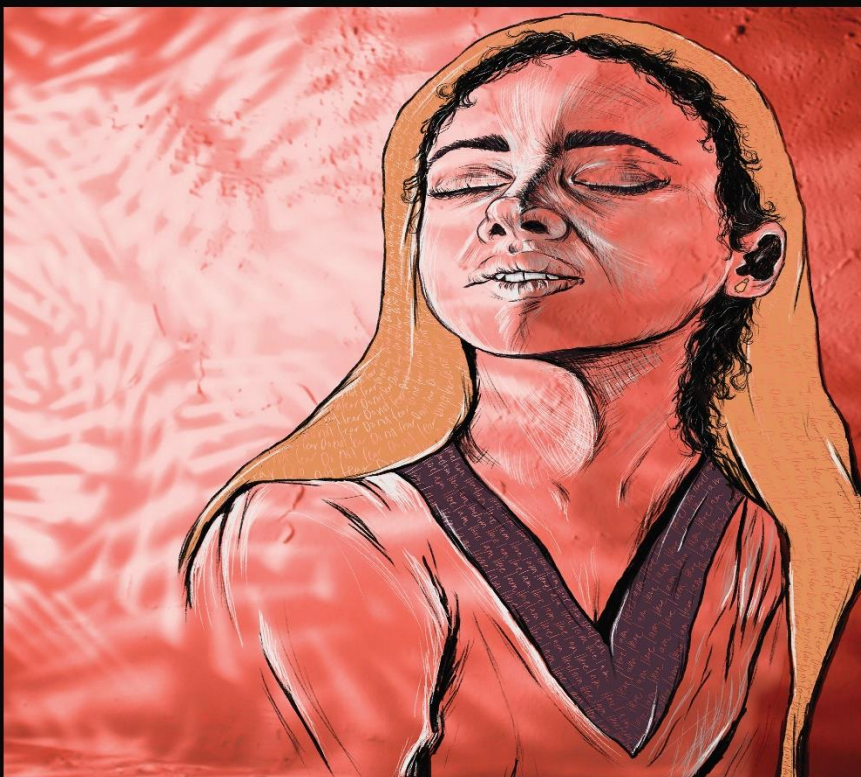


# December 14, 2025

## 3rd Sunday in Advent



## Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church

Box 159, 920 15th Street, Perry, Iowa 50220

Phone: 515-465-5298 Email: [mtolivetlutheran@gmail.com](mailto:mtolivetlutheran@gmail.com)

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[facebook.com/mtolivetlutheranchurch](https://facebook.com/mtolivetlutheranchurch)

Pastor Kimberly Belken

**December 14, 2025**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent: Even in Our Fear, We Are Called Forward**

**Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church**

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## **Welcome & Announcements**

### **Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

In a world full of fear, where do you see glimmers of joy?

**We see glimmers of joy in birthday candles and homemade cards. We see joy in the laughter of children and the delight of grandparents. We see joy in meals around the table and in the singing of Christmas songs.**

You are right. Even in a fearful world, joy is all around us. Today we light the candle of joy as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, joy is here. Joy is real. We only have to look for it.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## Advent Candle Lighting Song: We are Waiting for Jesus (ACS 905)

1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.  
Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

## Confession and Forgiveness

P Friends, often in life, when we make mistakes, we want to keep those mistakes to ourselves. We don't want to advertise our blunders. We don't want to highlight our failings. We can be tempted to brush those things under the rug and move on. But when it comes to God, there is nothing we need to brush under the rug. God welcomes and loves our full, honest, messy selves—blunders and all.

