

Hope Lutheran Church
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Reverend Matthew Converse, Pastor
Kirsten Jines, Preschool Director
Joyce Dubach, Organist
December 21, 2025
Fourth Sunday of Advent



Introduction to the day

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

Food pantry need: cereal and soup
Attendance for December 14, 2025 - 36

PRELUDE

please stand if you are able.

GATHERING *The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

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,
whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Long-expected God,
**we confess that we look to ourselves
for the peace and security only you can provide.
We reach for swords and spears,
reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.
We become impatient while waiting
and weary of keeping awake.
Free us from self-reliance,
and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.
Increase our trust in God's timing,
and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised.
Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve,
but according to God's own righteousness.

✠ You are freed and forgiven,
saved by grace,
and ready to welcome the Savior.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG

(ELW 265)

. **The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came**

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924

Music: Basque carol; arr. C. Edgar Pettman, 1865-1943, and John Wickham

GREETING

During this time, the presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.

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.

Advent Wreath

Week Four FOURTH SUNDAY - PRAISE the Light

Responsive Litany

Advent is a time to praise.

Praise the Lord, and rejoice in his goodness.

Advent is a time to remember God's faithfulness.

Praise the Lord, and rejoice in his goodness.

Advent is a time to remember God's blessings.

Praise the Lord, and rejoice in his goodness.

Advent is a time to remember God's promises.

Praise the Lord, and rejoice in his goodness.

Advent is a time to celebrate the end of darkness.

Praise to Jesus, the Light of the World.

Candle Lighting

This morning we light four candles. This candle reminds us that Advent is a time to give praise for what God has done, for what God is doing, and for what God will bring to completion. As the light of Advent grows brighter, it reminds us that we move closer to receiving the gift of a Savior — Jesus, the Light of the World.

Closing Prayer

Let us pray, **Father in heaven, we look to you from a distance; from a world filled with darkness. Help us to seek the light of your truth, as we remember your promises and offer our praise for your amazing gifts to us. Amen.**

LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH

Jesus, the Light of the World

Congregational Part

ELDERKIN

GEORGE D. ELDERKIN

(Sing twice)



We'll walk in the light, beau-ti - ful
light, come, where the dew-drops of mer-cy shine
bright, O, shine all a-round us by day and by
night, Je - sus, the light of the world.

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD *God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

A reading from Isaiah.

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph [|] like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

² **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, [|] and Manasseh,**
stir up your strength and [|] come to help us.

³ Restore [|] us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we [|] shall be saved.

⁴ **O LORD [|] God of hosts,**
how long will your anger fume when your [|] people pray?

⁵ You have fed them with the [|] bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of [|] tears to drink.

⁶ **You have made us the derision [|] of our neighbors,**
and our enemies laugh [|] us to scorn.

⁷ Restore us, O [|] God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we [|] shall be saved.

¹⁷ **Let your hand be upon the one at [|] your right hand,**
the one you have made so strong [|] for yourself.

¹⁸ And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

¹⁹ **Restore us, O LORD [|] God of hosts;**
let your face shine upon us, and we [|] shall be saved.

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

A reading from Romans.

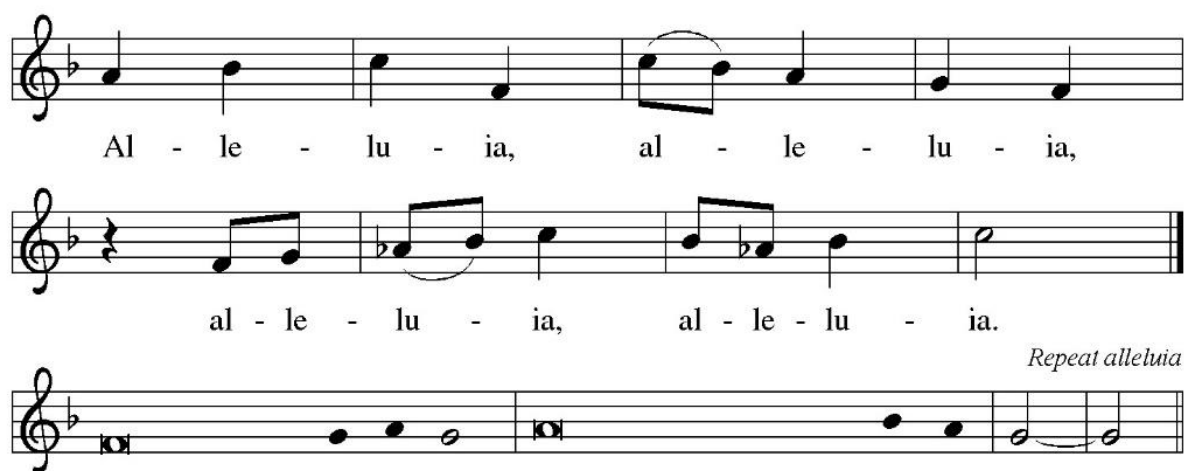
¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from

sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

HYMN OF THE DAY

(ELW 257)

• O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Text: *Psalteriolum Canticum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite Music: French processional, 15th cent.

