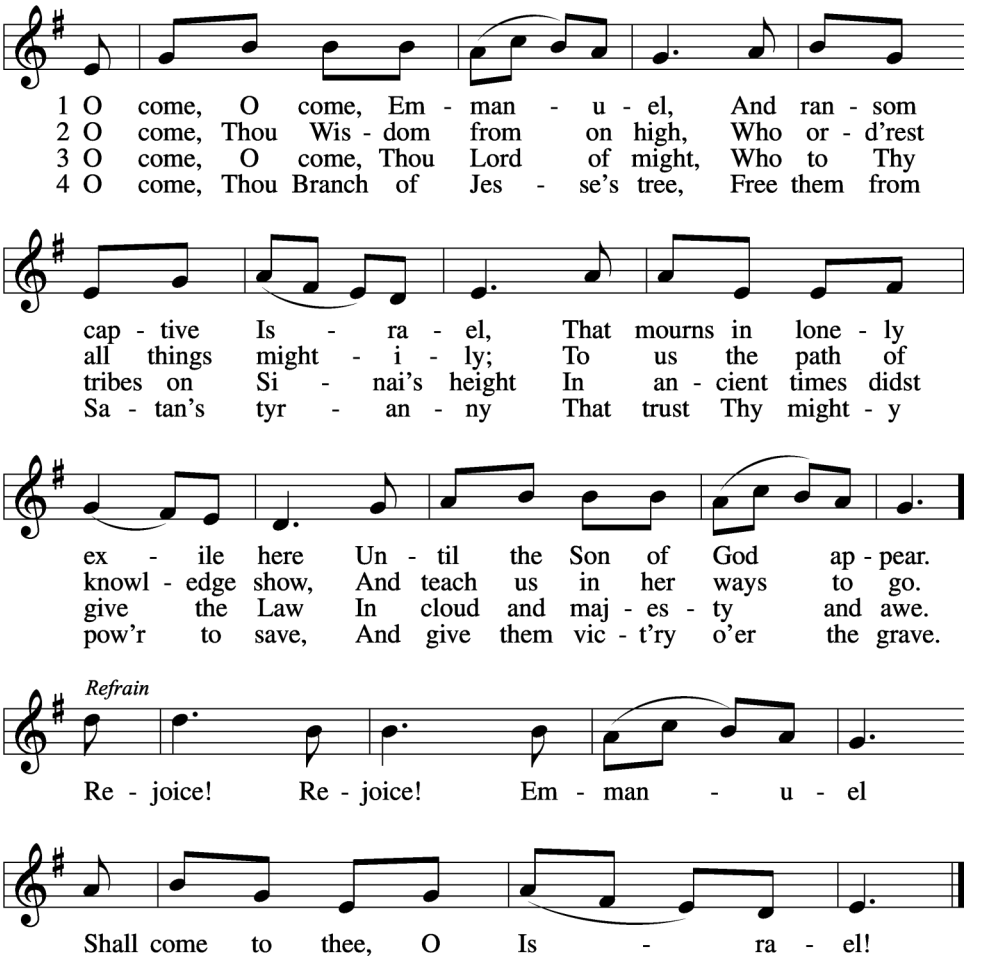
Lighting of the Advent Wreath

℗ We praise You, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when He comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with Your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome Him with joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, Whose coming is certain and Whose day draws near.
℃ **Amen.**

(All four candles are lit.)

Sermon—*The Rev. Dr. David H. Brooks*

Hymn of the Day — *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (LSB 357)



5 O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery. *Refrain*

6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Refrain

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace.
Refrain

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent.; Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum, 1710, Köln; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–66, alt.
Tune: French, 15th cent.
Text and tune: Public domain

Nicene Creed *(spoken in unison)*

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; by the power of the Holy Spirit,
He became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.

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.
With the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified.
He 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.

† *meaning the whole Church as it confesses the wholeness of the Christian doctrine*

Prayers of the Church

P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus,
and for all people according to their needs. . .