So let us come before God in prayer, trusting that there is nothing we need to hide from our Creator. Let us pray,

**C Courageous God, you invite us to live into our call. You invite us to act, to serve, and to trust. Instead of responding with a resounding**

**“yes,” we often hide our face. We dig our heels in. We look for someone else to volunteer. Spark courage in us. Remind us that every person is capable of making a difference. Remind us that even when we are scared, we are not alone. You invite us forward, with baby steps of hope, we pray. Amen.**

**P** Family of faith, no matter where your path has led you in the past, today is a new day. So join me in declaring this good news:

**C We are known. We are forgiven. We are sent to serve. May we step forward in faith, always moving closer to God’s call. Amen.**

# Gathering Song: Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

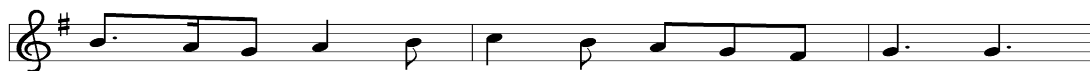
## Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn



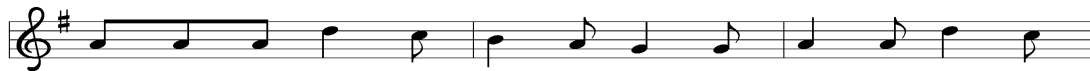
1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for  
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -  
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when  
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for  
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is  
all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so  
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.  
qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;  
crown you with light, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.  
be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -  
mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -  
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in  
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and  
kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to  
won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and  
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.  
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.  
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.  
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen

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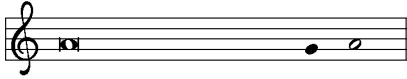
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## Greeting

**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C** And also with you.

## **Kyrie**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



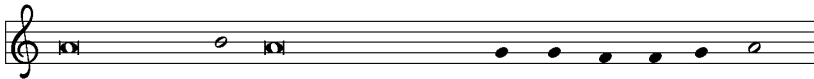
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity 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*

Assisting minister



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.

All



1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless-ing and glo - ry are his.

*Refrain*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless-ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

*Final refrain*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

## Prayer of the Day

P Holy one,

**C the story of this season is not a new one. We've heard this tale before. We've seen the nativities, watched the plays, sung the songs, witnessed the children act it out. The story of this season is not a new one, and yet we long to hear it as if it is. So spark our spirits awake. Call forth awareness, attention, and reverence in us. Allow us to hear this ancient tale with brand new ears. With hope we pray, Amen.**

## First Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10

Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

<sup>5</sup> "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

<sup>6</sup> Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." <sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to me,

"Do not say, 'I am only a boy,' for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you.

<sup>8</sup> Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD."

<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me,

"Now I have put my words in your mouth.

<sup>10</sup> See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms,

to pluck up and to pull down,  
to destroy and to overthrow,  
to build and to plant."

L Word of God, word of life.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## ***Psalm: 63:1-8***

O God, you are my God; I seek you;  
my soul thirsts for you;  
my flesh faints for you,  
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

**<sup>2</sup>So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,  
beholding your power and glory.**

<sup>3</sup>Because your steadfast love is better than life,  
my lips will praise you.

**<sup>4</sup>So I will bless you as long as I live;  
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.**

<sup>5</sup>My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, <sup>[a]</sup>  
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips

**<sup>6</sup>when I think of you on my bed  
and meditate on you in the watches of the night,**

<sup>7</sup>for you have been my help,  
and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

**<sup>8</sup>My soul clings to you;  
your right hand upholds me.**

## **Second Reading: Ephesians 4:1-6**

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup>with all humility and

gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: <sup>4</sup> there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. [a]

L Word of God, word of life.

C      **Thanks be to God.**

## Gospel Acclamation



Al - le - lu - ia.            Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life.      Al - le - lu - ia.

