

# The Season of Advent



In this time of upheaval, we find trust is fragile, truth contested, and spaces between us feel harder to cross. Divisions stretch far and wide. The constant churn of political tension leaves many feeling anxious and uncertain. Community feels strained, and connection is harder to come by. Hearts are weary, and souls unsettled, and people of all perspectives are searching—not just for answers, but for understanding, healing, and hope. This ache is not weakness; it is a holy longing—a sacred desire for a world made whole. From this longing comes the will to dream—a persistent courage to imagine, resist, and rebuild a better world.

Sunday, December 14, 2025

All Saints Lutheran Church  
Lilburn, Georgia

# GATHERING

## **Prelude & Welcome**

### **Confession & Forgiveness**

*The assembly stands in body or spirit.*

In the name of the Holy Trinity, ☩ the Lover, the Beloved, and the Love.

**Amen.**

We gather together in this place:

**prophets and dreamers, singers and poets,**

we who dare to imagine a world renewed;

**we who dare to dream God's dream.**

Answering the invitation of God,

who loves justice and promises us mercy, let us confess our sin.

**God of joy,**

**you created this world for joy and flourishing.**

**We confess that we construct barriers to protect our happiness, even at the expense of others. We fill ourselves with good things, taking no heed of those who are left empty.**

**We ignore oppression when it benefits our interests.**

**We dismiss the brokenhearted when we feel inconvenienced.**

**We crave power over liberation.**

**Remember us in compassion and come to our aid. Tear down our dividing walls.**

**Scatter our pride and reawaken the imagination of our hearts. Lead us again in the work of repair and restoration.**

**We pray in the name of Jesus.**

**Amen.**

God clothes you in salvation

and covers you in righteousness. Rejoice and take heart:

in grace, you are forgiven,

through the saving love of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

## Gathering Hymn

### 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;  
qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.  
crown you with light, 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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## **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.**

## **Advent Candle Lighting**

**Bruce Kraus**

The birth of Jesus has been told and retold a thousand times and in a thousand ways. Its impact cannot be contained in any one perspective. But who is telling the story changes how we hear it, how we imagine it, how we experience it.

We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold.

We light the candle of peace because peace requires us to pay attention to the needs of those around us.

Imagine two cousins embracing and sharing life-changing news with one another. One, an older woman, who knew the physical risks of bearing a child late in life. The other, a not-yet-married woman, who was aware of the social stigmas in her society. Yet each chose joy over fear. Imagine the pure joy of this wonderful occasion.

When Elizabeth shares her surprising news with Mary, her joy doubles upon hearing that Mary is also pregnant. The two women sing of joy as they sense, literally, in their bodies that change is coming.

A joy of defiance that good news perseveres even in the most difficult of circumstances. From Isaiah to Mary and Elizabeth, from biblical times to the present, joy can be found. Joy is not a denial of harm that is happening; it is a refusal to let injustice define all reality.

A joy that moves from personal experience to communal transformation in the song that Elizabeth and Mary proclaimed, and we proclaim today.

A joy our world needs to experience this season, not to hide from what is wrong, but to strengthen God's people to bear a world that is not right.

**Today, we also light the candle of joy because joy sustains us in the midst of uncertainty.**

## Prayer of the Day

God of surprises,  
you interrupt our world with joy and hope beyond our wildest dreams. When we feel forgotten or despair, bless us with your holy joy. When our world feels barren, bless us with the gift of possibility. We pray as people of deep faith, entrusting ourselves and our world to the holy unknown, brought to birth in Jesus, our light and life.

**Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## WORD

### First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

**Bruce Kraus**

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me  
because the Lord has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and release to the prisoners,\*  
2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,\*  
3 to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.\*  
4 They shall build up the ancient ruins;  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.\*

8 For I, the Lord, love justice,  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.\*  
9 Their descendants shall be known among the nations  
and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.\*

10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord;  
 my whole being shall exult in my God,  
 for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;  
 he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
 as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland  
 and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

11 For as the earth brings forth its shoots  
 and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
 so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
 to spring up before all the nations.

