

# Christ Lutheran Church & The Bridge Campus Ministry

## December 28, 2025 – First Sunday of Christmas

*Connecting people to people • people to faith • faith to life*

69 Mill Street • Athens, OH • (740) 593-3144

info@clcathens.org • [www.clcathens.org](http://www.clcathens.org)



**(PLEASE POWER OFF OR AIRPLANE MODE YOUR DEVICES)**

*Here in Athens, in SE Ohio, we are occupying the traditional homeland of the Shawnee people. Before the Shawnee, this land was occupied by the Osage people, and by the Adena, Hopewell, and Fort Ancient cultures.*

**SERVING TODAY:** *Presider/Preacher: Chad Huebner; Organist: George Weckman; Choir Director: Christian Yoder; Choir Accompanist: Donnalee Yoder; Pianist: Patricia Cambridge; Lector: Wanda Weinberg; Time with Children: Jane Unger; Ushers: Marilyn Shealy, JoAnn Ball; Greeter: Sue Righi; Acolyte: Rachel; Tray Server: Fran Snyder; Livestream: Sam Hanson*

### **INTRODUCTION**

As we celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, our gospel today confronts us with the death of innocent children at the hands of Herod. The birth of Christ does not remove the power of evil from our world, but its light gives us hope as we walk with all the “holy innocents” of past generations and today who have suffered unjustly. In our gathering around word and meal, God continues to redeem us, lift us up, and carry us as in days of old.

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,  
Wonderful Counselor,  
Mighty Savior,  
Prince of Peace.

**Amen.**

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness,  
let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Reconciling God,  
**we yearn for your presence to transform  
our grief, pain, and despair.**  
**We confess that we have not always prepared  
room in our hearts for your love;  
we have not always recognized  
your presence among us;  
we have not always embraced your message of peace.**  
**We cry out, weary with the burden of violence,  
oppression, and fear.**  
**We confess our failure to make room  
for those seeking refuge;  
our participation in violent systems  
that harm your innocent ones;  
our reluctance to embody your good news.**  
**Be born in us today  
and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation.**

**Amen.**

God's grace upon grace flows over you.

☩ Christ's presence redeems the whole creation.

Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

**Amen.**

# GATHERING SONG    *Angels, from the Realms of Glory (ELW 275)*

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*

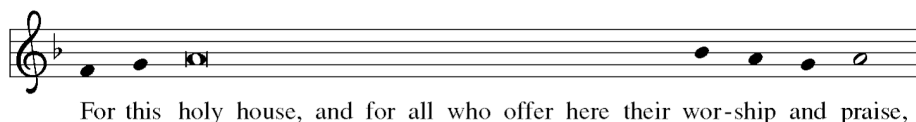
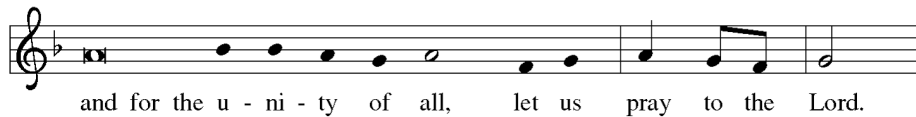
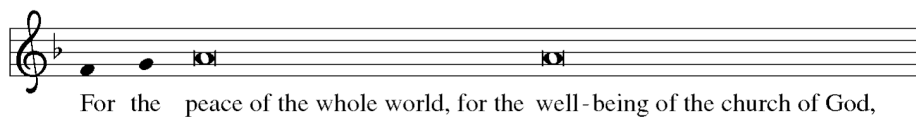
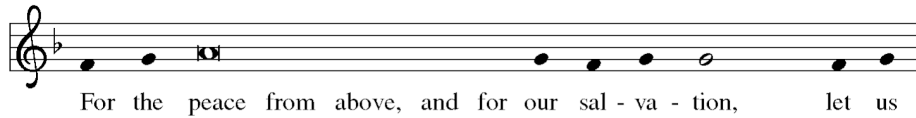
Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4  
 Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

## GREETING

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

## KYRIE



## GREETING

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

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

**O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## **TIME WITH CHILDREN**

### **FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:7-9**

A reading from Isaiah.