CREED

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

**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.**

**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. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

PEACE

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

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

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.

The assembly is seated.

MEAL *God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

OFFERING

(ELW 253)

He Came Down

Text: Cameroon traditional

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

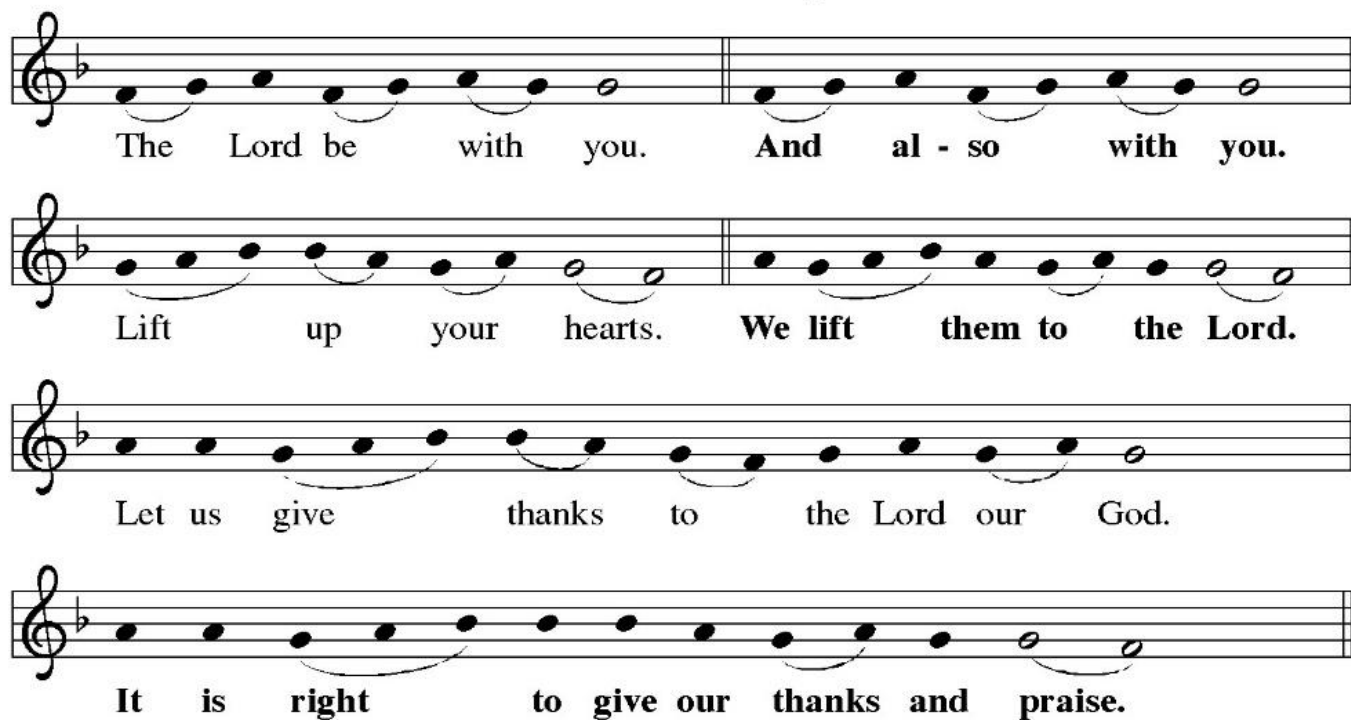
OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOGUE



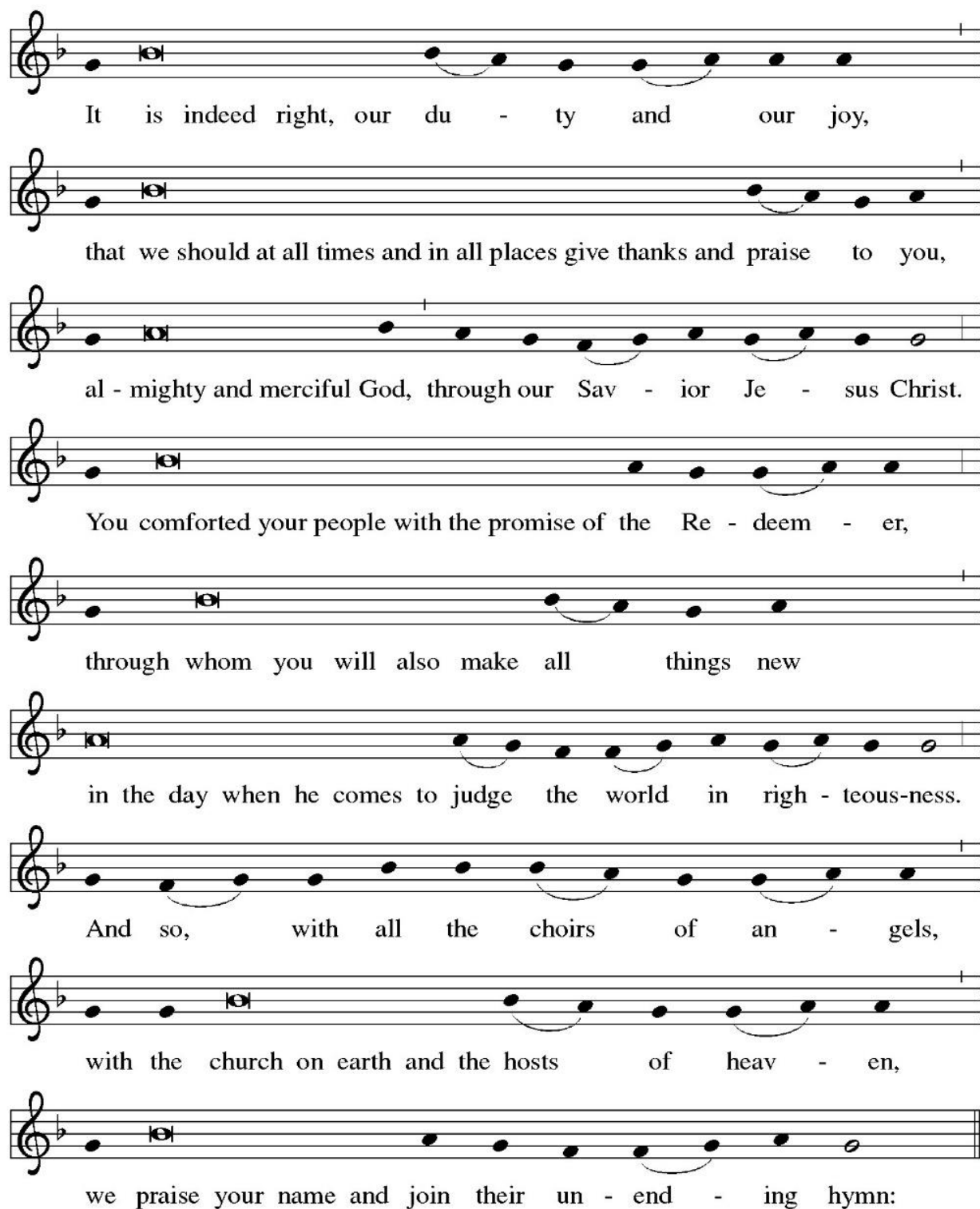
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

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.