After each prayer, the congregation responds:

P Lord in Your mercy,
C **Hear our prayer.**

(The prayers conclude)
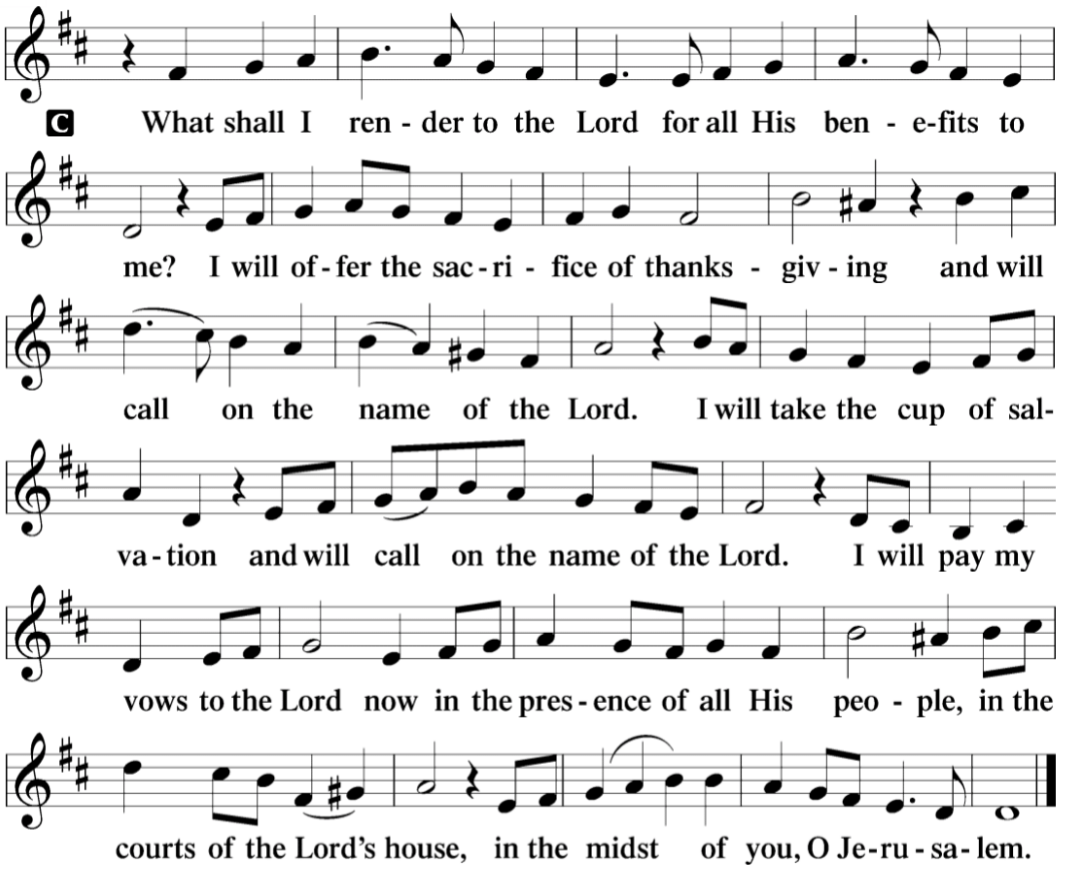
P Into Your hands…
C **Amen.**

Sharing of the Peace

Following the prayers, the people may greet one another in the name of the Lord, with the 'hand wave of peace', as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matthew 5:22–24; Ephesians 4:1–3).

