

JOHN THE BAPTIZER PREPARES THE WAY FOR THE LORD

The Third Sunday of Advent

Gaudete

Sunday, December 17, 2017

WELCOME TO GOOD SHEPHERD!

We are so happy you could join us today! If we can assist you in any way with questions about our confession of faith, spiritual struggles, understanding our liturgical service, or any other need, please let us know. It is our prayer that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will strengthen and comfort you.

For your convenience, **Listening Devices** are available for those who need assistance in hearing the service. Please speak with an usher if you need one. A **Large-Print Service Folder** is also available if you are in need of it. A **Nursery** is also available and is equipped with a speaker so that a minimal amount of the service is missed. The nursery is located in the hallway just off the entryway (first door on left).

SERVICE NOTES FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The voice of the Baptizer cried out in the wilderness: "*Prepare the way of the Lord...*" (Isa. 40:1). John called the people to be made ready for the Messiah's coming through repentance, for "*all flesh is grass*" (Isa. 40:6). Now He asks from prison, "*Are you the one who is to come...?*" (Matt. 11:2). Jesus' works bear witness that He is. The sick are made well; the dead are raised, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. Their iniquity is pardoned; they have received from the Lord's hand double forgiveness for all their sins. The "*stewards of the mysteries of God*" (1 Cor. 4:1) still deliver Christ's overflowing forgiveness to the poor in spirit, comforting God's people with the word of the Gospel which stands forever. This Gospel produces rejoicing among all those who believe.

The Third Sunday of Advent is traditionally known as *Gaudete*, which is the first Latin word of the Historic Introit assigned to this Sunday from Philippians 4. *Gaudete* means "rejoice" (*Gaudete in Domino semper* = "Rejoice in the Lord always"). In some parishes, including our own, a rose-colored candle is used in place of another blue or purple candle. This lighter tone is meant to "soften" the tone of repentance and preparation within the Advent season with a message of joy and expectation.

HOLY COMMUNION IS OFFERED TODAY



As Christians who believe that the Bible is inspired by God and that every word written in it is God's holy word, we believe that we receive the body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. While this is something that goes beyond our human understanding, our faith allows us to accept this as true. God warns us in the Bible that anyone who doesn't understand this teaching or who denies this real presence of Christ's body and blood will do damage to his or her soul if not properly taught first (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

As a congregation we care about people and about the spiritual well-being of individuals, especially those attending the Lord's Table today. If you are a guest and desire to commune,

please speak to the pastor before the service. Our altar is open to those who confess oneness with us in doctrine, are not under church discipline in another congregation, and are members of our congregation, one of our sister congregations in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod [WELS], or a member of our sister synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod [ELS].

THE ADVENT WREATH



The traditional Advent Wreath is a combination of two very common symbols: light and the fir tree. From the early centuries of Christianity, it has been the practice to represent Christ by a burning candle. The fir tree also has a long history of religious use, and no doubt the idea of an Advent Wreath was inspired by the fir tree.

It seems that the Advent Wreath originated a few hundred years ago among the Lutherans of eastern Germany. A wreath of evergreens, made in various sizes, was either suspended from the ceiling or placed on a table. Four candles representing the four Sundays of Advent were fastened to the wreath.

Eventually, the use of the Advent Wreath became widespread and moved from the home into the church. The general symbolism of the Advent Wreath lies in the growing light of the wreath, increasing each week as we approach the birthday of Jesus, the Light of the world.

ABOUT THE SEASON OF ADVENT

Advent is a Latin word that means “coming.” The season of Advent is the four week period before Christmas that the Church uses to remember the “coming” of the Christ. We are celebrating that he came once as a baby in Bethlehem, and that he will come again at the end of time as King of kings and Lord of lords.

It is worth observing that it is a peculiar tradition of the church to begin a new year at the time of Advent—at the end of November or early December. This differs from all other accounts of how we measure time whatsoever. The reason for this is because the Church is counter-cultural. She does not number her days or measure her seasons so much by the motion of the sun as by the course of our Savior’s life, beginning and counting her year with Him at the center. So, as the days become darker, and the night becomes longer, the true Sun of Righteousness begins to rise upon the world to enlighten those who sit in spiritual darkness.

