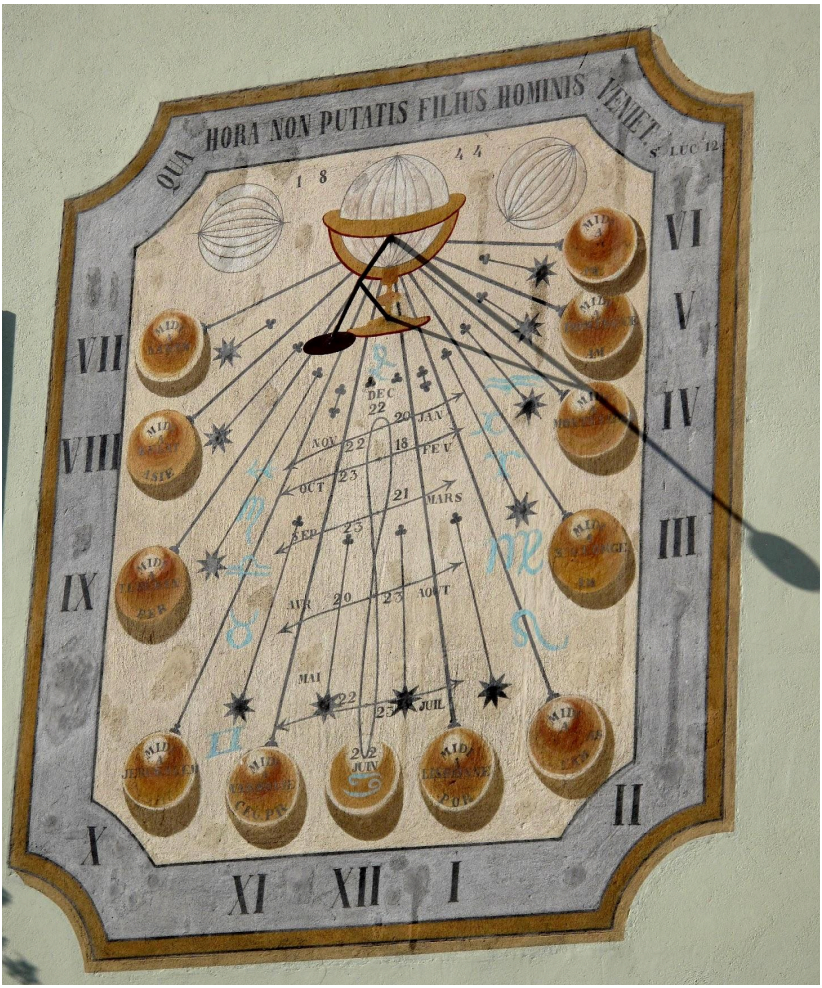
December 1, 2024
The First Sunday of Advent

'The Son of Man will come at an unexpected hour' - Luke 12:40



Sundial of the rectory of the Assumption church of Samoëns, France

Visitor Information

Welcome in the name of Christ! We rejoice that you have joined us this morning. Please sign our Guest Book in the narthex after worship if you have not already done so.

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated each Lord's Day. Further information may be found on page 15 of today's bulletin.

Children of any age are welcome in worship. Activity bulletins and soft, quiet bags of religious objects, books, and coloring pages are available at the bookshelves by the stairs and may be returned after worship.

A handicapped-accessible restroom is located in the Narthex. Additional restrooms are available in the Undercroft.

If you have any questions, please ask an Usher, the Pastor, or any of our church members for assistance. We will be glad to answer as best we can! May God bless and inspire you today.

St Stephen Lutheran Church is a congregation of the North American Lutheran Church (www.thenalc.org). The NALC has adopted the following Core Values:

NALC
North American Lutheran Church

Christ-Centered
We confess the apostolic faith in Jesus Christ according to the Holy Scriptures. We affirm the authority of the Scriptures as the authoritative source and norm, "according to which all doctrines should and must be judged" (Formula of Concord). We accept the ecumenical creeds and the Lutheran Confessions as true witnesses to the Word of God.

Mission-Driven

We believe that the mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and to make disciples for Christ. We believe that making disciples — in our congregations, in our communities and nations, and around the world — must be a priority of the Church in the present age.