Offertory Music
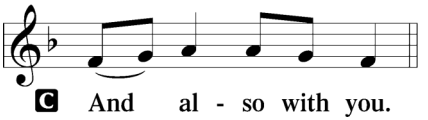
OFFERTORY


C
What shall I ren - der to the Lord for all His ben - e-fits to
me? I will of - fer the sac - ri - fice of thanks - giv - ing and will
call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of sal-
va - tion and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my
vows to the Lord now in the pres - ence of all His peo - ple, in the
courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Je - ru - sa - lem.
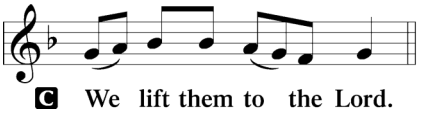
Service of the Sacrament

Preface
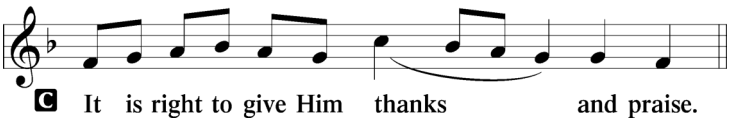
P The Lord be with you.



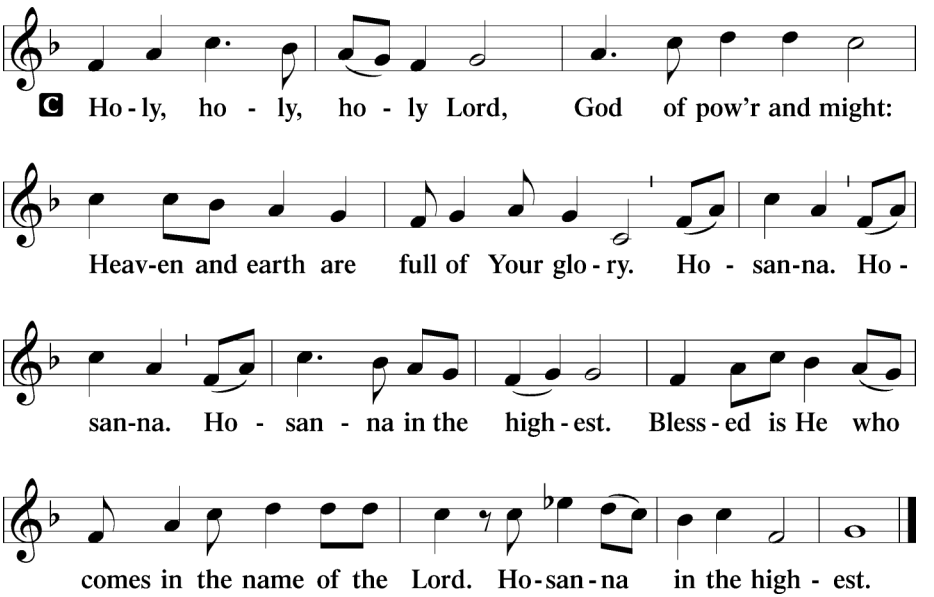
P Lift up your hearts.



P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



P It is truly good, right, and salutary … and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:



Prayer of Thanksgiving

P Blessed are You, O Lord our God, for You are the King of glory. You, Who are Light inaccessible, sent Your only Son, Jesus Christ, into the darkness of our lives to be a light among us, the light of Your grace and truth. In obedience, He took on our flesh to live and grow as a son of Adam. Obedient in all things, He taught the truths of Your kingdom, stretching out His hands in suffering that He might free from suffering all those who call on Your name. Obedient even unto death, You freed Him from death and won for Yourself a holy people. For all this, we give You our thanks, O God, as we live in the promise that He will come again to share with us the great feast of Your heavenly kingdom.