<sup>7</sup> I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,  
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,  
because of all that the LORD has done for us  
and the great favor to the house of Israel  
that he has shown them according to his mercy,  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

<sup>8</sup> For he said, "Surely they are my people,  
children who will not act deceitfully,"  
and he became their savior

<sup>9</sup> in all their distress.

It was no messenger or angel  
but his presence that saved them;  
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;  
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **SECOND READING: Hebrews 2:10-18**

A reading from Hebrews.

<sup>10</sup> It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. <sup>11</sup> For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, <sup>12</sup> saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

<sup>13</sup> And again,

"I will put my trust in him."

And again,

"Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

<sup>14</sup> Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. <sup>16</sup> For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the

people. <sup>18</sup> Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The word of the Lord.

**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: Matthew 2:13-23

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>13</sup> Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." <sup>14</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

<sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. <sup>17</sup> Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup> "A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

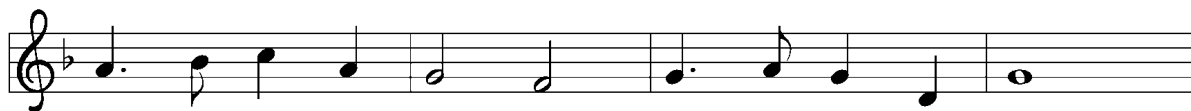
<sup>19</sup> When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, <sup>20</sup> "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." <sup>21</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to

the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."  
 The gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

### HYMN OF THE DAY

#### *In the Bleak Midwinter (ELW 294)*



1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,  
 2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;  
 3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;  
 heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;  
 If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed  
 if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.  
 the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.  
 yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830–1894  
 Music: CRANHAM, Gustav Holst, 1874–1934

### PRESENTATION (ELW p. 227)

*Candidates for baptism, sponsors, and parents gather with the minister at the font. The assembly is seated.*

In baptism our gracious heavenly Father frees us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity; by water and the Holy Spirit we are reborn children of God and made members of the church, the body of Christ. Living with Christ and in the communion of saints, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.

Called by the Holy Spirit, trusting in the grace and love of God, do you desire to have Rylee Jane Russell baptized into Christ?

*Response:* We do.

As you bring *Rylee* to receive the gift of baptism, you are entrusted with responsibilities:

to live with *her* among God's faithful people,  
bring *her* to the word of God and the holy supper,  
teach *her* the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments,  
place in *her* hands the holy scriptures,  
and nurture *her* in faith and prayer,  
so that *Rylee* may learn to trust God,  
proclaim Christ through word and deed,  
care for others and the world God made,  
and work for justice and peace.

Do you promise to help *Rylee* grow in the Christian faith and life?

*Response:* We do.

*The presiding minister addresses the assembly:*

People of God, do you promise to support Rylee and pray for *her* in *her* new life in Christ?

**We do.**

*The assembly stands.*

#### **PROFESSION OF FAITH (ELW p. 229)**

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church.

Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God,  
the powers of this world that rebel against God,  
and the ways of sin that draw you from God?

*Response:*

I renounce them.

*The presiding minister addresses the candidates and the assembly.*

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,**



**the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE FONT (ELW p. 230)**

*Water may be poured into the font before or during the thanksgiving. At the font, the presiding minister begins the thanksgiving:*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life, you are the everlasting wellspring, you are the fire of rebirth.

Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams. Honor to you for cloud and rain, for dew and snow. Your waters are below us, around us, above us: our life is born in you. You are the fountain of resurrection.

Praise to you for your saving waters: Noah and the animals survive the flood, Hagar discovers your well. The Israelites escape through the sea, and they drink from your gushing rock. Naaman washes his leprosy away, and the Samaritan woman will never be thirsty again.

At this font, holy God, we pray: Praise to you for the water of baptism and for your Word that saves us in this water. Breathe your Spirit into all who are gathered here and into all creation. Illumine our days. Enliven our bones. Dry our tears. Wash away the sin within us, and drown the evil around us.