SERVING IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

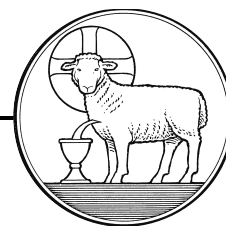
Preacher & Presiding Minister.....Pr. Nathanael Seelow
Pianist.....Michelle Reinsch
Ushers.....Phil Brei & Matthew Brei
Greeters.....Oscar and Arleta Bauch
Sound Technician.....Jamie Scott

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THE DIVINE SERVICE

The Service of Word & Sacrament — Christian Worship, pg. 26



PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord | CW 28



1 Let the earth now praise the Lord, Who has
2 What the fa - thers most de - sired, What the
3 A - bram's prom - ised great re - ward, Zi - on's
4 Wel - come, O my Sav - ior, now! Joy - ful,
5 Crush for me the ser - pent's head That, set



tru - ly kept his word And at last to
proph - ets' heart in - spired, What they longed for
help - er, Ja - cob's Lord— Him of two - fold
Lord, to you I bow. Come in - to my
free from doubt and dread, I may cling to



us did send Christ, the sin - ner's help and friend.
man - y a year Stands ful - filled in glo - ry here.
race be - hold— Tru - ly came, as long fore - told.
heart, I pray; Oh, pre - pare your - self a way.
you in faith, Safe - ly kept through life and death,

6 And, when you shall come again
As a glorious king to reign,
I with joy may see your face,
Freely ransomed by your grace.

INVOCATION

Please stand.

M The grace of our Lord ✙ Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C And also with you.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

- M** We light three Advent candles remembering Jesus, who came in history. He came into a world of sin and death.
- C** We remember Jesus, who came as the promised Messiah. John the Baptist prepared the way of the LORD.
- M** We hear his call to repent.
- C** We light three Advent candles as a sign of our repentance and desire for renewal.
- M** Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.
- C** Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.



ADVENT HYMN

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You | CW 18 (1,3)

During the hymn, three Advent candles are lit.

O Lord, how shall I meet you,
How welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you,
My Hope, my heart's Delight.
O Jesus, let your Word be
A lamp to light my way,
To show me how to please you,
To guide me ev'ry day.

Rejoice, then, you sad-hearted,
Who sit in deepest gloom,
Who mourn o'er joys departed
And tremble at your doom.
Despair not; he is near you,
He's standing at the door
Who best can help and cheer you
And bids you weep no more.

Introduction

NARRATION

Pastor Seelow

We all know how important a solid foundation is for a building. A building with a weak foundation may stand for a time, but eventually it will topple. Tonight, we once again hear the account of the birth of Jesus. Why do we set aside time to do this every year? The answer is that this is an important brick in the foundation of our faith. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 3:11, "No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." As we close out the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, we are reminded how God used Martin Luther to restore to the church the true teachings of Scripture. Luther summarized those teachings in five short statements: By Scripture Alone, By Faith Alone, Through Christ Alone, To God's Glory Alone, and By Grace Alone. These phrases form the foundation of the Lutheran Church, and because they are rooted in Scripture, they form the foundation of the Christian faith.

HYMN

Now Sing We, Now Rejoice | CW 34 (1,4)

Now sing we, now rejoice,
 Now raise to heav'n our voice;
 He from whom joy streameth
 Poor in a manger lies;
 Not so brightly beameth
 The sun in yonder skies.
 Thou my Savior art!
 Thou my Savior art!

Oh, where shall joy be found?
 Where but on heav'nly ground?
 Where the angels singing
 With all his saints unite,
 Sweetest praises bringing
 In heav'nly joy and light.
 Oh, that we were there!
 Oh, that we were there!