C **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

The Words of Institution

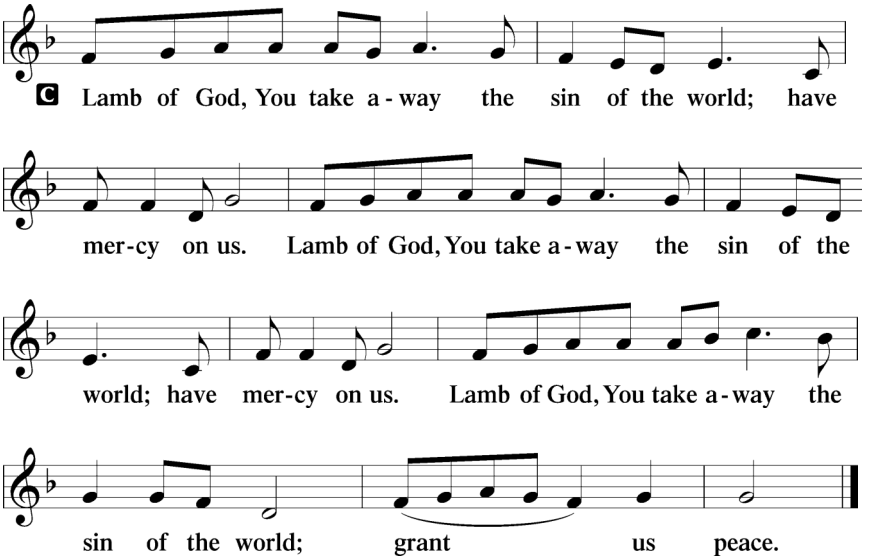
P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed…

P As we prepare for this great gift, let us pray as our Lord has taught us:

Lord's Prayer

C **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.

