

Christ Lutheran Church & The Bridge Campus Ministry

January 4, 2026 – Epiphany (Observed)

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

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(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: Mim Almquist; Time with Children: Cheryl Huebner; Ushers: Marilyn Shealy, Linda Batey; Greeter: Mark Sunderman; Acolyte: Melody; Tray Server: Jim Sillery; Livestream: Doug Debrick

INTRODUCTION

The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.

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.

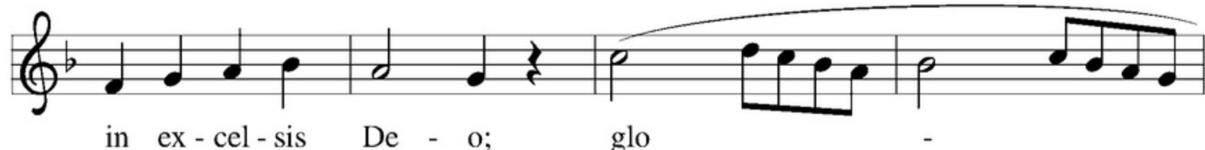
GATHERING SONG *Angels We Have Heard on High* (ELW 289)



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.



Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864
Music: GLORIA, French carol

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

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

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

pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

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 mercy.

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

let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

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

A - men.

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 God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

TIME WITH CHILDREN

FIRST READING: Isaiah 60:1-6

A reading from Isaiah.

- ¹ Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
- ² For darkness shall cover the earth
and thick darkness the peoples,
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
- ³ Nations shall come to your light
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
- ⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together; they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.
- ⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
- ⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 3:1-12

A reading from Ephesians.

¹ This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you gentiles, ² for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you ³ and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, ⁴ a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵ In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶ that is, the gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷ Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given

me by the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ ⁹ and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things,

¹⁰ so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have access in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their

treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

The First Noel (ELW 300)



1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to
2 They look - ed up and saw . . . a star shin - ing
3 And by the light of that . . . same star three . . .
4 This star drew near to the . . . north - west, o'er . . .
5 Then en - tered in those wise . . . men three, full . . .



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where
in . . . the east . . . be - yond . . . them far; and to the
wise . . . men came . . . from coun - try far; to seek for a
Beth - le - hem . . . it took . . . its rest; and there it
rev - 'rent - ly . . . up - on . . . their knee, and of - fered

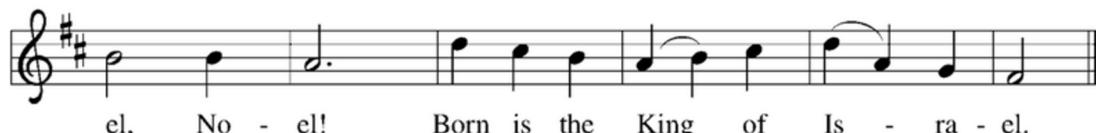


they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's
earth it gave . . . great light, and . . . so it con -
king was their . . . in - tent, and to fol - low the
did both stop . . . and stay right . . . o - ver the
there in his . . . pres - ence their . . . gold, . . . and

Refrain



night that was so deep.
tin - ued both day and night.
star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -
place where Je - sus lay.
myrrh, and frank - in - cense.



el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Text: English traditional

Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

O Loving God, we are filled with wonder and awe that you sent Your Son as a fragile human baby to live among us. Such blessed love! We thank you for all the goodness in our lives: warm homes, food, safe communities, health, meaningful work, family, and friends. Inspire us by your birth to be a blessing to others and to share our abundance with those in need. We also rejoice with those who are celebrating the hope of the New Year, birthdays, anniversaries, and happy events. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Wonderful Counselor, you bring light to our darkness of fear, doubt, and selfishness. As you guided the Magi, so shine in our hearts to illuminate our paths. Send your Spirit to journey with us and redirect our lives to show courage, faith, and caring. Help us discern and use our talents to do your work. Bless all pastors, bishops, lay leaders, and all of us who are the church. Guide us to tell the Good News, work for justice, forgive others, and show love to everyone. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Mighty God, we marvel at the wonderful Earth you have made. Help us to recognize the blessings of every season and every kind of weather. Teach us to be faithful stewards of your Creation, to work diligently to care for all that is entrusted to us, and to use the Earth's resources wisely. We pray for guidance to reduce our consumption and to preserve the Earth for future generations. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Everlasting Father, you are our refuge and strength. Restore to wholeness all those who are ill in mind, body, or spirit. Bless caregivers with compassion. Bestow knowledge and guidance on all health care workers and researchers. We also pray for those who are dealing with long-term diagnoses, such as depression, dementia, and addictions. Comfort all those feeling blue this season as they mourn the loss of loved ones. Embrace our elderly loved ones and shut-ins with joy. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Prince of Peace, we pray for people everywhere who struggle with hunger, poverty, violence, and the effects of disasters. Keep them safe and give them hope. We yearn for a time when peace will replace conflict, war, and torture. We beseech you to stir all world leaders to act with wisdom and compromise so oppression and revenge will end. We pray your blessings of security and comfort come to all refugees, military personnel and families, and veterans. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of mercy, listen now as we offer other prayers either silently or aloud..... Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, we give thanks for the lives of those who have passed away. Comfort and support their family and friends who mourn. Remind us of the promise of everlasting life with you. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O Lord, 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 download our church app!

