

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

Lector/Intercessor: Judy Hoekstra, Christine Lovelace,
Ashleigh Matthews, Amy Whisnant

Communion Assistant: Ann Blackwelder

Acolyte: Noah Pittard

Ushers: Mike Downs, Al Brown Jr., Sid Hughes,
Bill Hardister, Hunter Huss

Videographer: Debbie Davis

Greeter: Esther Circle

Building Supervisor: Wendell Overby

PRAYER LIST

Brad Baker; Joyce Beaty (friend of the Marlow's); Angie Buchanan; Mike & Debbie Cagle (friends of Robert & Debbie Davis); Noah Clifton; Bruce Coffey (friend of Mark Murphy); Karey Conrad (friend of Dee Pieschel); Emma DePaulis; Anne Fridlund; Ed Frost (friend of the Marlow's); Tim Gibson (friend of Deb Black); Tom Grady; Linda Jones (family of Barbara & Dale Merrell); Annaleah, Michael, & Preston Morrow (friends of Shannon Nesbit); Jan Phillips (family of Brownie Brown); Tom Ridenhour; Geoff & Pam Seige (friends of Robert & Debbie Davis).

ALTAR FLOWERS

Today's altar flowers are given by Kelley Carpenter and Kim Haberman to the glory of Jesus Christ, in loving memory of their parents, Jo and Don Eng.

2025

SUNDAY MINISTRY SIGN-UPS

Sign up to be a Communion Assistant, Lector, Videographer, or Acolyte in 2025! All Sundays in the new year are now posted. Sign up by scanning the code or visiting the website.



**The Nativity of our Lord
December 24, 2024**

**The Holy Communion
5:30pm**



**St. James Lutheran Church
104 Union Street South
PO Box 684
Concord, North Carolina 28026
704-786-0166
www.sjnc.net
Rev. William C. Ridenhour, Pastor**

Welcome to St. James Lutheran Church

Maybe you need forgiveness, or maybe you need to forgive ... Maybe you're tired and you need a little space to breathe ... Maybe you're trying church for the first time, or maybe you're trying church for the last time... Maybe you've spent your whole life wondering if God really loves you... Maybe you're lonely... Maybe you're sick... Maybe you came here looking for a miracle... Maybe you came here looking for another church but got disoriented and came here instead, and now it's too late to get up and walk out... Maybe, with God, there are no accidents... Maybe, with God, there is hope and healing and miraculous companionship... Maybe, with God, there is space to breathe and forgiveness on top of forgiveness... Maybe, with God, there is love... Maybe, with God here in our midst, we will hear those words that still split open the heavens, "You are my son! You are my daughter! You are my beloved. You. In you I am well pleased!" Maybe this is why we gather together, week after week after week, here at St. James.

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome in this place - not just by the Saints at St. James, but by the God who revealed himself in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, our brother, and our friend.

Welcome to St. James.

If you are comfortable doing so, please introduce yourself to Pastor Bill. If you have visited with us a number of times and think you might want to "make it official," please speak to Pastor Bill. If you have any questions, please feel free to speak to the person next to you or to an usher.

Restrooms are located on the first and second floor of the Education Building. A nursery is available for children up to and including five years of age on the first floor of the education building. An usher will be happy to help you find them.

If you're visiting or if you have been here for 99 years (and are willing to do so), please sign a pew pad.

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

Dec. 23 – Lauren Irvin
Dec. 25 – Bub Craver
Dec. 26 – Todd Walker
Dec. 28 – Beth Downs

CHURCH CALENDAR THIS WEEK

Sunday, Dec. 22	8:45am	Congregational Breakfast
	9:00 am	Parish Choir
	10:00 am	Worship
Monday, Dec. 23	10:30 am	Quilting
Tuesday, Dec. 24	Christmas Eve at St. James	
	5:30pm	Family Service
	10:30pm	Musical Prelude
	11:00pm	A Carol Mass
Wednesday, Dec. 25	Christmas Day – Church Office Closed	
Sunday, Dec. 29	9:00 am	Adult Sunday School
	9:00 am	Parish Choir
	9:30am	Children's Sunday School
	10:00am	Worship

SALVATION ARMY MEAL WEEK

St. James is committed to covering dinners **Sunday 1/19 – Saturday, 1/25** at the Salvation Army Night Shelter. If you can provide a meal, please sign up at the link:
<https://sjnc.net/special-event-sign-ups>



*Harmony scores for the carols can be found in the green LBW hymnal.
There is no harmony for "On Christmas Night"*

Prelude (from <i>Christmas Concerto in G minor, Op. 6, No. 8</i>)	Pastorale	Corelli
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Please stand.