Agnus Dei



Holy Communion
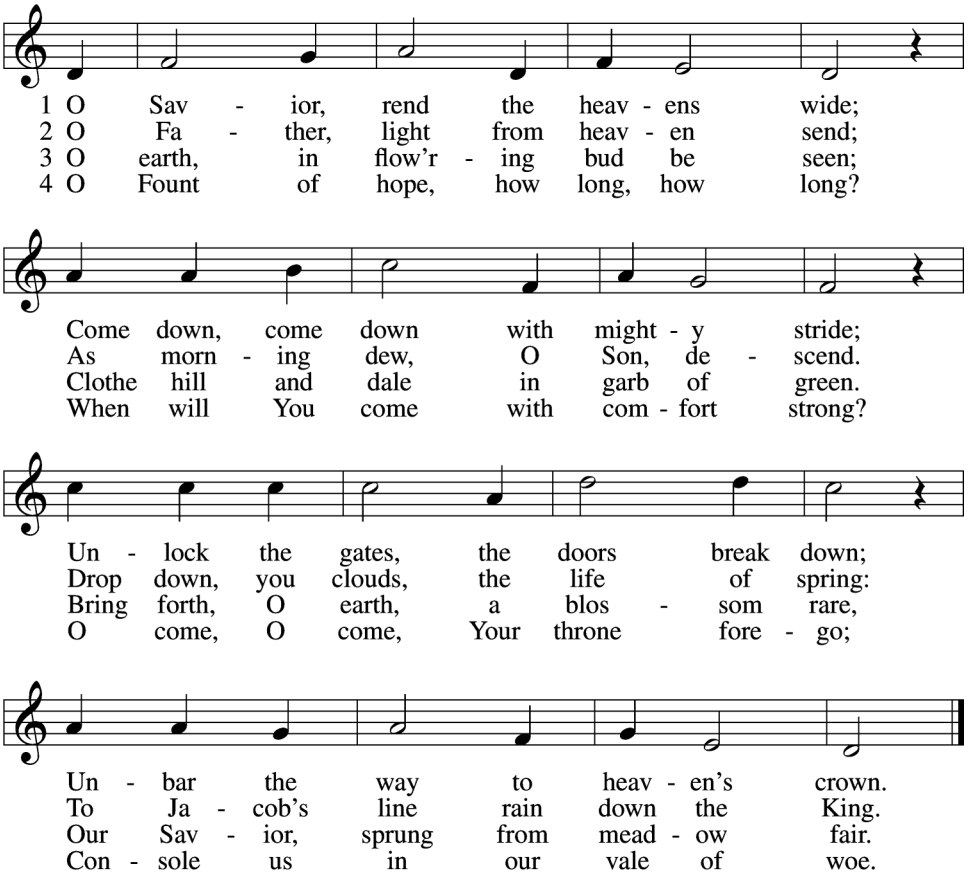
Receiving Holy Communion

As Lutheran Christians, we believe, teach, and confess that Jesus Christ gives us His own true Body and Blood via the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10:16).
We trust His promise that this Supper is for the forgiveness of our sins, the increase of our faith, and the strengthening of our life as the Church. Baptized Christians who share our confession, repent of their sins, and seek the Lord's blessing are welcome to receive. *First time guests are kindly asked to speak to our pastor or an usher before receiving communion.* Those not communing are welcome to come forward to receive a blessing.

[For silent prayer before communing]
Dear Savior, at Your gracious invitation I come to Your table to eat and drink Your holy body and blood. Let me find favor in Your eyes to receive this Holy Sacrament in faith for the salvation of my soul and to the glory of Your holy name; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

[For silent prayer after receiving the Sacrament]
Almighty and everlasting God, I thank and praise You for feeding me the life-giving body and blood of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Send Your Holy Spirit that, having With my mouth received the holy Sacrament, I may by faith obtain and eternally enjoy Your divine grace, the forgiveness of sins, unity with Christ, and life eternal; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Distribution Hymn — *O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide* (LSB 355)



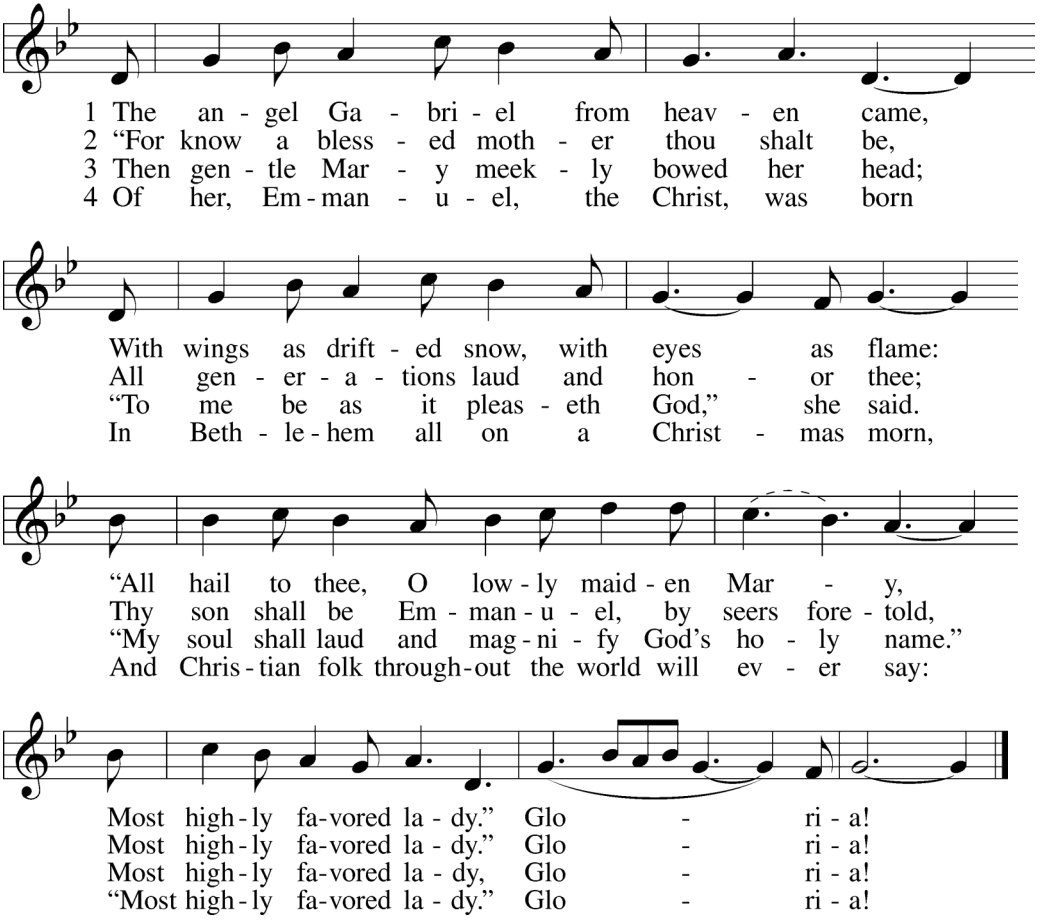
5 O Morning Star, O radiant Sun,
When will our hearts behold Your dawn?
O Sun, arise; without Your light
We grope in gloom and dark of night.