## Holy Gospel: *Luke 1:26-38*

*P The holy gospel according to Luke the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.*

**C**     *Glory to you, O Lord.*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>29</sup> But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will

give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup> He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” <sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” <sup>35</sup> The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God.” <sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

P The Gospel of the Lord  
C **Praise to you O, Christ.**

## **Christmas Program: Do Not Be Afraid**

A No-Rehearsal, Quite Silly, Almost Accurate-ish Christmas Pageant by  
Rev. Rebecca Joy Sumner

*The congregation has a part to play in this special program. You are the angel chorus and the animal chorus.*

Angel Chorus:

95

Prepare the Way of the Lord

The musical score is for the hymn "Prepare the Way of the Lord". It is written for an Angel Chorus and piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 8/8. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains the first two lines of the chorus, and the second system contains the next two lines. The vocal part is written in a single staff with a treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is written in two staves (treble and bass clef). The lyrics are: "Do not be af-raid for God is with us When you are af-raid reach out for love". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and chords. Above the first vocal staff, the chords Eb, Ab, and Eb are indicated. Above the second vocal staff, the note a is indicated. Above the third vocal staff, the note a is indicated. Above the fourth vocal staff, the note a is indicated. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody. The score ends with a double bar line.

(chords continue)

Do not be af-raid for God is with

us When you are af-raid reach out for love

Animal Chorus:

95

Prepare the Way of the Lord

The musical score is for a piece titled "Prepare the Way of the Lord" (numbered 95). It features an "Animal Chorus" with lyrics: "Moo, Moo Ba Ba Ba Meow cock - a - doo - dle do! woof woof, quack, quack neigh, neigh cluck, cluck, cluck!". The score is written for a single melodic line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 8/8. The piano part consists of sustained chords in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. Above the first staff, the chords E-flat major and A-flat major are indicated. Above the second staff, the instruction "(chords continue)" is written. The melody includes various note values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The lyrics are placed below the melody. The score ends with a double bar line.

Moo, Moo Ba Ba Ba Meow cock - a - doo - dle

do! woof woof, quack, quack neigh, neigh cluck, cluck, cluck!

# Hymn of the Day: O Come, Take Heart

## O Come, Take Heart

VENI IMMANUEL 8.8.8.8 with refrain

Words by Anna Strickland, 2025

Plainsong adapted by Thomas Helmore, 1854



O come, O come though tim - id and un - sure And  
O come, O come though you feel un - pre - pared When  
O come and join God's kin \_\_\_\_\_ dom work And



trust that God de - clares your worth Re - mem -  
cour - age fails you, do it scared Don't let  
be God's hands and feet on earth You're called



ber when you're feel - ing small That ev - ery child of  
the fear of ma - king mis - takes Im - pede you from the  
ex - act - ly as \_\_\_\_\_ you are To love the world with



God \_\_\_\_\_ is called  
path you're called to take Take heart, take heart! The One  
ev - ery bro - ken part



who calls to you Will give you strength and see you through

## **Affirmation of Faith**

**We have seen the valley. We have seen a sky without stars. We have seen the longest night, and still we believe.**

**We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow. We believe that good news is louder than fear. We believe this good news is for all people.**

**So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news.**

**We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst. We will sing songs of joy. We will proclaim: unto us, love is born.**

**We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love. So still, we believe. Amen.**

## **Prayers of the People**

Calling God, if you tapped on my shoulder today, would my knees shake? Would my mind race? Would my voice waver?

Or knowing the stories of all the faithful folks you've called before, would I be ready? Would I be brave enough to follow? Would I hear your call for what it is? Would I reply, *"Let it be with me according to your will?"*

It is hard to know. But what I do trust is that you are a God who calls. You called Mary and Moses, Jeremiah and Peter. You have called ordinary people throughout all of time. You have called artists and activities, poets and prophets, teachers and healers—young and old alike.

So as we move through this world, open our ears to hear your voice. As we move through this world, open our hearts to the invitations, the inspiration, and the nudges you place in our lives. As we move through this world, God, allow us to hear whatever call you have in store for us in this season.