Word of God. Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Gospel Acclamation

*The assembly stands in body or spirit.*

### Unexpected and Mysterious

**Verse 1 only**



1 Un - ex - pect - ed and mys - te - rious is the gen - tle  
 2 In a mo - men - tar - y meet - ing of e - ter - ni -  
 3 We are called to pon - der mys - t'ry and a - wait the



word of grace. Ev - er - lov - ing and sus - tain -  
 ty and time, Mar - y learned that she would car -  
 com - ing Christ, to em - bod - y God's com - pas -



ing is the peace of God's em - brace. If we fal - ter  
 ry both the mor - tal and di - vine. Then she learned of  
 sion for each frag - ile hu - man life. God is with us



in our cour - age and we doubt what we have known, God is  
 God's com - pas - sion, of E - liz - a - beth's great joy, and she  
 in our long - ing to bring heal - ing to the earth, while we



faith - ful to con - sole us as a moth - er tends her own.  
 ran to greet the wom - an who would rec - og - nize her boy.  
 watch with joy and won - der for the prom - ised Sav - ior's birth.

Text: Jeannette M. Lindholm, b. 1961

Music: ST. HELENA, Calvin Hampton, 1938-1984

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## **Gospel Reading: Luke 1:39-55**

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter.

### **Glory to you, O Lord.**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.  
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name;  
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.\*  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.\*  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly;\*  
he has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.\*  
He has come to the aid of his child Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,\*  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."\*

This is the Holy Gospel of the Lord.

### **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## **Sermon**

## Hymn of the Day

*The assembly stands in body or spirit.*

### We Are Waiting for Jesus



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.

Text: John Helgen, b. 1957

Music: JESUS BRINGS PEACE, John Helgen

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## The Apostles' 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

*The assembly is seated.*

**Bruce Kraus**

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.

*The assembly kneels or sits for prayer.*

God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you.

God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith.

We offer to you now the concerns of our hearts, either silently or aloud.

*Additional Intercessions*

*Rev. Ashton Roberts*

*A brief silence*

- *We pray for Roger and the Boyer family; Dave; Robin and Cathy; Faith; Paige.*
- *We pray for Joe; Byron; Kathryn; Ray; Todd.*
- *We pray for Flossie; Jim and Sharon; Charlie; Alex; John.*

*God of grace,*

***hear our prayer.***

- *We pray for all people of the world impacted by ongoing war, conflict, and violence, especially those caught between Ukraine and Russia; between Israel and Hamas; between Pakistan and Afghanistan; in South Sudan; in Myanmar; in Eastern Congo.*
- *We pray for schools everywhere, that all students and those who care for them may feel safe and free from fear.*
- *We pray for those affected by rain and flooding in the northwestern United States and earthquakes in Japan.*
- *We pray for protection, provision, and justice for immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and advocates.*
- *We pray for access to affordable and reliable healthcare.*
- *We pray for those who seek shelter like the Holy Family.*
- *We pray for justice around the world and here at home, that God may delight when we are creators of justice and joy, compassion, and peace.*

*God of grace,*

***hear our prayer.***

When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant (especially we pray for Global Refuge and Inspiritus). God of grace,

***hear our prayer.***

As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith (especially Mary, mother of Jesus, John of the Cross). May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. 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.***

*The assembly stands in body or spirit.*

## Peace

The peace of Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## MEAL

### Offering & Offering Music

*Unexpected & Mysterious* (ELW, #258, **v. 3 only**)

*The assembly stands in body or spirit.*

#### Unexpected and Mysterious



**Verse 3 only**

1 Un - ex - pect - ed and mys - te - rious is the gen - tle  
2 In a mo - men - tar - y meet - ing of e - ter - ni -  
3 We are called to pon - der mys - t'ry and a - wait the



word of grace. Ev - er - lov - ing and sus - tain -  
ty and time, Mar - y learned that she would car -  
com - ing Christ, to em - bod - y God's com - pas -



ing is the peace of God's em - brace. If we fal - ter  
ry both the mor - tal and di - vine. Then she learned of  
sion for each frag - ile hu - man life. God is with us



in our cour - age and we doubt what we have known, God is  
God's com - pas - sion, of E - liz - a - beth's great joy, and she  
in our long - ing to bring heal - ing to the earth, while we



faith - ful to con - sole us as a moth - er tends her own.  
ran to greet the wom - an who would rec - og - nize her boy.  
watch with joy and won - der for the prom - ised Sav - ior's birth.