6 Sin's dreadful doom upon us lies;
Grim death looms fierce before our eyes.
O come, lead us with mighty hand
From exile to our promised land.

7 There shall we all our praises bring
And sing to You, our Savior King;
There shall we laud You and adore
Forever and forevermore.

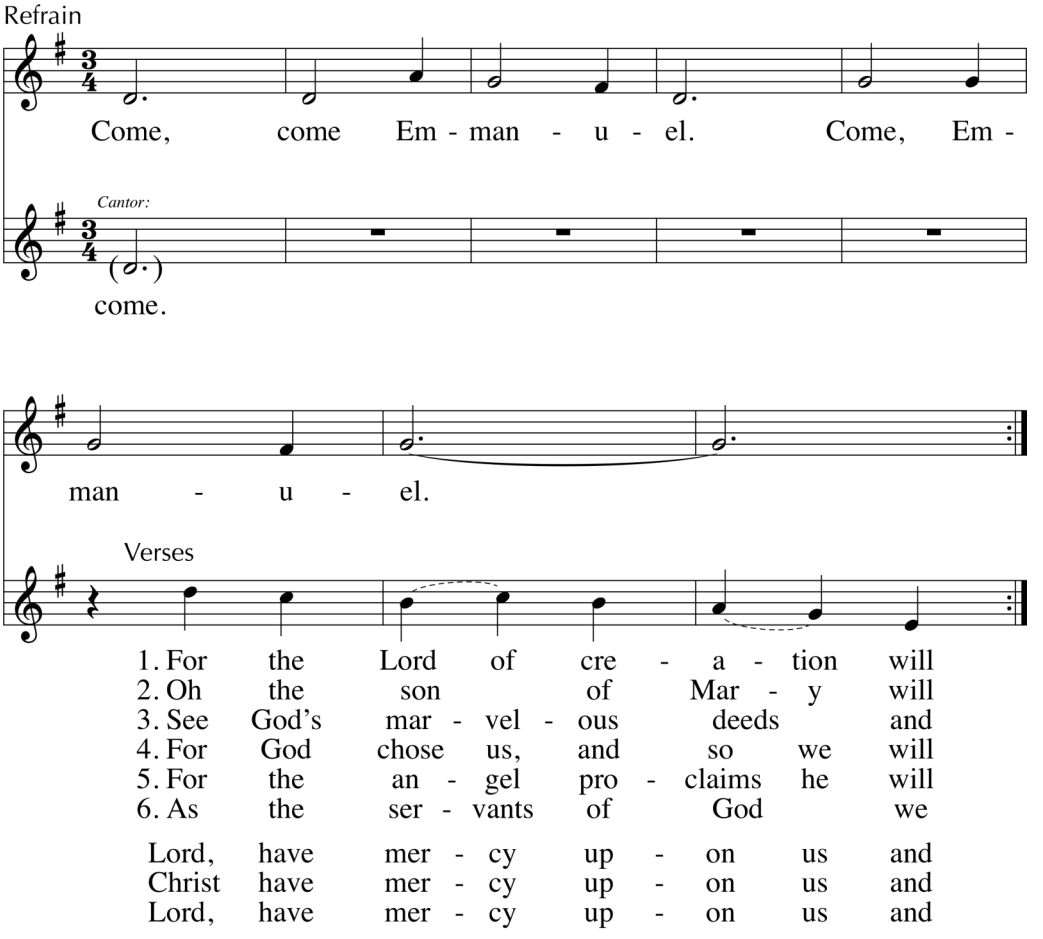
Text: Friedrich von Spee, 1591–1635; tr. Martin L. Seltz, 1909–67, alt.
Tune: Rheinfelssisch Deutsches Catholisches Gesangbuch, 1666, Augsburg
Text: © 1969 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110004227, Tune: Public domain

