

St. Stephen Lutheran Church
December 5, 2021
2nd Sunday in Advent



ST. STEPHEN
Evangelical Lutheran Church

* indicates to please rise for this part of the worship service

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

Our Mission

We respond to Christ's love by feeding those who hunger in body, mind, and spirit.

Prelude

"On Jordan's Bank the Baptist 's Cry"

arranged by Robert Lau

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

***Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God for whom we wait,

in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace.

Amen.

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, ☩ your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

Amen.

Gathering Music

"Prepare the Royal Highway"

Hymn#264 vs. 1,3,4

- 1 Prepare the royal highway;
the King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley
a level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory,
foretold in sacred story:

Refrain

Hosanna to the Lord,
for he fulfills God's word!

- 3 Then fling the gates wide open
to greet your promised king!
Your king, yet ev'ry nation
its tribute too may bring.
All lands will bow before him;
their voices join your singing: *Refrain*
- 4 His is no earthly kingdom;
it comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom
and justice, truth, and love.
So let your praise be sounding
for kindness so abounding: *Refrain*

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772-1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*

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Wreath Litany 2nd Sunday of Advent

"Peace"

Candle Lighting:

Last Sunday we lit the candle of Hope, remembering the hope which comes in Christ. (Light Candle). Today we light the second candle of Advent, the candle of Peace.

God has a peaceful dream for the world, and we dream it too. We dream of peaceful world full of wolves and leopards and lions eating and sleeping and dancing with lambs, kids, and calves. We dream of a peaceful world where nations come together, where war is a memory, and we eat at one table.

We light this candle in Peace.

On this day, we remember the Lord of All who brings peace surpassing all understanding.

***Advent Wreath Hymn**

"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

Hymn#240, vs. 1,2

- 1 Light one candle to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He shall bring salvation to Israel,
God fulfills the promise.

- 2 Light two candles to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He shall feed the flock like a shepherd,
gently lead them homeward.

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954

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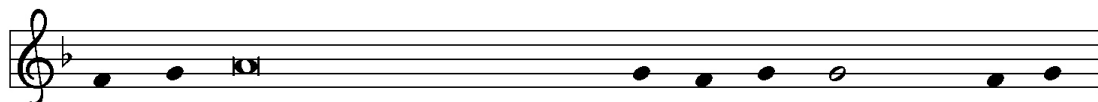
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***Kyrie**



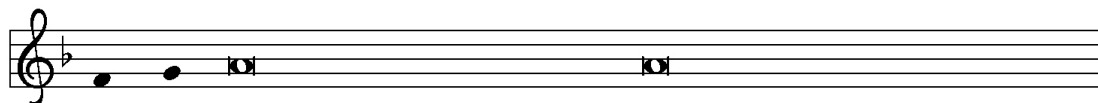
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**




For the peace from above, and for our sal - va - tion, let us



pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



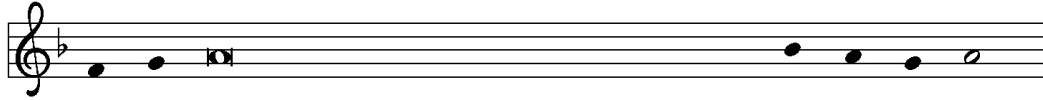
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



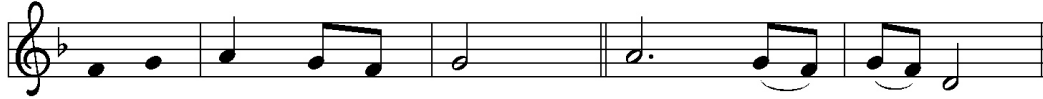
and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men.

*Canticle of Praise



Refrain
Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



1 Lord God, heav-en - ly King, al - mighty God and Fa - ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Refrain
Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.



2 Lord Je - sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of



God, you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us; you are

seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

Refrain

Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

3 For you a - lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,

you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly

Spir-it, in the glo-ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

Refrain

Glo-ry to God in the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

***Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Word

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

The First Lesson

Malachi 3:1-4

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means "my messenger") will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God's people, as silver and gold are refined.

A reading from the prophet Malachi, the 3rd chapter.

¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed,

he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks Be to God.**

Psalm

Luke 1:68-79

⁶⁸Blessed are you, Lord, the ¹ God of Israel,
you have come to your people and ¹ set them free.

⁶⁹**You have raised up for us a ¹ mighty Savior,
born of the house of your ¹ servant David.**

⁷⁰Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us ¹ from our enemies,

⁷¹from the hands of ¹ all who hate us,

⁷²**to show mercy ¹ to our forebears,
and to remember your ¹ holy covenant.**

⁷³This was the oath you swore to our ¹ father Abraham:

⁷⁴to set us free from the hands of our ¹ enemies,

**free to worship you ¹ without fear,
⁷⁵holy and righteous before you, all the days ¹ of our life.**

⁷⁶And you, child, shall be called the prophet of ¹ the Most High,

for you will go before the Lord to pre-¹ pare the way,

⁷⁷**to give God's people knowledge ¹ of salvation
by the forgiveness ¹ of their sins.**

⁷⁸In the tender compassion ¹ of our God

the dawn from on high shall ¹ break upon us,

⁷⁹**to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shad- ¹ ow of death,
and to guide our feet into the ¹ way of peace.**

The Second Lesson

Philippians 1:3-11

The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

A reading from Paul's epistle to the Philippians, the 1st chapter.