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## Offering Prayer

Bruce Kraus

*Let us pray.*

Holy God, we bring our gifts and offerings to you  
because the voices of the prophets remind us  
of something bigger, something greater  
than any system this world offers us.

We believe when we trust you with our resources,  
the kin(g)dom of God comes much closer to reality on earth.  
Help us steward these gifts to create abundant life and love.

**Amen.**

## The Great Thanksgiving

ELW, pg. 107

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.**

## Preface

ELW, pg. 108

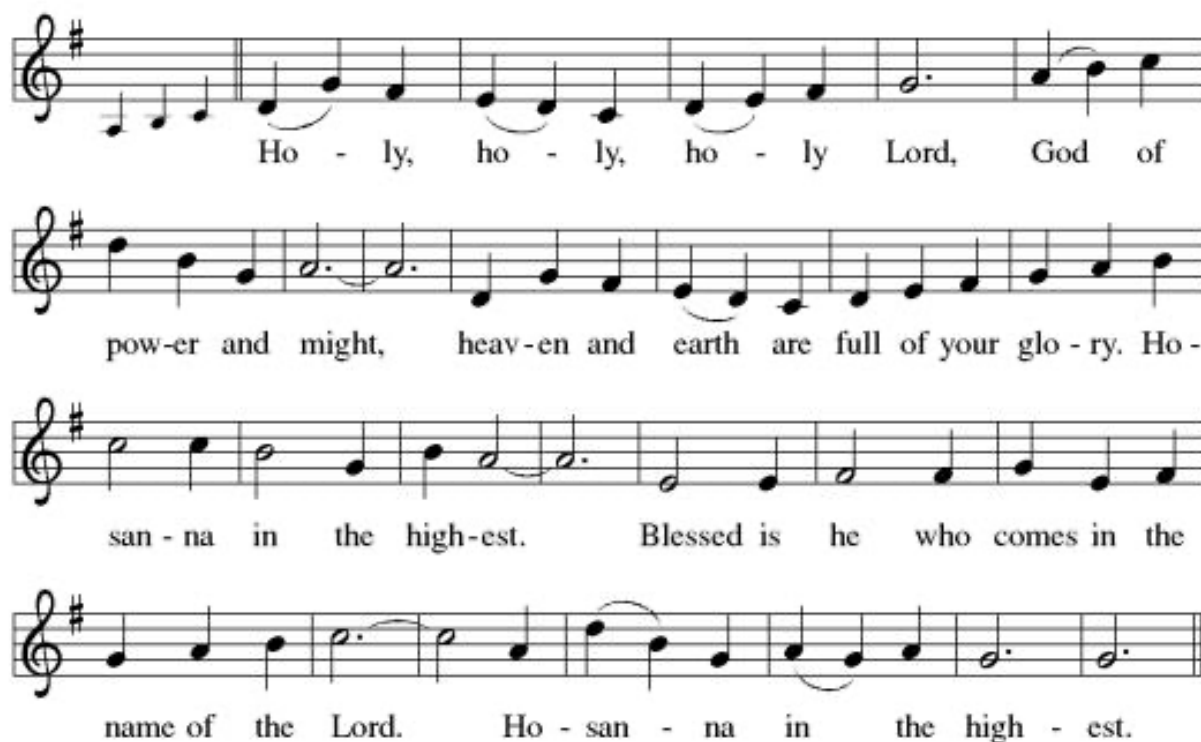
It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,  
through whom you will also make all things new  
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

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:

## Sanctus

ELW, pg. 108



## Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy are you, and blessed is your name.

You, O God, never leave us.

You, who came to model a new kind of power  
using mercy and not might, love and not hate,  
you can reorient us and give us the will to dream once more.

We receive this bread and this cup in the  
same spirit that you demonstrated to us  
by your words and actions.

