November 26, 2023
First Sunday of Advent
Late Service – 10:15 AM

+ GATHERING +

WELCOME and GREETING

PRELUDE Savior of the heathen, come – J.S. Bach

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS
Friends, in today's scripture passage… So may we come to the prayer of confession today, not with fear, but with an awe so deep that we ask ourselves, "How can this be?"

Let us pray:
Gracious God, we are weary.

For weary bodies that ache and cry out, we pray:
Forgive us for pushing ourselves too hard.
Reminds us that we deserve Sabbath rest.

For weary minds that feel overwhelmed and saturated with news, we pray:
Forgive us for creating so many distractions.
Remind us that in the quiet, we can hear you.

For weary hearts that long to feel the joy of this season, we pray:
Forgive us for being impatient with ourselves.
Remind us that healing takes time, and that joy and grief can coexist.

For the weary edges of our faith that struggle to hold onto hope, forgive us.
Remind us of Zechariah and Elizabeth.
Remind us that your good news knows no bounds. Amen.

Family of faith,
no matter how many times we wear ourselves thin,
no matter how many times we lose ourselves to distractions,
no matter how many times we ask ourselves, "How can this be?"
God's love keeps showing up for us.
So join me in reminding each other of that truth:
We are loved. We are claimed. We are forgiven.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN ELW 239 Hark, the Glad Sound!

GREETING
The grace of the One for whom we wait, the abiding love of God
and the joyful presence of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE
How does a weary world hope?

By telling stories of hope,
by lighting candles in the night,
and planting seeds in the winter that
will bloom in the spring.

By praying for children as they grow,
And picking up trash on the sidewalk.

By insisting that small acts can make a
difference.

There are a million ways to practice hope.
So today we light the candle of hope as a
reminder and a charge.

With God's help, may we bring hope
into a weary world. Amen.

The Advent candle is lit while we sing the song of reflection.

SONG OF REFLECTION ELW 253 He Came Down

He came down that we may have hope;
he came down that we may have hope;
he came down that we may have hope;
hallelujah forevermore.

PRAYER OF THE DAY
Loving God…
With openness and gratitude we pray,
Amen

Please be seated.

+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth
before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.
Stir up your might,
and come to save us!

Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

O LORD God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
You have fed them with the bread of tears,
and given them tears to drink in full measure.
You make us the scorn of our neighbors;
our enemies laugh among themselves.

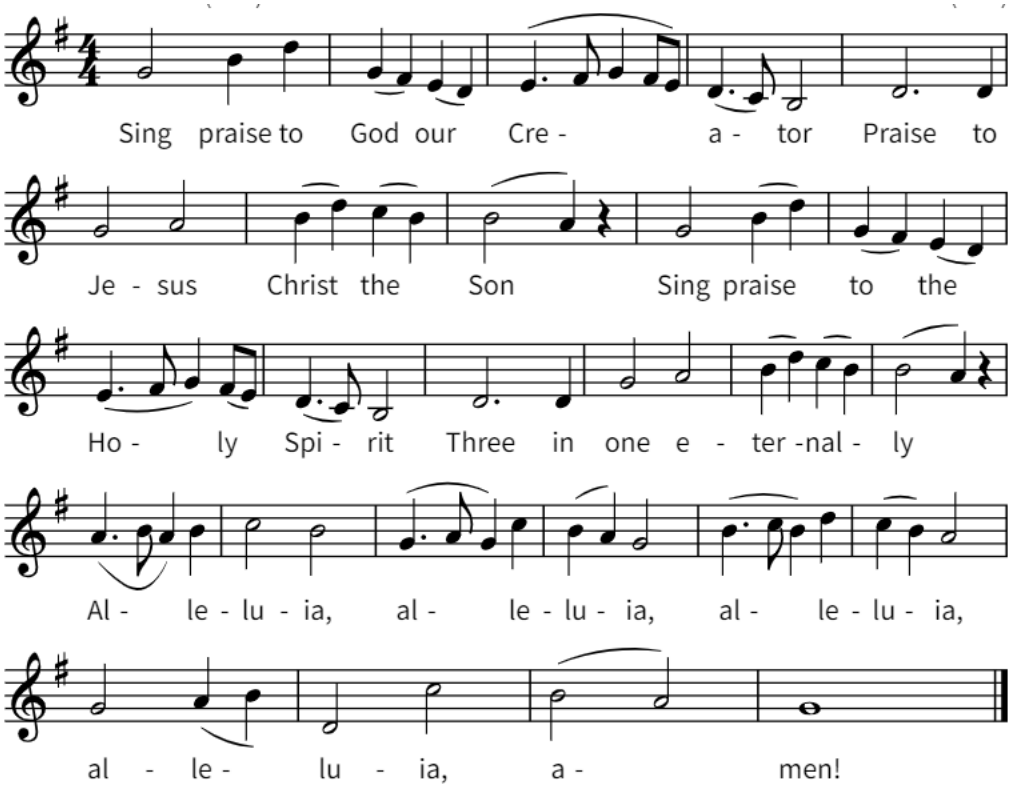
Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one whom you made strong for yourself.
Then we will never turn back from you;
give us life, and we will call on your name.

Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL READING – Luke 1:1-23

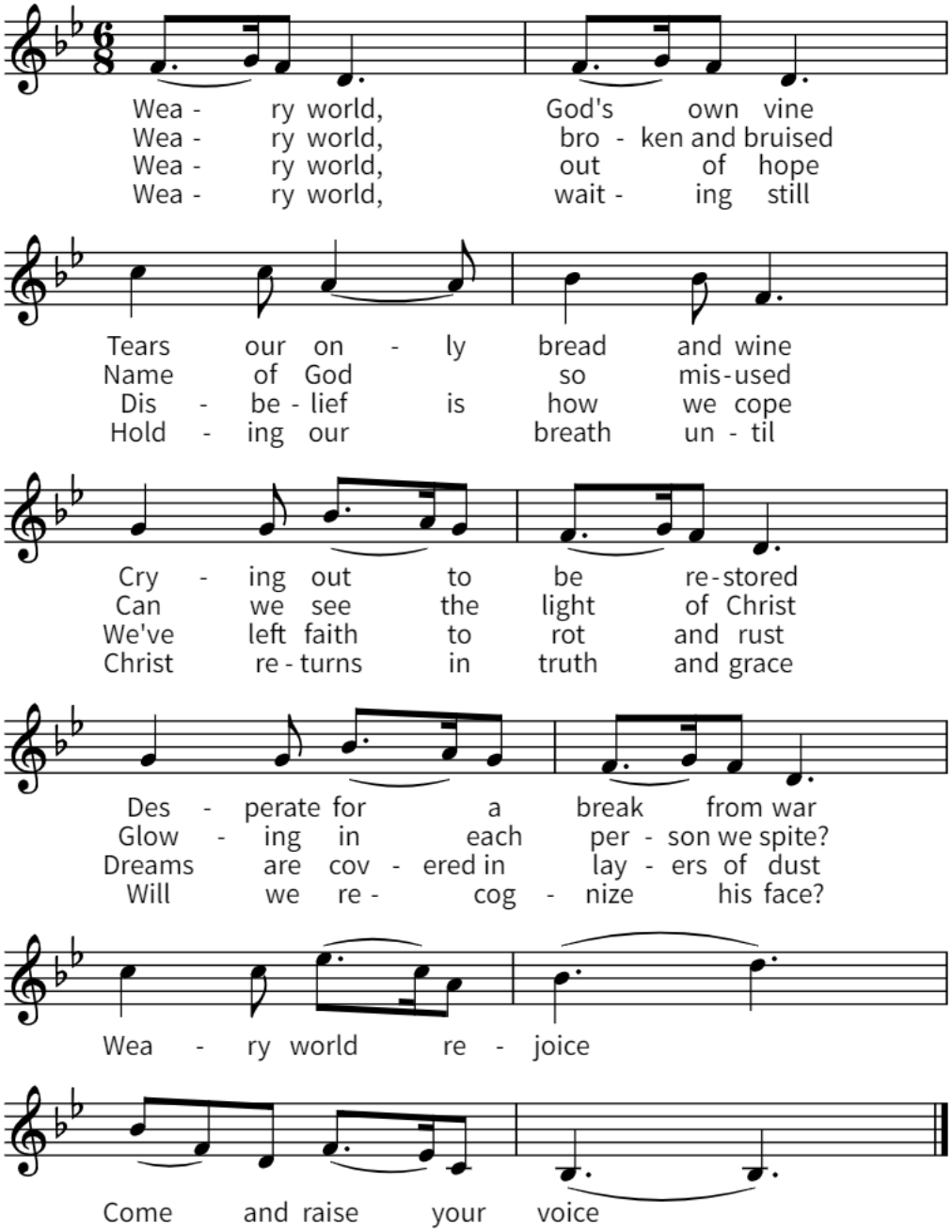
At the beginning of the reading:
The holy Gospel according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion of the reading:
This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY Weary World Rejoices



AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in a God who hears our prayers,
who knows the shape and form of our weariness.
We believe in a God who wants joy and delight for us,
not just survival and existence.

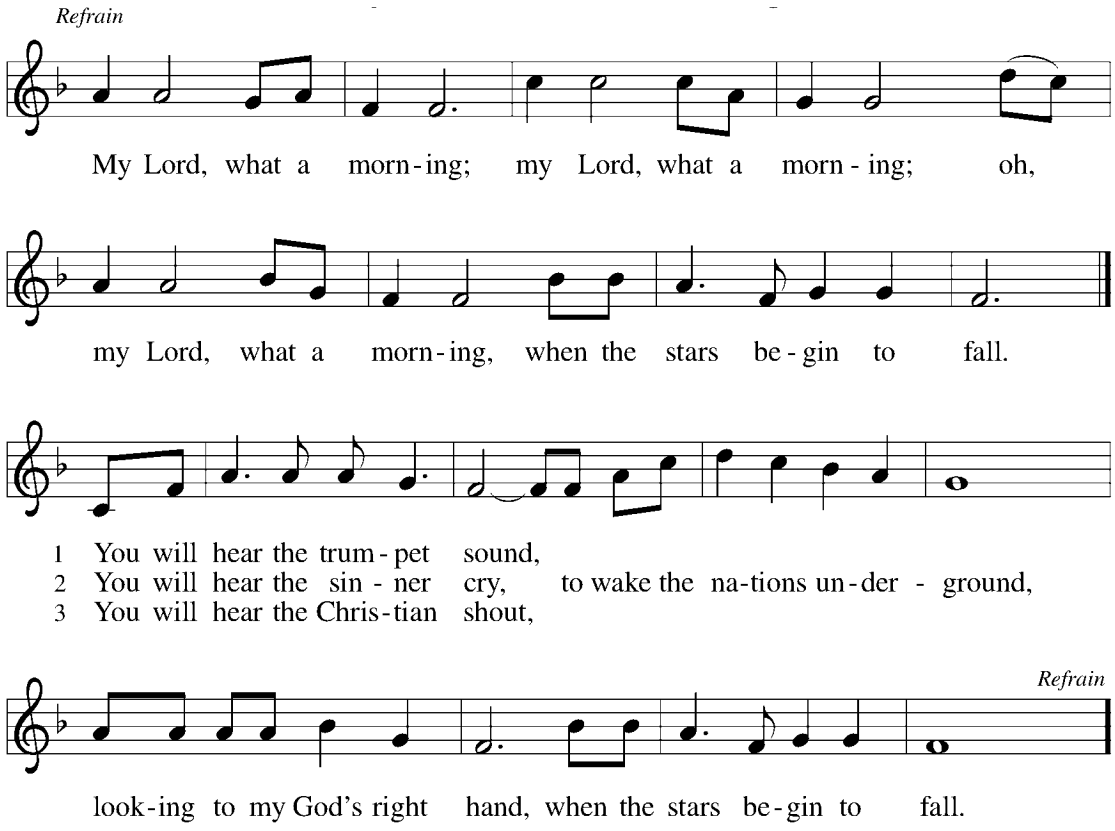
We believe in a God who looks ahead,
who is not done dreaming for the world—
a God who sends hope in the form of people and change,
movements and Spirit.
And so we return to this space.