THE INVOCATION

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

THE READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴ For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

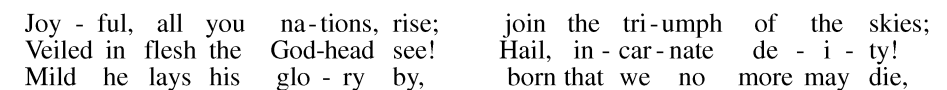
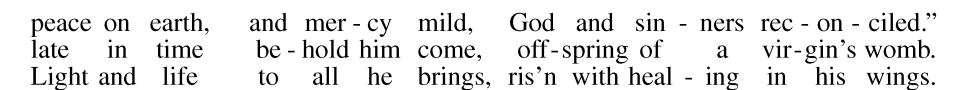
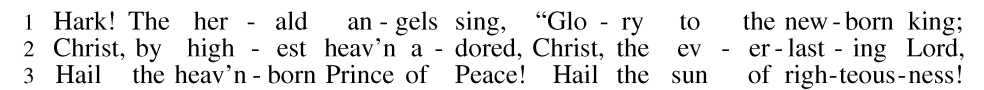
⁷ His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

A The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

THE ENTRANCE HYMN: #60 Hark the Herald Angels Sing





with an - gel - ic hosts pro-claim, “Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!”
Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em-man - u - el!
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, “Glo - ry to the new-born king!”

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you

C **And also with you.**

P Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

THE GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

The Gospel is read in parts with carols sung between each part.

While the carols are sung, the characters are gradually placed into the nativity scene.

Read By:

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

#41 O Little Town of Bethlehem



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee Jie!
4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
cast out our 'sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
We hear the Christ-mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

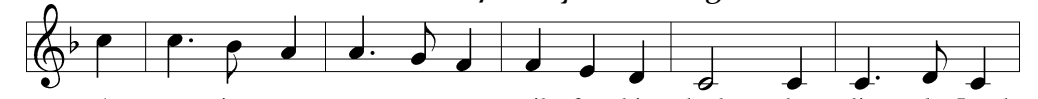


The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Read By:

⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

#67 Away in a Manger



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord
2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the poor ba - by wakes, but lit - tle Lord
3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -



Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the sky looked
Je - sus no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus; look
ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in



down where he lay; the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
your ten - der care and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

Read By

⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

#71 Angels We Have Heard on High



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun - tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.

Refrain



Glo - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo -



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

Read By

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

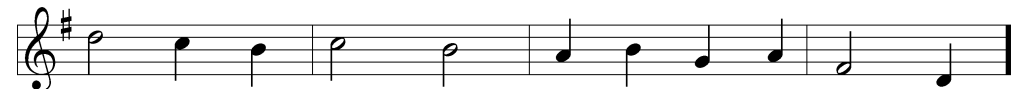
#45 O Come All Ye Faithful



1 Oh, come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! Oh,
2 The high - est, most ho - ly, light of light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;



come ye, oh, come ye to Beth - le - hem;
born of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes;
sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav - en a - bove!
Je - sus, to thee be . . . glo - ry giv'n!



come and be - hold him, born the king of an - gels:
Son of the Fa - ther now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
Glo - ry to God . . . in . . . the . . . high - est:
Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

Refrain



Oh, come, let us a - dore him, oh, come, let us a - dore him,



oh, come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Read By

¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

On Christmas Night



1 On Christ-mas night all Chris - tians sing to hear the news the
2 Then why should we on earth be sad, since our re - deem - er
3 When sin de - parts be - fore his face, then life and health come
4 All out of dark - ness we have light, which made the an - gels



an - gels bring. On Christ - mas night all Chris - tians sing to
made us glad? Then why should we on earth be sad, since
in its place. When sin de - parts be - fore his face, then
sing this night. All out of dark - ness we have light, which



hear the news the an - gels bring: news of great joy, news of great
our re - deem - er made us glad, when from our sin he set us
life and health come in its place. An - gels re - joice with us and
made the an - gels sing this night: "Glo - ry to God in high - est



mirth, news of our mer - ci - ful king's birth.
free, all for to gain our lib - er - ty?
sing, all for to see the new - born king.
heav'n; peace on earth, and good - will. A - men."

(Children's) SERMON

THE NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
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 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.**

THE PRAYERS

A With joy and gratitude for the gift of Jesus, let us draw near to Almighty God in prayer, asking his mercy for the Church, the world, and all who need his loving-kindness.