Traditionally-Grounded
We affirm the ecumenical creeds and the faithful witness of the Church across time and space. We endorse the form and practices of the universal Church that are consistent with Scripture, particularly the office of the ministry and the tradition of worship under Word and Sacrament. We seek dialogue and fellowship with other Lutheran churches and with faithful Christians of other confessions.

Congregationally-Focused
We strive to be a church that is organized to facilitate the ministries of local congregations in a posture of servant-hood and a spirit of partnership, through the provision of resources, connections and information.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The color blue, used for the vestments and paraments of Advent, is redolent of the deep blue of twilight just before dawn, symbolic of the Christian hope for the coming of the Light of the World.

FIRST READING: The nation of Judah was defeated in war by the King of Babylon in 587. Jerusalem was razed, the Temple destroyed, and the Davidic line of kings ended. Jeremiah proclaims that this happened because of the sin of Judah. However, here Jeremiah's screed of warning and judgment gives way to the promise of God's salvation. 'A righteous Branch will spring up for David,' meaning that a Davidic king will again rise after the shame and sadness of the Babylonian exile. Christians believe this promise was fulfilled in Jesus: Son of David, Son of God.

SECOND READING: Paul asks God to strengthen the hearts of the Thessalonians, as they look forward to the promised day of redemption. Paul prays that they may be 'blameless' before God the Father. Of course, this does not mean that we will make no mistakes. Rather, it has to do with the attitude of faith, hope, and love which is implanted in us by the power of the

Holy Spirit. The Spirit calls us to daily repentance and faith, so that we may rejoice in God's promises each day that he gives us.

GOSPEL: Jesus speaks about his return to earth in glory. It is the day of God's redemption; the day God 'cashes in' and brings the people whom Jesus has bought with his blood into the everlasting kingdom. In this reading, Jesus both encourages his disciples to look forward to that time, but also to keep alert so that sin, death and the devil, which seem to reign on earth, do not gain the upper hand. Their hearts are not to be 'weighed down,' but instead they are to be alert and pray for strength.

Agnus Day appears with the permission of www.agnusday.org

OPENING MUSIC *Christe, der du bist Tag und Licht,* BWV 1096

(Christ You are the Day and Light)
J.S.Bach, 1685-1750

Music Notes:
A central theme of Advent is light illuminating the darkness. Both the prelude and communion anthem define the source of this light, Jesus Christ. The Bach prelude, "Christ, You are the Day and Light," is from the "Neumeister Chorales," recently discovered Bach Organ works (1985). Annette's anthem, "God is Light" invites us to follow the light of the Good Shepherd, who gives us peace.

Stand and face the processional cross.

HYMN **Green LBW 22** *The Advent of Our God*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AT THE ADVENT WREATH

The day of justice and righteousness dawns upon us.
Illumined by the light of the first Advent candle,
we turn to God with sorrow for sin and hope for salvation.

Heavenly Father, you have created a universe of light;
forgive us when we return to darkness.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world:
cleanse and heal our blinded sight.
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Holy Spirit, you give us light in our hearts:
renew us in faith and love.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ
has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive you your sins,
open your eyes to his truth,
strengthen you to do his will
and give you the joy of his kingdom.
Amen

APOSTOLIC 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
Stir up your power, O Lord, and come.

Protect us by your strength
and save us from the threatening dangers of our sins,
for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Amen

CALL TO THE WORD

Show us your ways, O Lord,
and teach us your paths. *Psalm 25:3*

Let us hear the Word of the Lord.

Sit

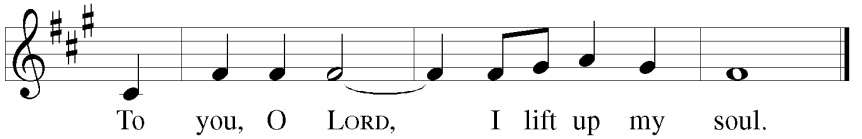
FIRST READING **Jeremiah 33:14-16**

14 The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill
the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of
Judah. 15 In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous
Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and
righteousness in the land. 16 In those days Judah will be saved
and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which
it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

The Word of the Lord.

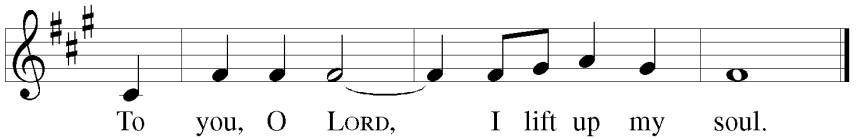
Thanks be to God.