We bring our joy and our weariness
like two sides of the same coin,
and we trust that God is already at work.
Yes, we believe in a God who hears our prayers.
Thanks be to God for a love like that.
Amen.

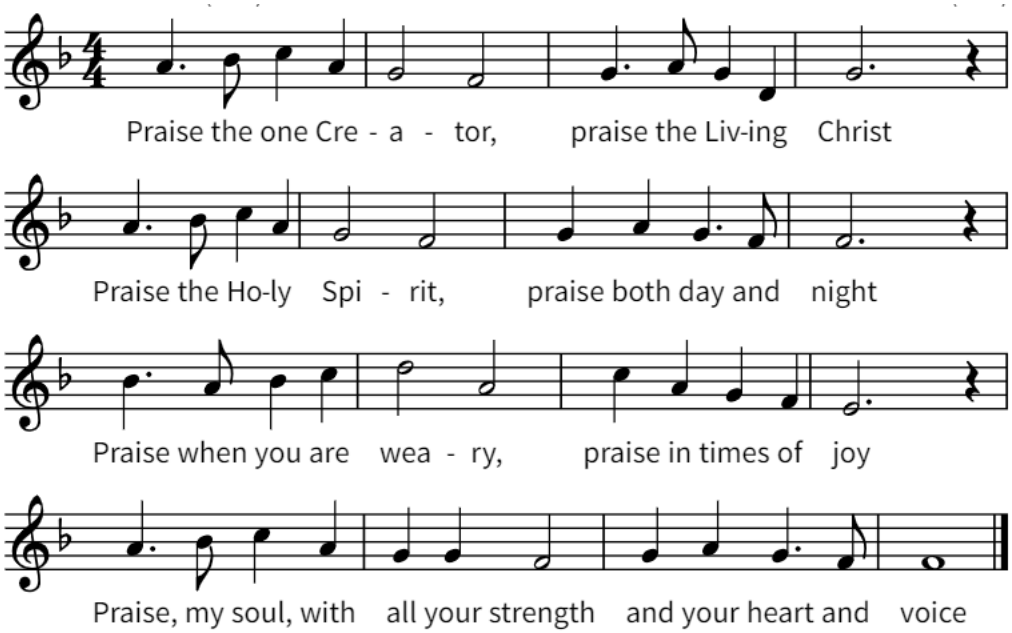
OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING My Lord, What a Morning

The choir will sing the first refrain and the first verse.
The congregation is invited to join on the refrain after the first verse.
Women are invited to sing verse 2, men are invited to sing verse 3.



OFFERTORY



OFFERING PRAYER

God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER

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

+ SENDING +

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

Family of faith, as you leave this place,
you go into a weary world— so speak tenderly.
Do the good that is yours to do. Choose connection. Hold onto hope.

And remember that Christ took on flesh for you.
You are God's beloved. So go rejoicing.
The world needs it.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN ELW 248 People, Look East

DISMISSAL
Go in peace to rejoice with a weary world!
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE O Thou, of God the Father – J.S. Bach

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PRAYER LIST

Please continue to keep the following people connected to our congregation in your prayers: Bob Moran, Charles Krupp, Steve Keyser, Pastor Jennifer Phelps, Andrew Renninger, Leonard & Martha Gibeon, David Mounts, Michael Keller, the Romich family, Ruthie Jadick, Andrew Breuninger, Dennis Krauss, Richard Ditzler, Judy Ockenlaender, Doris Slonaker, Robin Seasock, James Israel and Alyssa Gegan.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, Nov. 27	7:30 Executive meeting (zoom)
Tuesday, Nov. 28	7:15 Confirmation Learning
Thursday, Nov. 30	7 Choir Rehearsal
Sunday, Dec. 3	8am Early Worship
	10:15am Late Worship

Last Day to Order Poinsettias!
Poinsettia Order Change– Please note that the Poinsettia Order Form has changed from what was originally published. The three color poinsettia combo is no longer available, so we are ordering the 6" Red Poinsettias, instead.