Dear Father, thank you for giving us your Jesus, your Son born this night as God-with-us. Thank you for fleshing out your love, forgiveness, and peace, in a way we can approach, touch, and believe in our trembling hearts. Thank you for bringing us the light of eternity in this Babe of Bethlehem, Jesus our Savior. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless your Church throughout the world. Make it a place where all may hear the angel's song and hasten to adore Jesus, their Lord and Savior. Shelter your Church in your arms, so they may gather to worship in peace and rise to serve you in joy. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless our guests and visitors, especially those whose faith wavers and whose hearts are heavy. Give them a glimpse of the joys you have prepared for all who love you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless this congregation – its people and programs, its worship and service. Grace all we do with your strong saving love. Help us to freely share Jesus, today and always, with those who do not know him and with all who need him most. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless our country, this world, and all its people and creatures, with peace and good will; with health and safety; with kindness and justice; with food for body and soul; and with love for you and one another. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless everyone for whom this season of joy is dimmed by sorrow, pain, loneliness, and everything else that is inflicted by evil's power working through human hands. Come with healing in your wings; with tidings of great joy; and with light and life for all. Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Bless all who mourn with the certainty that you have opened heaven's doors to all who have died trusting in your promises. Bless us each day of our earthly pilgrimage with peace and mercy, reconciliation and joy. And lead us, at length, we pray, to your bright courts of heaven, and to your endless day. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Thank you for hearing our prayers, dear Lord. We entrust them, and our lives, into your merciful care. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

THE OFFERING

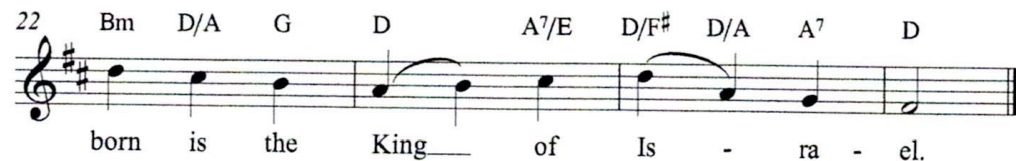
Please stand.

THE DOXOLOGY

The Offertory is the Doxology set to the familiar Christmas carol tune, The First Noel.

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. Chord symbols are placed above the staff at various points. The lyrics are: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures here be low. Praise God above, ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. No - el, No - el, No - el, No - el,". The score is divided into four systems, with line numbers 7, 12, and 18 indicated at the beginning of the second, third, and fourth systems respectively.

Chord symbols: D, Bm, A, A⁷, D/F#, G, D, A⁷, D, A⁷, D, G, A⁷, D, A⁷, Bm, A, A⁷, D/F#, G, D, A⁷, D, A⁷, D, G, A⁷, D, A⁷, D, A⁷, D, Bm, F#m, D, G, A⁷, D, A.



THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

A Let us pray.
 A Merciful Father,
 C **we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us – our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

THE COMMUNION RITE

P The Lord be with you.
 C **And also 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 him thanks and praise.**
 P It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory; that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

C **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might: Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

P In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your Kingdom and teach us to pray:
 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.**

Please sit.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Q: What is the Sacrament of the Altar?
 A: Instituted by Christ himself, it is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and to drink.
 Q: What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?
 A: We are told in the words “for you” and “for the forgiveness of sins.” By these words the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament, for where there is forgiveness of sins, there are also life and salvation.

-Luther's Small Catechism Part V

Jesus bids all the baptized to feast at his table. Please come by way of the center aisle and return by the side aisle. If you need help figuring out where to and when to go, an usher or fellow worshiper will help you. At one time we too were confused. For those unable to partake of wine, white grape juice is available. If you are unable to come to the altar, the pastor will bring communion to you at your seat. Please advise an usher.

*The congregation is invited to sing carols during distribution.
An interlude will be played between carols.*

#50 Angels From the Realms of Glory



1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch-ing o'er your flocks by night,
3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem-pla-tions, bright-er vi - sions beam a - far;
4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais-ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,



once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry; now pro-claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon-der shines the in - fant light.
seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

Refrain



Come and wor-ship, come and wor-ship, wor-ship Christ, the new-born king.

#44 Infant Holy, Infant Lowly



1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;
2 Flocks were sleep-ing, shep-herds keep-ing vig - il till the morn-ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know-ing Christ the child is Lord of all.
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift-ly wing-ing, an - gels sing-ing, bells are ring-ing, tid - ings bring-ing:
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais-es voic-ing, greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

#40 What Child Is This



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep-ing?
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead-ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

Please stand.

THE POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C **Amen**

THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A Let us pray,
A O God, in this meal we have been given a foretaste of the feast that is to come.
Help us always to be alert to your gifts in our midst; through Jesus Christ our Lord.


C **Amen**

THE BENEDICTION


P Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.
C Amen

*The congregation lights their candles.
When all candles are lit, the congregation sings the carol*

THE SENDING HYMN: #65 Silent Night




1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

THE DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

Please extinguish your candle.

Postlude Ding Dong Merrily on High arr. Lowry

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