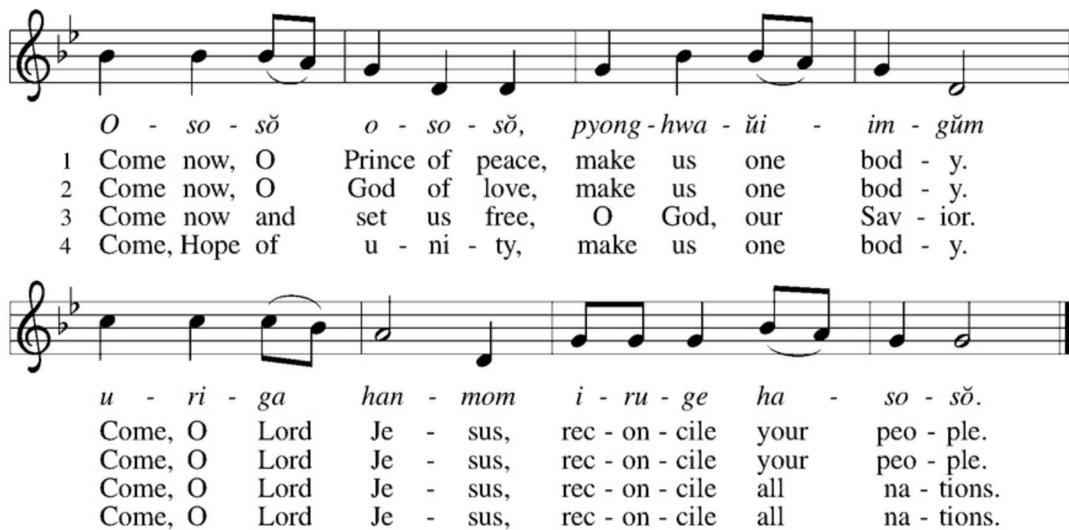
MUSICAL OFFERING

Come Ye Blessed

Donnalee Yoder - Piano

OFFERTORY

Come Now, O Prince of Peace



O - so - sō o - so - sō, pyong - hwa - ūi - im - gūm
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 - sō.
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: OSOSō, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947

Text and music © Geonyong Lee

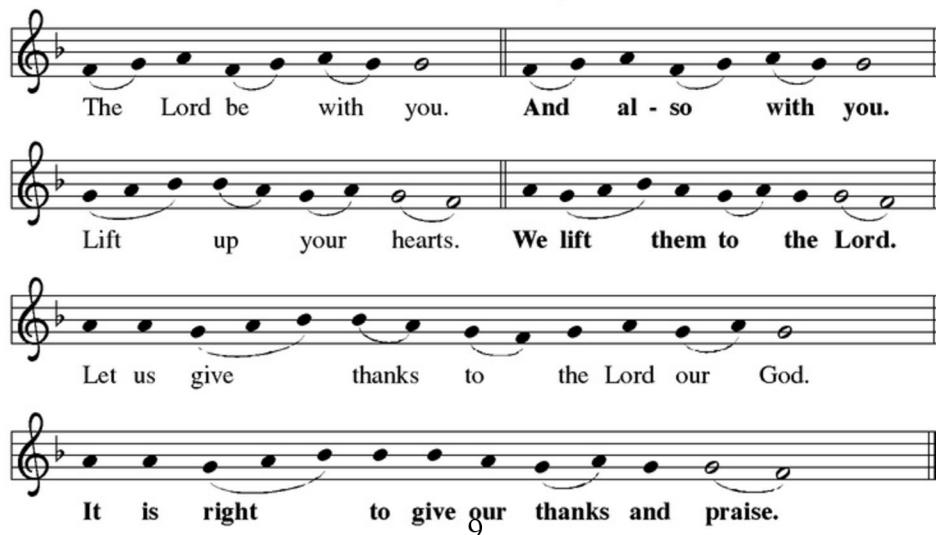
OFFERING PRAYER

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.