Satisfy all our thirst with your living water, Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*The assembly may be seated.*

**BAPTISM**

Rylee Jane Russell, I baptize you in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

You belong to Christ,  
in whom you have been baptized.

**Alleluia.**

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give your daughters and sons new birth, cleanse them from sin, and raise them to eternal life.

Sustain Rylee with the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

**Amen.**

*The presiding minister marks the sign of the cross on the forehead of each of the baptized. Oil prepared for this purpose may be used. As the sign of the cross is made, the minister says:*

Rylee Jane Russell, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

**Amen.**

## **WELCOME**

Let your light so shine before others  
that they may see your good works  
and glorify your Father in heaven.

Let us welcome the newly baptized.

**We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share:  
join us in giving thanks and praise to God  
and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Let us pray for the church, the world, and all people according to their needs.

Dear God, thank you for bringing us together today for this opportunity to worship with one another. As we celebrate Christmas and the holiday season, we thank you for the gift of Christmas, and how Jesus was born to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, in order to save us all. We celebrate the gift of Christmas today and every day, and we are called to share our blessings and your love with those we meet in our lives every day. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of Love, this has been a hard year in many different ways, and we thank you for always being with us and helping us through difficult times. We know that through you, we have hope for better days ahead of us. Please help us to reach out to those who may be feeling alone or troubled and help them to know that they are loved and not alone. This year has also provided each of us with different blessings that we are very grateful for. Please help us to use our blessings wisely and to help anyone in need. And please also help us to remember that while we are all different in so many ways, we are all Your children because You made us in Your image. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of Peace, so many people live in danger and in fear in our world. Please be with everyone whose lives are filled with danger of any sort. We ask you to help our leaders around the world to work for peace instead of conflict. Help our leaders to work together to help one another, and to remember that we are all Your children. Please protect those who serve in the military, comfort military families and bless our veterans. Please also bless those who are impacted by war and violence, so they may be safe and they can live in peace. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of Compassion, we ask you to comfort those experiencing grief and loss and to relieve those who are suffering. Please also bring strength to those who are hospitalized, confined to homes, or undergoing tests. We pray for healing for anyone who is ill in mind, body, or spirit. Restore to wholeness those who are struggling with addictions. Bless our shut-ins and help us to

bring them joy. Please hear us now as we ask for blessings for those we name aloud or in our hearts..... Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of Comfort, be with those to whom death draws near and those who have lost loved ones. Bring peace and comfort to all who mourn; knowing with the conviction of our faith that because you so loved the world that you gave your Chosen Son, who died and rose again, we too will have eternal life. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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

## PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

## OFFERING – THANK YOU! YOUR GENEROSITY MAKES OUR MINISTRY POSSIBLE.

Giving is easy online through our website at <https://www.clcathens.org/give>

There you will also find instructions for how you can text to give or by downloading our church app!


## CHORAL OFFERING

### *Good Christian Men Rejoice*

CLC Choir


## OFFERTORY

### *Come Now, O Prince of Peace*



*O - so - sŏ o - so - sŏ, pyong - hwa - ūi - im - gŭm*

1	Come now, O	Prince of peace,	make us one	bod - y.
2	Come now, O	God of love,	make us one	bod - y.
3	Come now and	set us free,	O God, our	Sav - ior.
4	Come, Hope of	u - ni - ty,	make us one	bod - y.



*u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sŏ.*

Come, O	Lord	Je - sus,	rec - on - cile	your	peo - ple.
Come, O	Lord	Je - sus,	rec - on - cile	your	peo - ple.
Come, O	Lord	Je - sus,	rec - on - cile	all	na - tions.
Come, O	Lord	Je - sus,	rec - on - cile	all	na - tions.

Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope  
 Music: OSOSŎ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947  
 Text and music © Geonyong Lee

## OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others.

With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

## **PREFACE**

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.  
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 all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

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.

Holy God,  
Creator of all and Source of life,  
at the birth of time  
your word brought light into the world.  
In the fullness of time,  
you sent your Word, born of Mary,  
to shine in our darkness  
and to make us your daughters and sons.  
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.  
Remembering, therefore,  
his birth and life among us,  
his death and resurrection,  
we await his coming again  
when all things will be restored in him.  
By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup,  
that, held and nourished by you,  
we may live as your children,

shining with the light of your Son.  
Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
in your holy Church,  
both now and forever.