PSALM 25:1-9



1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my | trust in you;*
let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph | over me.
2 **Let none who look to you be | put to shame;***
let the treacherous be disappointed | in their schemes.

[3] Show me your | ways, O LORD,*
and teach | me your paths.
[4] Lead me in your | truth and teach me,*
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all | the day long.
[5] Remember, O LORD, your compas- | sion and love,*
for they are from | everlasting.
[6] Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;*
remember me according to your love
and for the sake of your good- | ness, O LORD.
[7] Gracious and upright | is the LORD;*
therefore he teaches sinners | in his way.
[8] He guides the humble in | doing right*
and teaches his way | to the lowly.
[9] All the paths of the LORD are | love and faithfulness*
to those who keep his covenant and his | testimonies.



SECOND READING **1 Thessalonians 3:9-13**

[9]How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? [10]Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

[11]Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. [12]And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. [13]And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

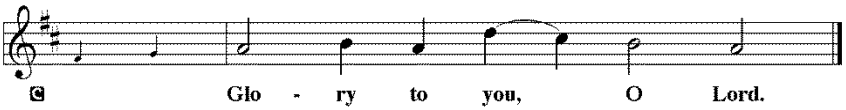
Stand

VERSE Psalm 85:7 Setting by Robert Wetzler

Alleluia. Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and give us your salvation. Alleluia.

GOSPEL **Luke 21:25-36**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

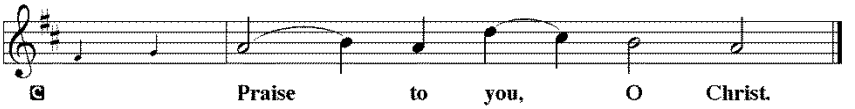


[Jesus said:] 25"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. 26People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. 28Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

29Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; 30as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. 31So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. 33Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

34"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, 35like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

The Gospel of the Lord.