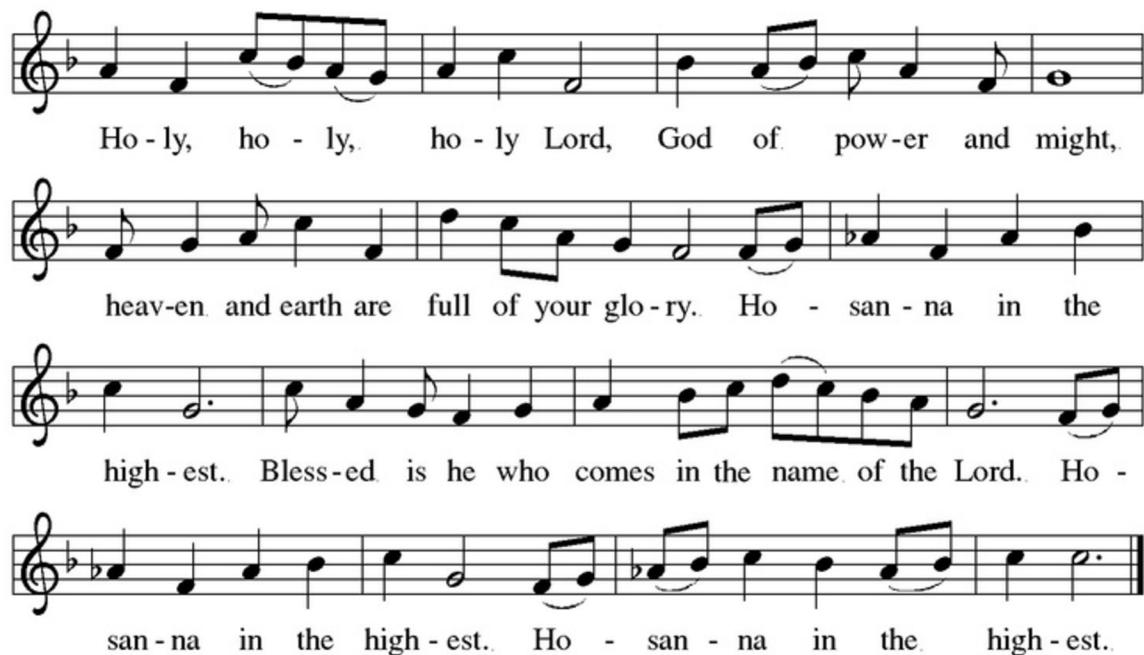
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

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. By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son; and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory. 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...

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

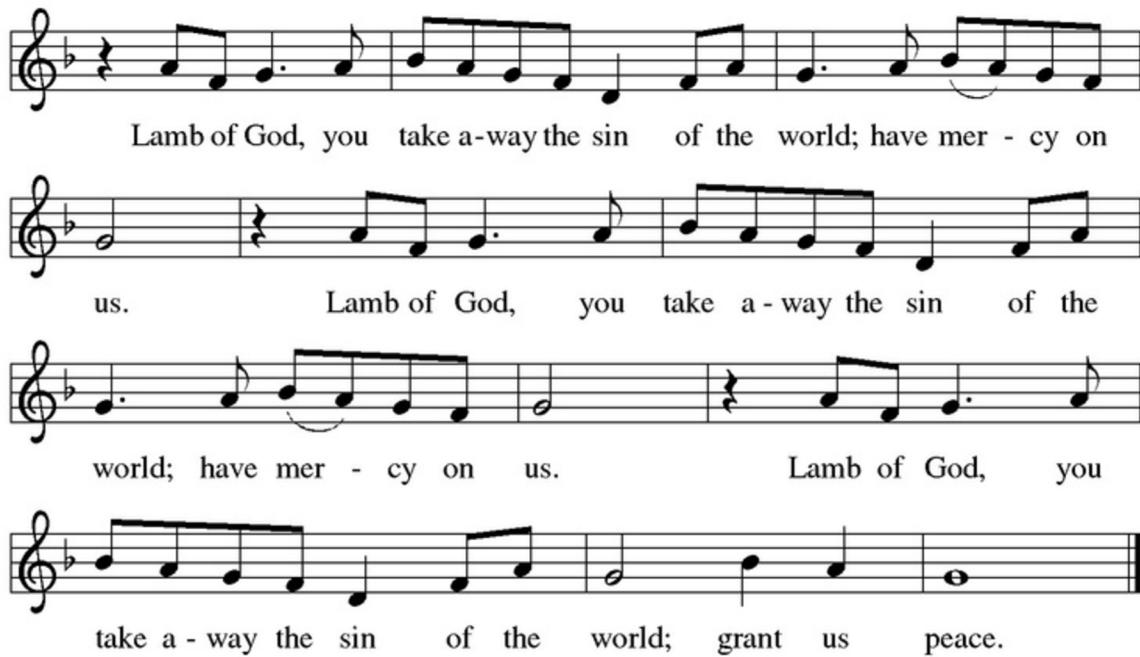
Amen

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.

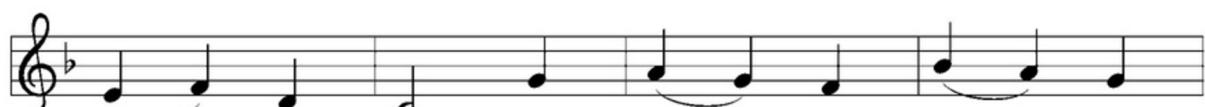
Amen.

SENDING SONG

Once in Royal David's City (ELW 269)



1 The Spir - it sends us forth to serve; we go in
2 We go to com - fort those who mourn and set in 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.