Distribution Hymn — *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came* (LSB 356)



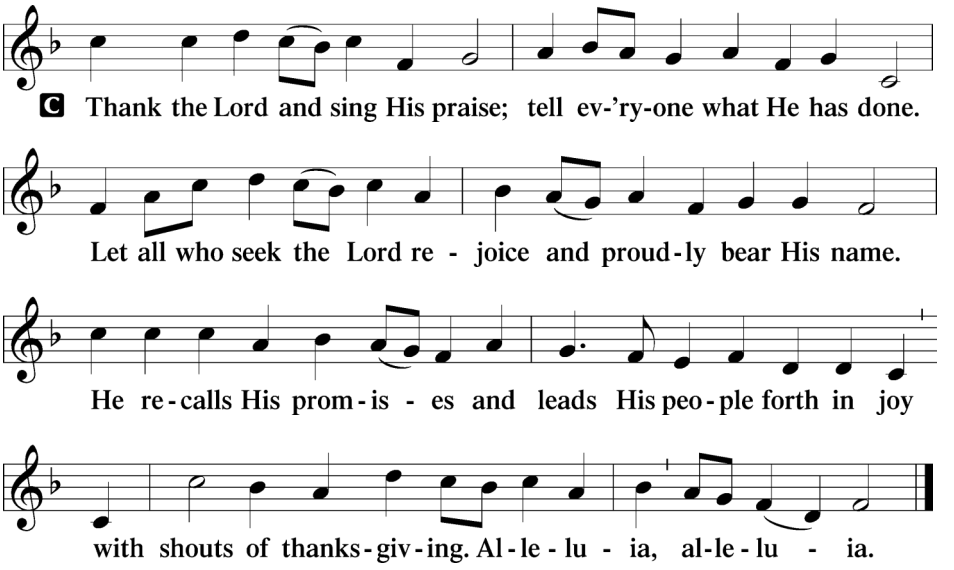
Text: para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924
Text and tune: Basque, c. 18th cent.
Text and tune: Public domain

Distribution Hymn — *Advent Gathering Song* (Gather 405)



Text and Tune: James J. Chepponis.
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Thank the Lord



Post-Communion Collect

P Let us pray.

Mighty God, we praise You, for You look with favor upon those who are lowly, and You fill the hungry with good things. Let the good things we have received at this altar strengthen us in faith, that we may with all Your people keep watch for the signs of our Lord's coming, that we may enter into the feast of the Lamb that has no end; through Jesus Christ,