For no matter how big, or how small, we trust that you are a calling,  
inviting, nudging, inspiring God who sees us in the best light.  
With hope we lean forward. With hope we listen for your word. **Amen.**

## Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

## Offering

### Offering: *Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful* (ELW 184)

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that  
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of  
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble  
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

## Offering Prayer

P Loving God,

C **pour out your Spirit on these gifts that we bring to your table. Pour out your Spirit on the bread and the wine. Pour out your Spirit on us. Draw near to us here and saturate us with your love. Amen.**

## 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.**

Friends, did you ever have a moment growing up when you walked into the school cafeteria, panned the faces in the crowd, and wondered if you were going to have a place to sit?

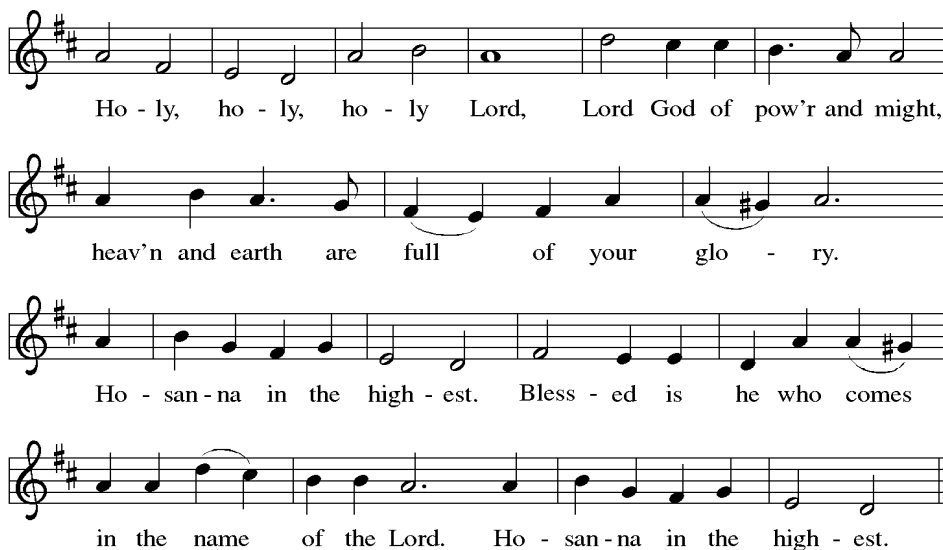
Did you ever have a moment, maybe as a new student or new employee, when fear nibbled at the back of your mind because you weren't sure where you belonged?

I imagine, at some point or another, most of us have experienced that kind of fear. But here at this table, you never have to wonder.

Here at this table, there is enough room, enough food, enough love for everyone.

Here at this table, Jesus is standing up on his chair, waving his hands over his head, saying to each of you "I saved you a seat!" Here at this table, you are wanted and welcomed. You are safe and loved. Here at this table, you belong. There is no need for fear here, for this is a joyful feast.

## Holy, Holy, Holy



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,  
heav'n 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.

## Thanksgiving at the Table

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.

## Lord's Prayer

P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us,

**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**

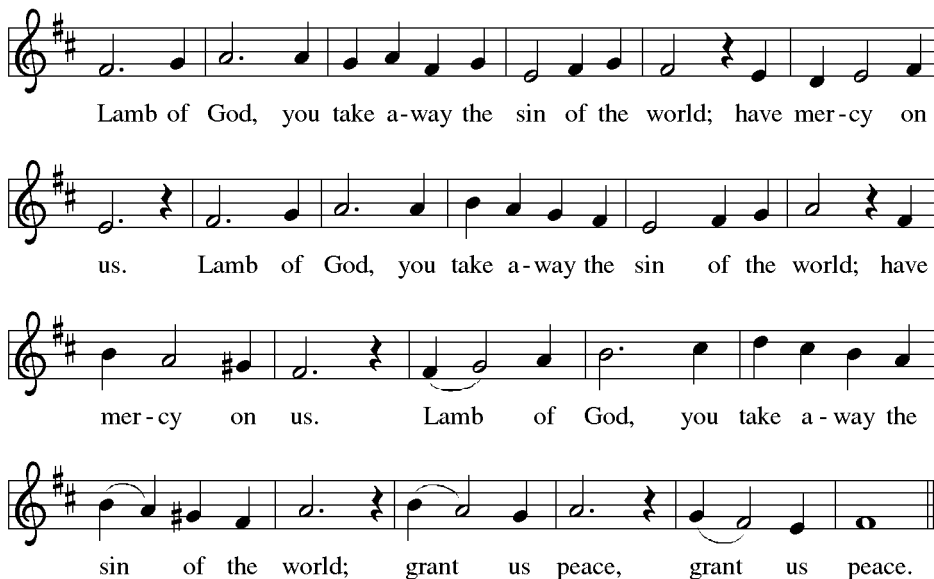
who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