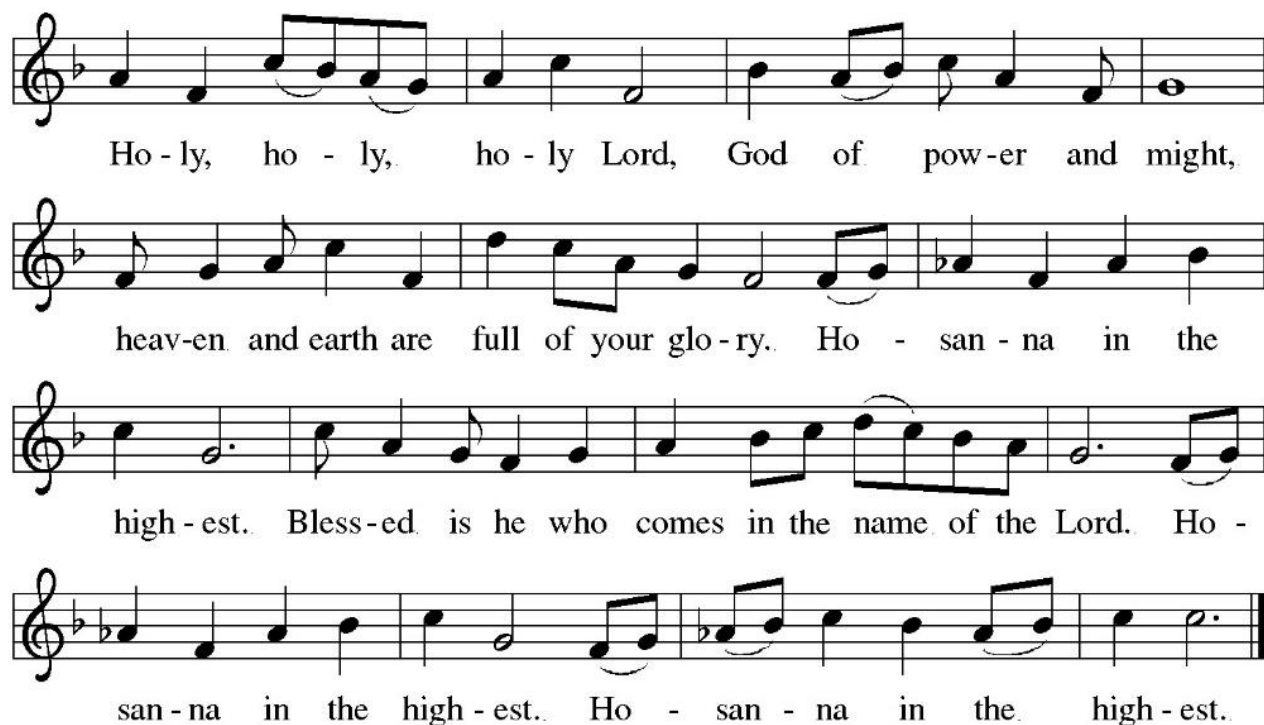
Preface



It is indeed right, our du - ty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you,
al - mighty and merciful God, through our Sav - ior Je - sus Christ.
You comforted your people with the promise of the Re - deem - er,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righ - teous-ness.
And so, with all the choirs of an - gels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heav - en,
we praise your name and join their un - end - ing hymn:

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Holy, Holy, Holy



Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy God, the Beginning and the End,
our Salvation and our Hope,
we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty.
When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair,
you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.

At this end of the ages
your Son Jesus came to bring us your love
and to heal all the suffering world.

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 life, death, and resurrection,
we await his coming again
in righteousness and peace.

Send your Spirit on us
and on this bread and wine we share:
strengthen our faith,
increase our hope,
and bring to birth the justice and joy 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

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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

Here is life. God is with us.

Come, receive what God has promised.

COMMUNION

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

and each person may respond **Amen.**

The ministers commune either after or before others commune.

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.

COMMUNION SONG

In a Far-Off Place, Jesus Comes



1 In a far - off place, Je - sus comes to earth.
2 For the poor in heart, Je - sus comes to earth.
3 In our deep - est night, Je - sus comes to earth:



Sheep and cat - tle grace the site. As the
Hum - ble shep - herds start the news. For each
ra - diant star to light our way. Sum-mer's



an - gel songs be - gin, like the whis - per of the wind,
home-less in - fant born, for the meek and those who mourn,
heat or win - ter's chill, with a warm and lov - ing will,



na - ture's hope a - wakes a - gain; Je - sus comes.
for the wear - y and the worn, Je - sus comes.
to a world that needs him still, Je - sus comes.

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

Music: TENTH NIGHT, Sally Ann Morris, b. 1952

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Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

God our host,
at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.
Send us forth, eager to share the feast,
welcome the stranger,
and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Sending *God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

Blessing

May God who comes among us,
Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.

Amen.

Sending Song

Canticle of the Turning

(ELW 723)

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat
Music: Irish traditional

Dismissal

Go in peace. Keep awake. **Thanks be to God.**

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ANNOUNCEMENT

BREAD LOAF OFFERING - DECEMBER – The Center For Whitley County Youth

- Food Pantry needs, with the colder weather the need for Soup increases. While we still need Cereal and Peanut Butter, we could also use Soup as well.
- Our annual congregational meeting will be held on January 18th right after church service. The church will be providing Fried Chicken and drinks. We will be passing around a sign up sheet for sides and desserts as we get closer to the date. Please put this on your calendar. Thank You

- December's Bread Loaf Offering will be going to "The Center For Whitley County Youth". The Center has served the youth of Whitley county for the past 20 years and has served over 10,000 students. Flyers and information will be available in the Parish Hall. If you have any questions, see Joe Freiburger
- **Holiday Service Location and Time**
 Last year there was concern that we did not have a late Christmas Eve Service. We have brought that back this year.
 Christmas Eve 7pm Grace no communion
 9pm Hope no communion
 11pm Grace no communion

Weekly Agenda at Grace Lutheran Church

Monday December 22, 2025

No school – winter break

AA 7:30 pm

Tuesday December 23, 2025

T.O.P.S 9:30 am

Wednesday December 24, 2025

Men's Breakfast 8 am

Thursday December 25, 2025

AA 7:30 pm

Al-non 7:30 pm

Friday December 26, 2025

Pastor's Day Off

Saturday December 27, 2025

Sunday December 28, 2025

Worship @ Hope 8:15 am

Worship @ Grace 10:00 am

Fellowship 11:15 am

We have new sign-up sheets in the parish hall, for coffee hour. Coffee hour will be after church service, for anyone that would like to stay.