**Amen**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

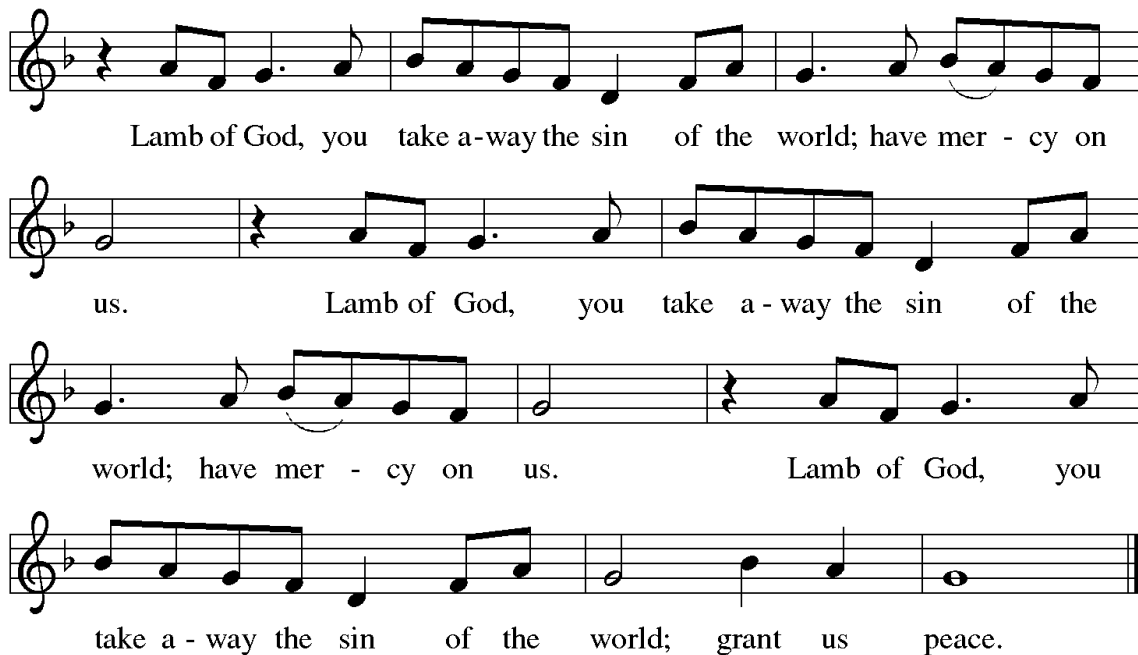
**Give us today our daily bread.**

**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.**

### **LAMB OF GOD**



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.

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

God is now in flesh appearing.

Come to the feast of joy!

**Thanks be to God!**

## COMMUNION

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table.  
May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts  
the mystery of your presence.  
Move us to discover the wonders of your love  
in the everyday moments of our lives,  
through Christ born in us.  
**Amen.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### BLESSING

The triune God,  
glorious Mystery,  
holy Incarnate One,  
abiding Comforter,  
✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.  
**Amen.**



**SENDING SONG**      *The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve (ELW 551)*



1 The Spir - it sends us forth to serve; we go in  
 2 We go to com - fort those who mourn and set the  
 3 We go to be the hands of Christ, to scat - ter  
 4 Then let us go to serve in peace, the gos - pel



Je - sus' name to bring glad tid - ings  
 bur - dened free; where hope is dim, to  
 joy like seed and, all our days, to  
 to pro - claim. God's Spir - it has em -



to the poor, God's fa - vor to pro - claim.  
 share a dream and help the blind to see.  
 cher - ish life, to do the lov - ing deed.  
 pow - ered us; we go in Je - sus' name.

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939  
 Music: CHESTERFIELD, attr. Thomas Haweis, 1734–1820  
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**DISMISSAL**

Glory to God in the highest!

**And peace to God's people on earth!**

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

**Thanks be to God.**