## Invitation to Communion

P Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

## Holy Communion

### Communion Song:



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, grant us peace.

## Post Communion Blessing

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

C Amen.

## Prayer after Communion

P Loving God,

C **in a world racked with fear, you gather us together. You set the table. You meet us here. You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits. You remind us that this is a joyful feast, and that fear cannot win every time. So, with renewed courage, with renewed hope, with renewed conviction, send us out into the world. Help us to feed others as you have fed us. With gratitude we pray, Amen.**

## Blessing

P In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit. May you reach for each other's hands. May you choose courage whenever you can. And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear. In the name of the one who calls, the one who sends, and the one who journeys with—go in peace and be not afraid. **Amen.**

# Sending Song: He Came Down

## He Came Down

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor 1, Tenor 2) and a Bass line. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is in the Soprano part, featuring a series of eighth and quarter notes with triplet markings. The Bass line provides a harmonic foundation with chords and single notes. The lyrics are arranged in four lines, with the first line containing four phrases and the subsequent lines containing three phrases each. The final line of the score includes the phrase 'hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er - more.'.

1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;  
2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;  
3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;  
4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;

he came down that we may have love;  
he came down that we may have light; hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er - more.  
he came down that we may have peace;  
he came down that we may have joy;

Text: Cameroon traditional

Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional; arr. John L. Bell, b. 1949

Arr. © 1986 Iona Community, GIA Publications, Inc., agent, 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. [www.giamusic.com](http://www.giamusic.com). 800.442.3358.

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## Dismissal

P Go in peace. Persist in hope.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## Announcements

- **Sunday School Teachers Needed!** Sunday school teachers are needed especially for our younger elementary/preschool age class. If you are interested in helping, please talk with Craig Lamm.
- **Congregational Meeting:** There will be a short congregational meeting on Dec. 21 to vote on new council members for 2026. There are three open positions and Meg Menke, Roger Niemeyer, and Mike Ramsey have been nominated to serve. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.
- **Carols and Cold Ones TODAY:** This event will be held on Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 4pm at the Huntington's Home! Please feel free to ask for the address if needed!
- **Online Giving:** Did you know you can set up online giving so you never have to worry about having to catch up on your giving when you have been away? You can visit the church website to sign up. The website also has a text to give option. If you need help signing up, please talk to Martha or Doug Stetzel.
- **Christmas Eve services are at 5:30pm** this year. Please make note of the different time and invite your friends and family for a candlelight and communion service.
- **Annual Meeting:** The annual meeting of Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church will take place during worship on Sunday, Jan. 18. If we have to cancel church due to weather, we will hold the meeting the following Sunday, Jan. 25.
- **Office Hours:** Pastor Kimberly is in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays. Thursdays she will be splitting her time between Immanuel and Mt. Olivet, so if you would like to see her on that day, please call ahead so she can be sure to be in town. You can call the church number (515) 465- 5298 and it will ring to Pastor's cell phone if she is not in the office.



THE PERRY MINISTERIAL  
ASSOCIATION INVITES YOU TO

# *Blue Christmas Service*

First Christian Church  
1224 Lucinda St

Wednesday, Dec. 17  
at 6pm





*Christmas Eve Service at 5:30pm*

*Join us to celebrate the birth of  
Christ!*