On the night you gathered your friends to eat together  
in the midst of their fear and your own,  
you transformed bread into an element of grace,  
you blessed it, broke it, and shared, saying  
Take and eat, this is my body broken for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

On that same night  
you transformed wine into an element of grace,  
you blessed, it, poured it, and shared, saying  
Take and drink, this is my blood poured out for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Because of these simple and remarkable acts,  
we offer ourselves to be your hands and feet,  
and we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**Christ was executed. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Holy God,  
we have seen and heard the dreams of the prophets.  
We have witnessed the power-defying acts of Jesus.  
Thank you for this abundant feast with enough for all to come and be fed.  
We ask that you transform these gifts of bread and cup  
into sustaining hope and encouragement to live a life full of prophetic imagination.

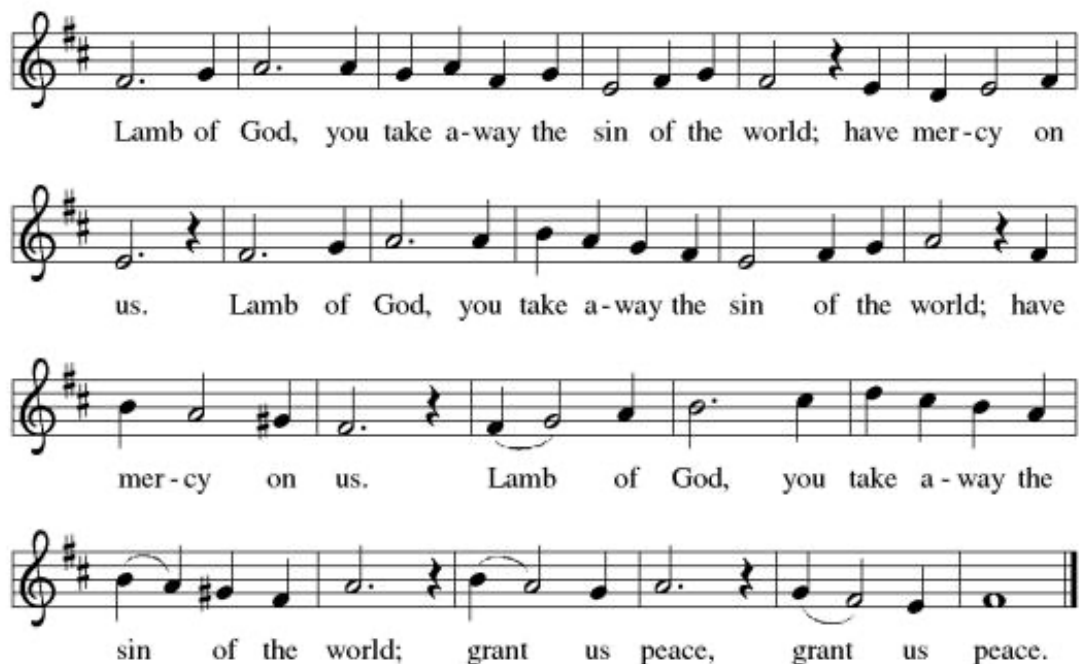
With confidence, we pray the prayer you taught us to pray, saying:

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Creator, 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.  
Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

### **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, grant us peace.

## **Invitation to Communion**

Here is life.

God is with us.

Come, receive what God has promised.

## **Music for Communion**

*The assembly stands in body or spirit.*

## **Prayer After Communion**

**Bruce Kraus**

Creator of all good things,

you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of blessing, small in their presentation, yet magnificent in our holy imagination. May the joy of the Lord's table accompany us on our journeys from here.

**Amen.**

## **SENDING**

### **Blessing**

To embody love is more than sentiment.

It is choosing, every day, to see the worth and good in ourselves, others, and this world.

So go forth from this place modeling merciful love, remembering God is love.

Though it may be difficult to understand, we see what it means modeled in Jesus.

May blessings flow from your mouth as you seek to be love in this world.

**Amen.**

## Sending Hymn

### People, Look East



1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing  
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is  
3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the  
4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new

of the year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble,  
plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,  
bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,  
life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming

trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look  
that in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look  
bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look  
with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look

east, and sing to - day— Love, the Guest, is on the way.  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Star, is on the way.  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881–1965

Music: BESANÇON, French carol

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## Announcements

### Dismissal

Go out into the world embracing the will to dream, and may joy wash over you, bringing renewed strength for the days ahead!

**Thanks be to God and we will!**