Part One: Sola Scriptura

BY SCRIPTURE ALONE

NARRATION

Austin Adelung

When the earth was new and people lived for hundreds of years, information was passed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth. Many generations were able to talk directly with Adam and Eve about the Garden of Eden, their fall into sin, and God's promise of a Savior. As the first people began dying and the number of generations increased, it became necessary to record God's promises. God tells us through his disciple Peter how this took place: "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20,21). So how do we know that the baby whose birth we are celebrating is our Savior? Because Scripture tells us. That news can be found nowhere else but in God's Word. God gave his people prophecies—pictures of coming events—so they would recognize the Messiah when he came.

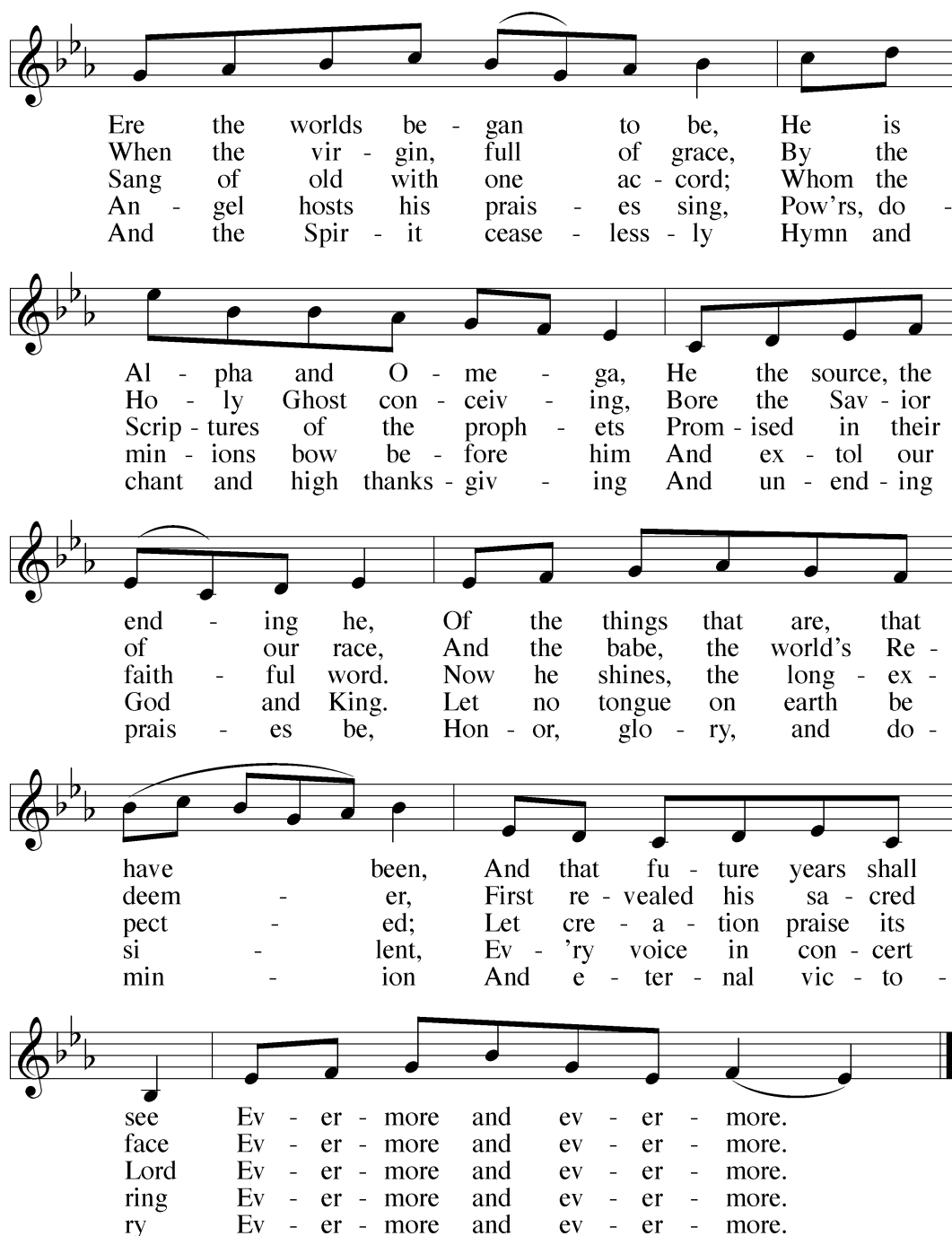
RECITATION

*Isaiah 7:14 — Judah**Micah 5:2 — Jaxon*

HYMN

Of the Father's Love Begotten | CW 35

1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten
 2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed
 3 This is he whom heav'n - taught sing - ers
 4 Let the heights of heav'n a - dore him,
 5 Christ, to you, with God the Fa - ther,