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

***Gospel Acclamation**



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. *Repeat alleluia*
Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

***Gospel Reading**

Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by “repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

The Gospel according to St. Luke, the 3rd chapter. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

⁵Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;

⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Sermon

Pastor Matthew Best

Hymn of the Day

“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

Hymn#249 vs. 1-3

- 1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings!
- 2 Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin;
make straight the way for God within,
and let us all our hearts prepare
for Christ to come and enter there.
- 3 We hail you as our Savior, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward;
without your grace we waste away
like flow'rs that wither and decay.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite

***Nicene Creed**

AM: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us profess our faith, using the words of 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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

**who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

***Prayers of the Church**

Congregational response after each petition:

AM: Lord, in Your mercy. **C: hear our prayer.**

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

Loving God, through the ages, your words and promises are consistent and true. Guide our Advent journey so that we may deepen our faith this season. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, we pray for your church universal, all of its ministries worldwide, and the mission of the Gospel. May the words of the Gospel, and the story of your son Jesus Christ, reach new ears this Advent season. Our Advent prayers always include the phrase "stir up." What a great image this creates! God we pray that your stirring creates incredible positive ripple effects across the world this Advent season. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of grace, thank you for the earth and all creation. During this time of year, help us to slow down the pace of our lives, to enjoy and appreciate the natural world rather than the material world. Use our lives to your service, to make an impact, during our short time here on this earth. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of Peace, sometimes we get caught up in tension and conflict, worry and fear. But you promise to bring peace to your people, and a prince of peace. We pray for peace and justice in the world, between countries and governments, political parties and all those in authority. May your peaceful spirit descend upon all like a dove. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of mercy, we pray for the poor, the oppressed, the lonely and the sick, especially all families who have been affected by the pandemic. Comfort, heal and bless them. Watch over our over-worked healthcare workers and everyone whose careers, businesses or livelihoods have been impacted by the pandemic. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, we pray for all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Help us to minister to their hurts and wounds during their time on earth. May we be lights, to spread the love of Jesus to them, so that your Holy Spirit erases all tears and pains for eternity in heaven. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we pray for all members and friends here at St. Stephen. Bless our hands and

hearts during this Advent season so that they reach and touch our Cumberland County community, and beyond, with your work and words. Let us prepare the way—your way. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here, other intercessions may be offered

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

***Peace**

P: The Peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us show a sign of peace from where we are.

Offering

The offering, whether in person or through digital means, is an act of worship. Worship, at its core, is a reverent love and devotion accorded to God. We give because God loves us first, and we are called to love God and neighbor as a result. The offering is one way we show our love of God.

To assist you in this act of worship, there are several ways to make your offering: Go to www.StStephenLC.org and scroll to the bottom of the page, and click **DONATE**.

Text your offering dollar amount to 717-685-6947. Text "help" for options.

Use Engage from your smart phone or Internet connected device at

<https://engage.suran.com/sslc/> or QR code below:

Set up regular electronic offerings by contacting Kevin, our office manager, at 717-766- 2168, Monday through Thursday from 9am – 2pm, or by email at office@StStephenLC.org to get set up.



Mail in your check, made payable to St. Stephen Lutheran Church. Our address is:
30 W. Main St., PO Box 266, New Kingstown, PA 17072.

The offerings are used to carry out the ministry of the church, to share the Good News, to provide pastoral care, to worship as a community, and to create an environment where Jesus encounters people and their lives are transformed. All of these things continue to take place. Thank you for your generosity.

*Offertory Prayer

Let us pray.

God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace.