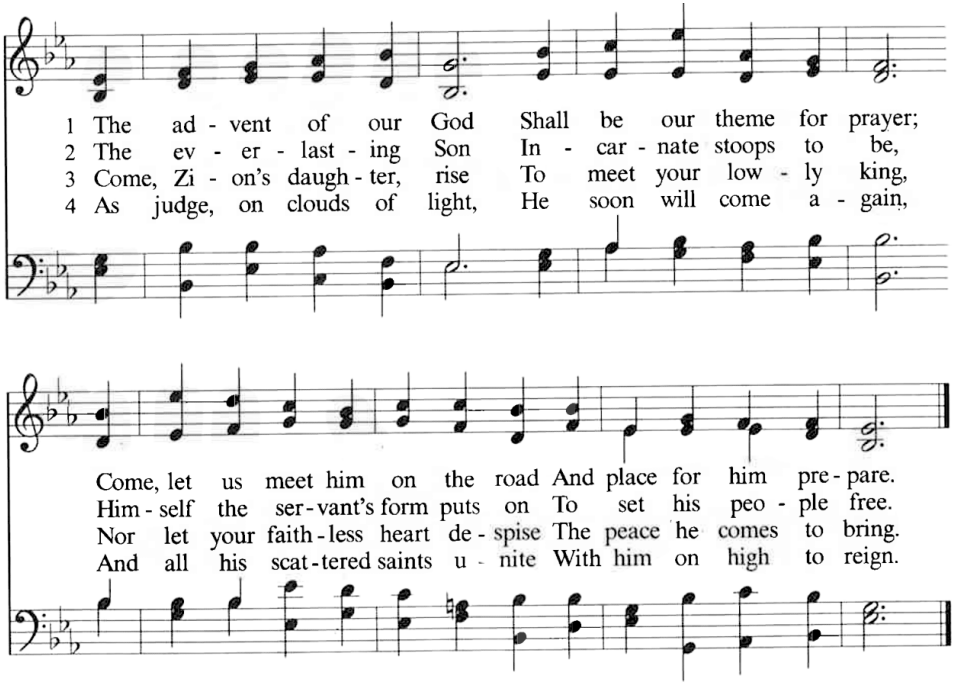
C **Amen.**

Benediction

P In every darkness, be not afraid, for the light is dawning:
May the Father of lights give you strength
May the Christ guide you by His wisdom
May the Holy Spirit be your comfort ✢ and peace.

C **Amen.**

Closing Hymn — *The Advent of Our God* (LBW 22)



5 **Before the dawning day**
Let sin be put to flight;
No longer let the law hold sway,
But walk in freedom's light.

6 **All glory to the Son,**
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever one
Through all eternity.

Text: Charles Coffin; tr. John Chandler, Tune: Johann B. Konig. FRANCONIA.
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Dismissal

P Now go and keep watch, for we do not know the hour when we will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.
Be faithful in service, and persistent in prayer, loving and serving the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude



UPCOMING AT GRACE

- *Wednesday, December 24*
  Christmas Eve Noon Service (12pm)
  Christmas Eve Service (5:30pm)
  Join us for fellowship and appetizers starting at 4:30pm.

- *Saturday, December 27*
  "A Christmas Carol" with Brendan White (7pm)

- *Sunday, December 28*
  A Service of Lessons and Carols (10am)

- *Sunday, January 11*
  Discipleship Pathways Step 3 Launch: Growing in Christ

- *Wednesday, January 21*
  Wednesdays at One—Chocolate Making (12:30pm Lunch, 1pm Session)
  RSVP to office@gracedurham.org

- *May 9-16*
  Puerto Rico Mission Trip—If you are interested, please reach out to Deaconess Anna at dco.anna.voelker@gracedurham.org.

Visit our website at gracedurham.org/news for the full calendar of events and small group (PALS) meetings.

SERVING YOU TODAY

Ushers	***Communion Assistants***	***Altar Guild***
Walt Crosmer	Dean Kolba	Marie Snyder
Tom McGill, Acolyte	Gary Stuhlmiller	John Kolba

Reader	***Greeter***	***A/V Operator***
Joyce Rea	Jan Kolba	Barb Tippin

GRACE STAFF

Pastor
Rev. David Brooks

Parish Administrator
Kim Romigh

Director of Christian Outreach
Deaconess Anna Voelker

Music Director/Organist
Erin Hodge

Grace Lutheran Church

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Livestream

Scan the QR code above or visit www.gracedurham.org/livestream-channel

Call In - Audio Only:
309-205-3325, 312-626-6799, 305-224-1968

Meeting ID: 847 8043 7557

Passcode: 9196826030

Giving

Grace Generous Giving
Quick Response (QR) Code, provides a simple and secure method of giving.
Hover over the QR code with your phone camera and it will take you to our giving page to make a donation.