Ere the worlds be - gan to be, He is
When the vir - gin, full of grace, By the
Sang of old with one ac - cord; Whom the
An - gel hosts his prais - es sing, Pow'rs, do -
And the Spir - it cease - less - ly Hymn and

Al - pha and O - me - ga, He the source, the
Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing, Bore the Sav - ior
Scrip - tures of the proph - ets Prom - ised in their
min - ions bow be - fore him And ex - tol our
chant and high thanks - giv - ing And un - end - ing

end - ing he, Of the things that are, that
of our race, And the babe, the world's Re -
faith - ful word. Now he shines, the long - ex -
God and King. Let no tongue on earth be
prais - es be, Hon - or, glo - ry, and do -

have deem - been, And that fu - ture years shall
deem - er, First re - vealed his sa - cred
pect - ed; Let cre - a - tion praise its
si - lent, Ev - 'ry voice in con - cert
min - ion And e - ter - nal vic - to -

see Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
face Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
Lord Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ring Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
ry Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.

Part Two: *Sola Fide*

BY FAITH ALONE

NARRATION

Danica

In the eleventh chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, we find a definition for faith: "Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." When we receive

unsettling news, our reaction might be to doubt the truth of this news. In Scripture we see in Mary an example of a strong faith as she reacts to some potentially startling news. Mary was chosen by God to give birth to the Savior. Mary was not special in and of herself, but by faith—a gift of the Holy Spirit—she trusted God and his Word. Many people today say they have faith, but too often it is in someone or something that provides no lasting foundation. Scripture tells us that there is only one sure foundation for our faith—Jesus Christ.

RECITATION

Acts 4:12

C There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.

NARRATION

Thousands of years after making the first promise of a Savior, God finally sent the Messiah. Listen again to those familiar words proclaiming Jesus' birth:

RECITATION

*Luke 2:1-7 — Easton
Ana*

HYMN

Once in Royal David's City | CW 50 (1,2)

1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y
2 He came down to earth from heav - en

Stood a low God - ly cat - tle of shed, Where a
Who is God and Lord of all, And his

moth - er laid her ba - by In a man - ger
shel - ter was a sta - ble, And his cra - dle

for his bed; Mar - y was that moth - er mild,
was a stall; With the poor and mean and low - ly

Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
Lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.

Part Three: Soli Deo Gloria

TO GOD'S GLORY ALONE

NARRATION

Austin

Matthew, the author of the first book of the Bible's New Testament, records the angel's instructions to Joseph concerning Mary's child: "You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). We have no part in saving ourselves. The Bible tells us we are saved through Christ alone. So we give God alone all the glory in thankfulness for sending his Son to save us. Yes, today we see a humble baby in a manger; but the apostle Paul reminds us in his letter to the Philippians of Jesus' honored place:

RECITATION

Philippians 2:9-11

C Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

NARRATION

Austin

The angels gave us a good example when they praised God after telling the shepherds the news of Jesus' birth.

RECITATION

*Luke 2:8-14 — Dalton
Emily*

HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing | CW 61

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all you nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel!

Refrain

(additional stanza on next page)

- 3 Hail, the heav'nly Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth.
Refrain

Part Four: Sola Gratia

BY GRACE ALONE

NARRATION

Danica

In the coming weeks many of you will be opening your Christmas gifts. What did you do to earn those gifts? The moment we do something to earn them, they are no longer gifts. Out of love for us, God gave the most precious gift on that first Christmas night—the Savior who lived a perfect life and suffered and died to pay for our sins. Our sinful nature wants nothing to do with God and his precious gift. Despite that fact, God loves us still. God's love is undeserved. That is GRACE! The apostle Paul reminds us:

RECITATION

Ephesians 2:8,9

- Indeed, it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

NARRATION

After you have opened your gifts, do you keep quiet about them? Or do you tell all your friends what you have received? When the shepherds saw God's gift to the world, they did not keep the news to themselves. They spread the word so that others could experience God's grace too!