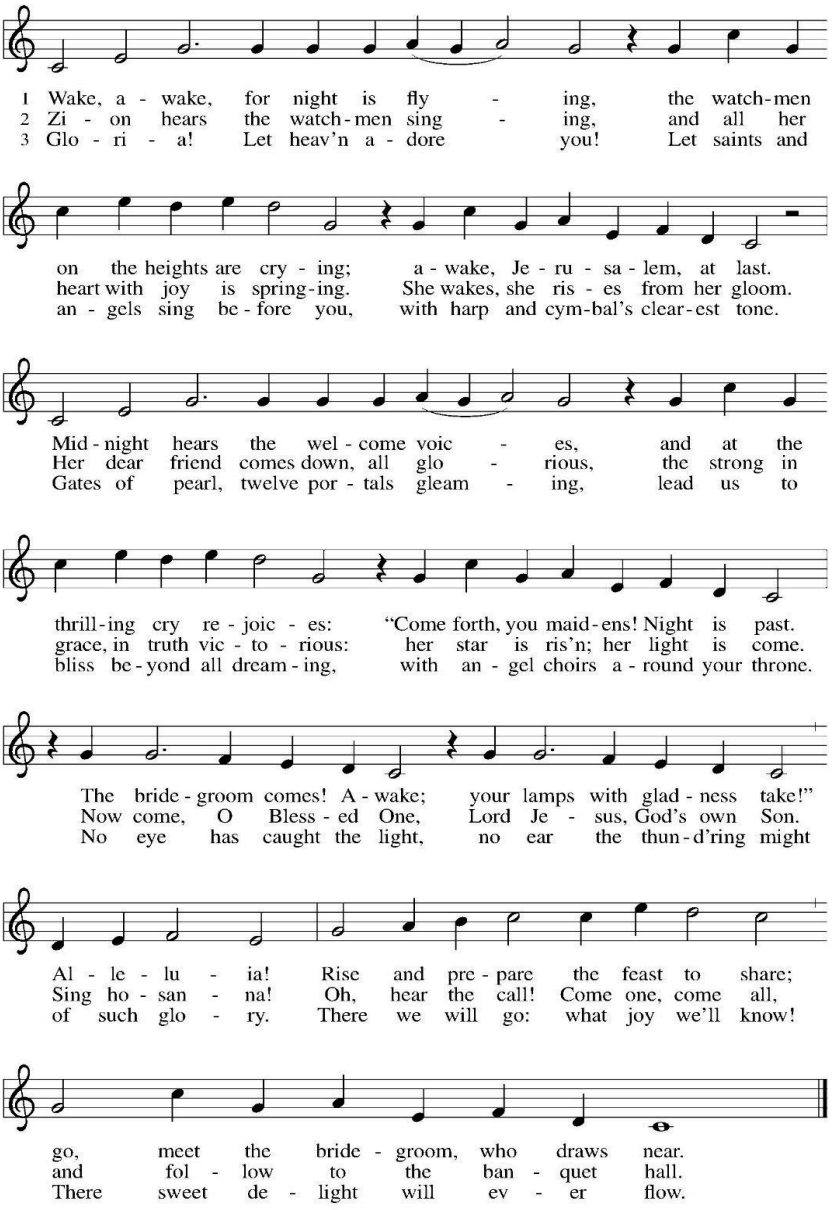


Sit

SERMON *The Rev. Maurice C. Frontz, III*

Stand

✠ HYMN OF THE DAY *Wake, Awake, For Night is Flying*



Text: Philipp Nicolai, 1556–1608; tr. composite
Music: WACHET AUF, Philipp Nicolai
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CONFESSION OF FAITH *Nicene Creed*

✠ *At the words 'For us and for our salvation,' and continuing through 'and was made man,' a solemn bow is appropriate to praise the incarnation of our Lord.*

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

✠ For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,
and was made man. ✠

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

In expectation and hope, let us pray to the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.

Silence is kept.

For the Church, that in this darkened world, your people may bear witness to the dawning of your light: Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For our bishop, pastors, and seminarians, that they may be strengthened to preach both your judgment and salvation: Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For our congregation, that we may increase in love for one another and for all; Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the President, the Congress, and the Courts; for our Governor and Legislature; for our armed forces and our first responders: Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For those who suffer from war and violence, addiction and abuse, disaster and poverty: Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the sick and the dying, the grieving, the brokenhearted, and all we name before you:

The pastor reads the names submitted for prayer.
The people may offer silent or spoken intercessions and thanksgivings.

...Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

That with Mary, the God-bearer, Stephen, Deacon and Martyr, and all the saints and faithful ones of every time and place, we may by grace stand before the Son of Man when he comes in glory: Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.
Trusting in your promises, we commend ourselves, one another, and all things to Jesus Christ, who was, and who is, and who is to come, and who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen

PEACE
The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And also with you.

The people exchange a sign of peace accompanied by the words,
Peace be with you.

Sit
The Lord's Table is prepared.

Stand
OFFERTORY Psalm 85:9, 12-13 Setting by Robert Wetzler
Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before them and make their footsteps a way.

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

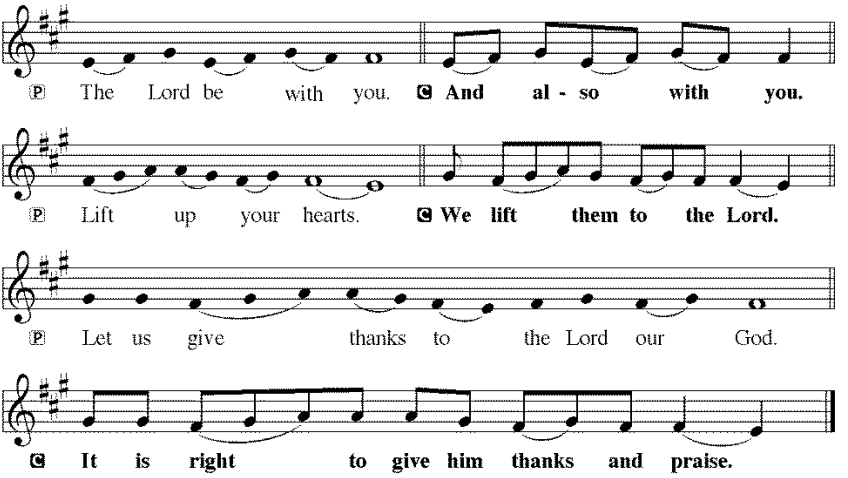
Hear us, O Lord Jesus Christ, from your dwelling place,
from the glorious throne of your kingdom, and come and cleanse us.

You are seated on high with the Father,
and you dwell also with us here, although unseen.