Wednesdays in Advent beginning on Wednesday, November 29th at 6:30
We will be considering Un-Ladylike: An Advent Matriarch Study following the four women called out in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus. The stories are full of scandal, pain and betrayal. Join us as we tell their stories and dive into who these powerful women are as we prepare for the arrival of the Emmanuel.

A new meal train has started! Judy Ockenlaender is home following a lengthy hospital stay after surgery. Her family could benefit from meal support starting the week after Thanksgiving thru the end of December. Thank you in advance for your help!
Go to **https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/yv4qgm** to view the meal train details!

Luminary Help Needed! All are welcome to come out and help our youth with the set up and clean up of the luminaries that line our property on Christmas Eve.

This ministry is so important to both the congregation and community as we shine the light of Christ into the world! All are welcome to come help ~ the more hands we have, the quicker it goes! **Set-Up - Sunday, December 24 at 12 noon; Clean-Up - Tuesday, December 26 at 12 noon**

More Coffee Helpers Needed The Coffee Fellowship will resume next week. Please sign up to bring some goodies to share and to clean up after. The sign up sheet is online at:
https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040D4EACAD2FAA8-coffee#/

There is also a sign up sheet hanging on the bulletin board next to the coffee bar. Feel free to sign up for a date there if you don't have access to the online sign up sheet.

Ushers and Readers NEEDED for either the 8am or the 10:15am Services
Please contact Vikki in the office (215-234-4888 or stj.stown@verizon.net) if you are willing to help.

The Advent Tree in the narthex will be up on Sunday, November 19 thru December 3 and will contain the tags for Pennsburg Manor gifts. These gifts should be wrapped, with the tag securely attached and returned to church by **Sunday, December 10th.**

The Virtual Advent tree will be a sign up genius that goes live on Sunday, November 19 thru December 3 and will contain the items requested by Martin Luther Silver Springs School. These items DO NOT GET WRAPPED, but **should be dropped off to church by Sunday, December 10th.**

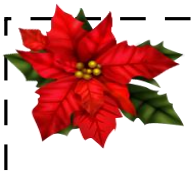
2024 Budget Q&A Times

Copies of the budget are available in the narthex and the parlor or the weekly email

· **Tuesday, November 28** ONLINE at 7 PM
(the online meeting will be held on Microsoft Teams, not Zoom)

· **Sunday, December 3** following the 10:15 AM service

Journey to Bethlehem will be held Saturday, December 16th from 4-6pm, the rain date is Sunday, December 17th from 4-6pm. Help is needed to support this outreach event - specifically set up help, station help (dressing up as Mary or Joseph and standing/sitting in one of the stations) and clean up help. **Go to https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B084FA8AD2CAAFD0-journey#/** to visit the list of open volunteer spots or see the sheet outside Pastor Becky's office to sign up!



NEW Christmas Poinsettia Order Form

Orders are due in the church office by Sunday, November 26th.

Name:_____ Phone Number:_____

Plant Information -

6" Red Poinsettia

_____ Total # plants ($10 each)

Sadly, the combo of three colors is no longer available

Please return this form in an envelope marked **Poinsettia Flower Order** on the outside to the church office or offering plate. Please provide exact cash or checks made payable to "St. John's Lutheran Church".

Please indicate how you would like the flower donation listed in the Christmas Eve bulletins (use back, if needed):

In honor / memory of _____

by _____