RECITATION

*Luke 2:15-20 — Danica
Creed
Austin*

The Sunday School will sing stanza 1.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 <i>To shepherds as they watched by night
Appeared a host of angels bright;
"Behold the tender babe," they said,
"In yonder lowly manger laid,</i></p> | <p>2 "At Bethlehem, in David's town,
As Micah did of old make known.
It is the Christ, your Lord and King,
Who will to all salvation bring."</p> |
| <p>3 Oh, then rejoice that through his Son
God is with sinners now at one;
Made like yourselves of flesh and blood,
Your brother is th' eternal God.</p> | <p>4 What harm can sin and death then do?
The true God now abides with you.
Let hell and Satan storm and rave,
Christ is your brother—you are safe.</p> |
| <p>5 Not one he will or can forsake;
His cov'nant he will never break.
Let ev'ry scheme the tempter try,
You may his utmost pow'rs defy.</p> | <p>6 You shall and must at last prevail.
God's own you are; you cannot fail.
To God forever sing your praise
With joy and patience all your days.</p> |

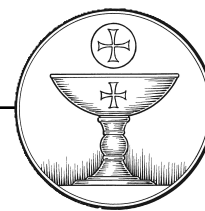
DEVOTION

RESPONSIVE PRAYER

Please stand.

- [M]** God our Wonderful Counselor, in your Word you reveal to us who you are and what we are.
- [C]** Through your Scriptures alone you show us that you are righteous and we are not. You show us that you are love and that we are forgiven.
- [M]** Mighty God, you provide us with certain hope and redeem us from our sin.
- [C]** Through faith alone we hold to your promises, and through Christ alone we receive salvation.
- [M]** Everlasting Father, you rule the universe, the church, and the hearts of your people.
- [C]** To you alone belongs all glory and praise!
- [M]** Prince of Peace, your love covers us and fills us and moves us.
- [C]** Through grace alone we receive new life and eternal hope.
- [M]** Faithful God, move us to rejoice in our salvation and to share eagerly this Good News with others.
- [C]** Help us to live for you through Scripture alone, by faith alone, in Christ alone, under grace alone, and to your glory alone. Amen.

The Service of the Sacrament



M Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we gather to celebrate the Testament of our Lord, let us take to heart the words of Christ by which he imparted to us his body and blood for the remission of our sins.

Let us remember and give thanks for his boundless love which he proved to us when he redeemed us from God's wrath, from sin, death, and from hell by his own precious blood.

Let us faithfully confess that in this bread and wine—which is his body and his blood—we receive the pledge and guarantee of his forgiveness.

Let us receive and enjoy this Sacrament according to the command that Christ gave, and glorify the name of the one who has so richly blessed us with this meal.

C Amen.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY — *Sanctus*

Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 118



LORD'S PRAYER — *Pater Noster*

Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

- C** 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.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver ✙ us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours now and forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION — *Verba*

*Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-24;
Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25*

- M** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat. This is ✙ my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it all of you; this is ✙ my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

PEACE OF THE LORD — *Pax Domini*

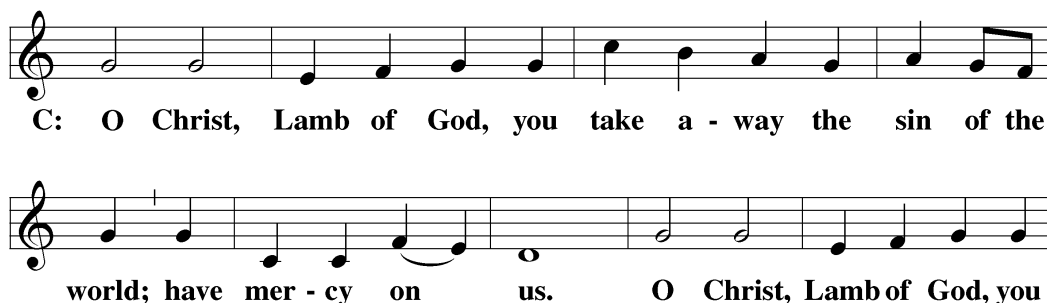
John 20:19

- M** The peace of the Lord be with you always.