Amen

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

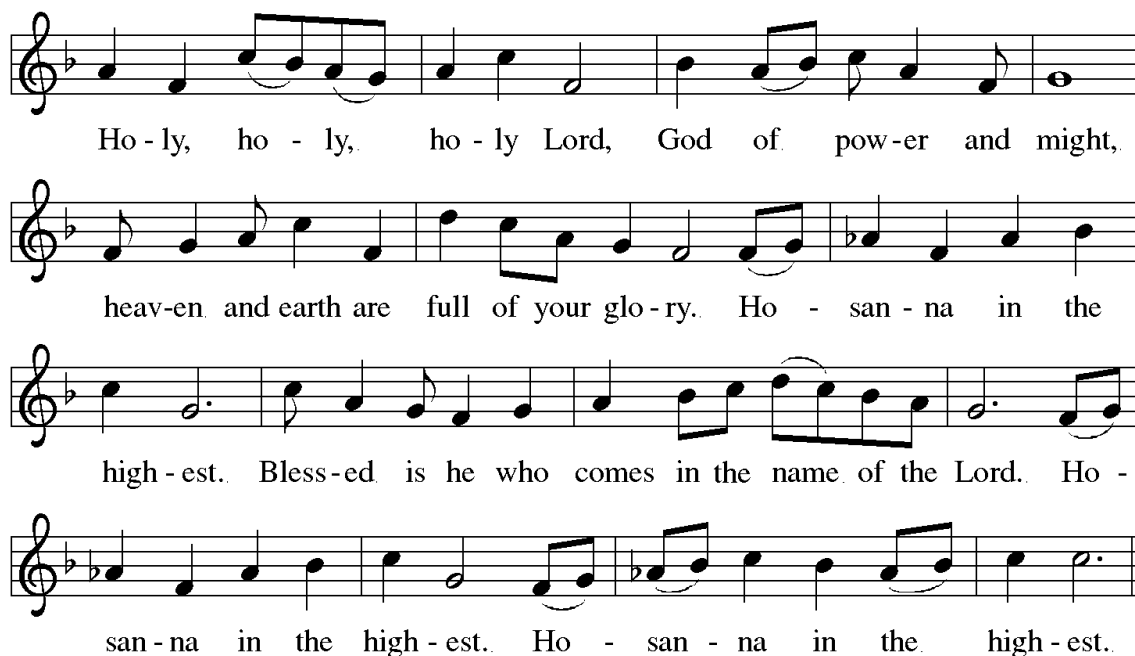
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the
high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was handed over, 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. Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.
Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us 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.

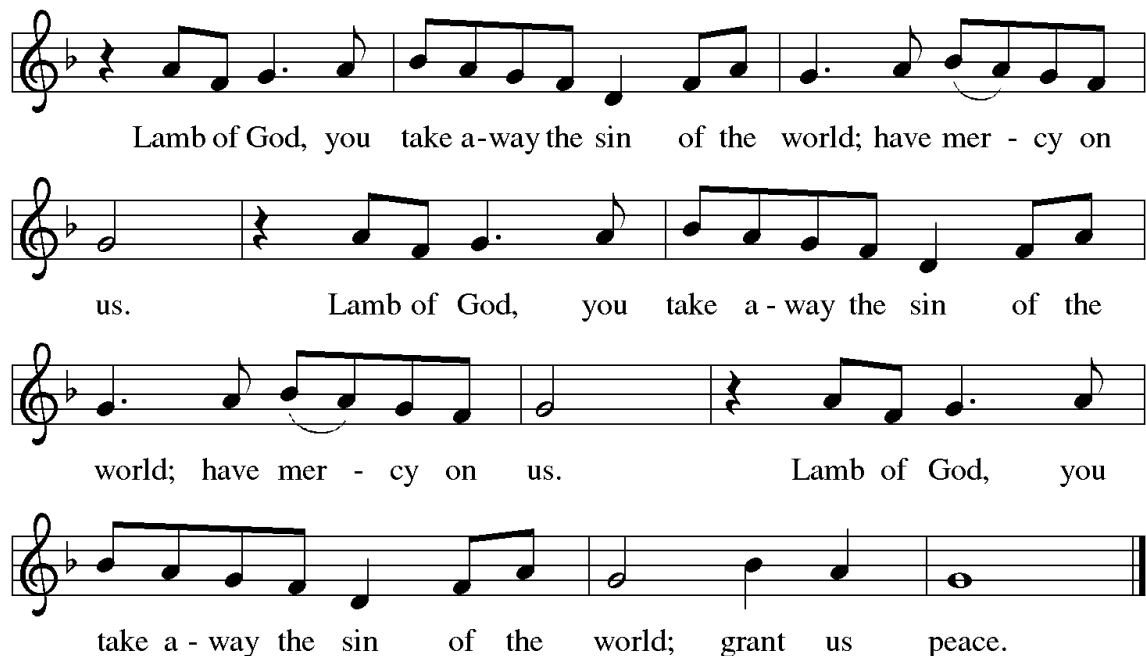
**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**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

Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.



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

The Body and Blood of our Lord broken and shed for you.

Post Communion Prayer

The God of hope
fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit,
through Christ Jesus for whom we wait **Amen.**

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

*Blessing

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, † now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Music

“Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding”

Hymn#246 vs. 1-3

- 1 Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding!
"Christ is near," we hear it say.
"Cast away the works of darkness,
all you children of the day!"
- 2 Wakened by the solemn warning,
from earth's bondage let us rise;
Christ, our sun, all sloth dispelling,
shines upon the morning skies.
- 3 See the Lamb, so long expected,
come with pardon down from heav'n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
one and all, to be forgiv'n;

Text: Latin hymn, 1632; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814-1878

***Dismissal**

Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Postlude

“Lift up Your Heads”

arranged by Lani Smith

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