LAMB OF GOD — *Agnus Dei*

John 1:29





Be seated.

DISTRIBUTION

*Good Shepherd confesses and practices the Biblical teaching of a **Closed Communion**. We ask that only members of the Wisconsin Synod [WELS] or the Evangelical Lutheran Synod [ELS] join us at the Lord's Table. If you have questions concerning our communion practice, or would like to inquire about how you, too, can commune with us, please speak with the Pastor following the service.*

*Those who will be receiving Holy Communion today may wish to read **Personal Preparation for Holy Communion**, found on page 156 in the front section of the hymnal. This page helps us put into practice what the Bible encourages: "Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup." (1 Corinthians 11:28)*

Prayer suggestions for before and after receiving the Lord's Supper can be found in the hymnal on pages 10-11 and 134-139.

In dismissing the communicants, the minister says:

- ☒ Now, may this true body and blood strengthen and keep you in the true faith to life everlasting. Your sins ✚ are forgiven. Go in peace. Amen.

THANK THE LORD

1 Chronicles 16:8-10

Please stand.





POST-COMMUNION ANTIPHON

M Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,

1 Corinthians 11:26

C we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

M Let us pray.

Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



BLESSING

Numbers 6:22-27

M The LORD bless you and keep you.

The LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

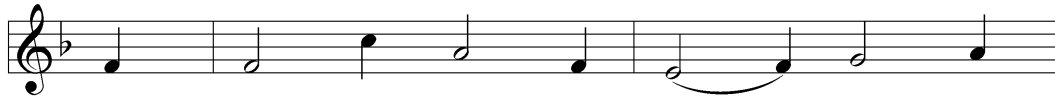
The LORD look on you with favor and ☩ give you peace.



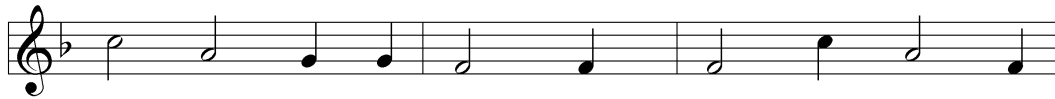
Be seated.

RECESSIONAL HYMN

Arise, O Christian People | CW 14



1 A - rise, O Chris - tian peo - ple! Pre -
 2 Pre - pare the way be - fore him; Pre -
 3 The hum - ble heart and low - ly God
 4 Pre - pare my heart, Lord Je - sus; Turn



pare your - selves to - day. Pre - pare to greet the
 pare for him the best. Cast out what would of -
 rais - es up on high; Be - neath his feet in
 not from me a - side, And help me to re -



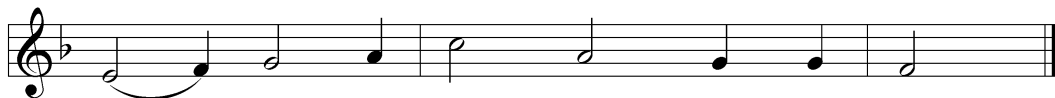
Sav - ior, Who takes your sins a - way. To
 fend him, This great, this heav'n - ly guest. Make
 ter - ror The haugh - ty soul shall lie. The
 ceive you This bless - ed Ad - vent - tide. From



us by grace a - lone The truth and
 straight, make plain the way: The low - ly
 heart sin - cere and right, That heeds God's
 stall and man - ger low Come now to



light were giv - en; The prom - ised Lord from
 val - leys rais - ing, The heights of pride a -
 in - vi - ta - tion And makes true prep - a -
 dwell with - in me; I'll sing your prais - es



heav - en To all the world is shown.
 bas - ing, His path all e - ven lay.
 ra - tion— It is the Lord's de - light.
 glad - ly And forth your glo - ry show.