By your mighty hand render us worthy to receive in holy communion
your spotless body and your precious blood.

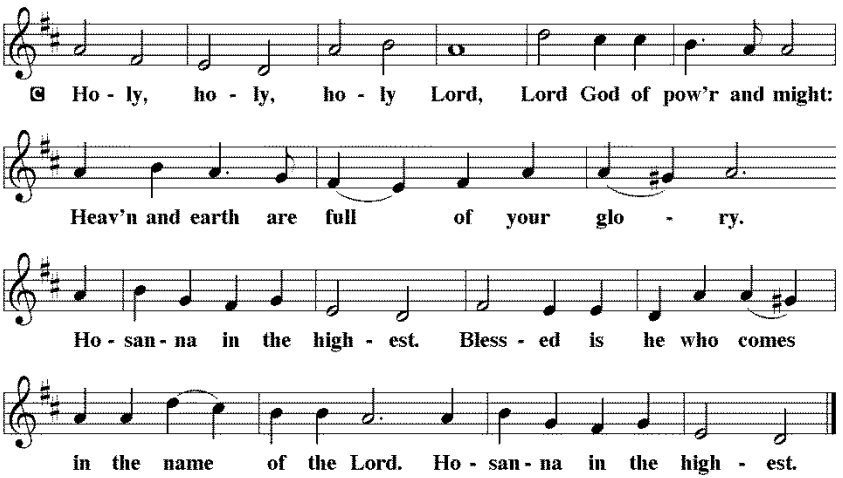
Amen

GREAT THANKSGIVING



It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. When first he came to us in the lowliness of our human body, he accomplished the work you purposed long ago and opened for us the way of eternal salvation; so that when he comes again in majesty and glory we may see at last your work completed and receive the salvation promised us, which we await in confidence and hope. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

℣ *Sanctus*



The pastor leads the people in praying the Eucharistic canon:

Blessed are you, O Adonai, Most High and Holy God,
for the wonder of your goodness
which creates, establishes, and permeates
the heavens and the earth.

We praise you for the promises you made to the Patriarchs,
as you led your chosen people out of slavery
into the land of promise,
giving them your Law on Sinai's heights.

You promised, through the prophets,

that the Messiah would come,
the very branch of Jesse –
before whom all nations would keep silent.

Then, at the appointed time,
you sent your beloved Son, Jesus our Emmanuel,
the key of David born of Mary by the power of the Spirit.

He came to rescue the uprooted,
to bring life to the lifeless
and voice to those who were without hope;
on Calvary's heights gave His life
to draw all people to Himself
and to your promise of mercy.

> 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.

Together, we proclaim the mystery of faith:
O Christ, you are the splendor of life everlasting:
We laud your death and resurrection,
and await your return in glory.
Blessed are you, O Adonai, Lord of might. \
You fulfilled your promises
in the death, resurrection and ascension of your Son,
the King of all nations.
We praise you for embracing us
as the people who now dwell in the brightness of His glory.

Send now your holy and life-giving Spirit
upon this Bread of Life and this Cup of Salvation,
that we, in this holy communion,
may be united to Him who is our cornerstone,
the One who gives us His very body and blood
to sustain us in His forgiving love.

With all the people of your promises,
we await our Lord's final coming
when we will share in that feast which shall never end.
Amen. Come, O precious Ransom, come!

In the presence of Christ, we pray to his Father using the words he gave us.

Christ is in our midst.
By the power of the Spirit,
we pray to his Father, saying:

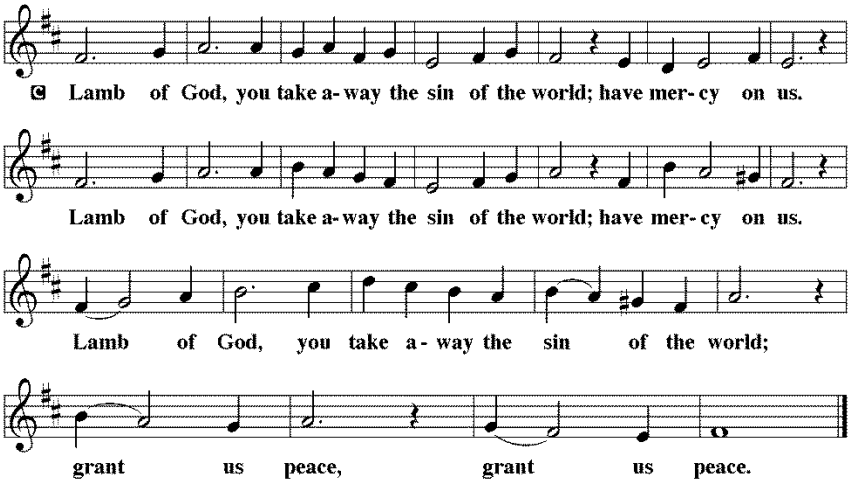
Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen

Matthew 6:9-15

This is the bread of God which gives life to the world.
Glory to you, O God, forever.
John 6:33

Wisdom has built her a house;
she has mixed her wine;
she has set her table.
Glory to you, O God, forever.
Proverbs 9:1

Agnus Dei



John 1:29

Sit

DISTRIBUTION

Admission to the Sacrament of the Altar is by invitation of the Lord, presented through the Church to those who are baptized. They may receive the Lord's Body and Blood who are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, who commune in their home churches, and who believe that Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is truly present in, with, and under the forms of bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

Those who for these or other reasons choose not to receive Holy Communion may come to the table for a pastoral blessing.

You may drink the wine from the common chalice or take an individual glass on your way to the table if you wish to receive the wine from the pouring chalice.

Those who are able may kneel to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ, who comes to us in this Sacrament.

DISTRIBUTION ANTHEM

God is Light - Annette Tierney

God is Light. In Him there is no darkness.
God is Light. Let us walk in the light of the World.

Come follow me. Feed my sheep. Tend my lambs.
Come follow the Light of the World.

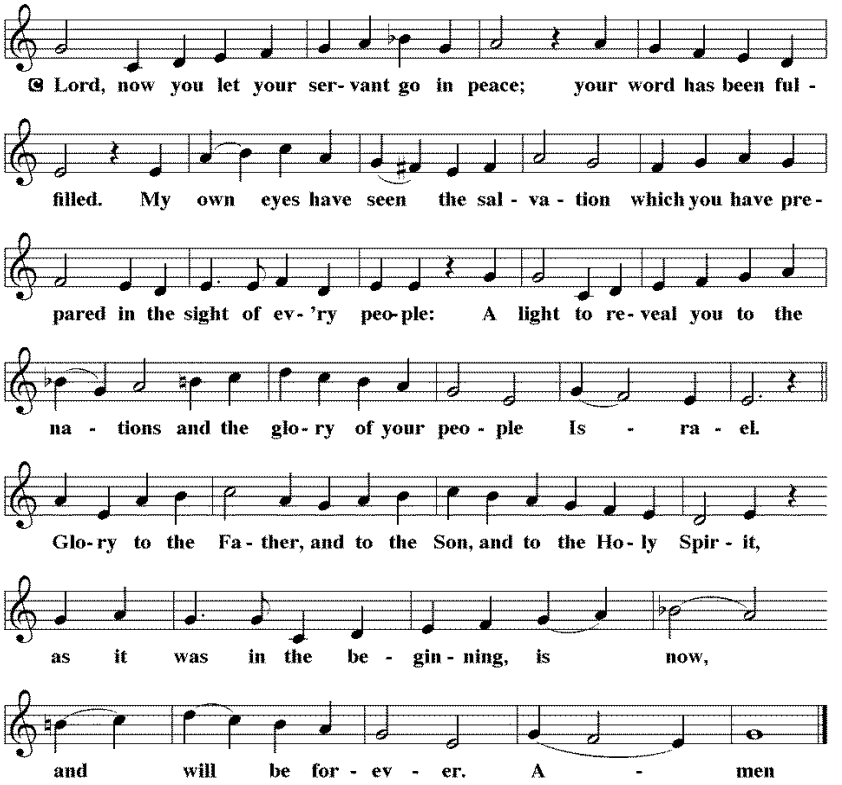
Peace I bring. My peace I give.
With Christ's peace we will walk in the Light of the World.

After all have returned to their places, the people stand at the direction of the pastor.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE



POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Pour out upon us the spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of
those whom you have fed with one heavenly food; through Jesus Christ
our Lord.

Amen

BENEDICTION

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,
scatter the darkness from before your path,
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory.

Amen

Almighty God, Father, ✠Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen

CLOSING HYMN Green LBW 33 *The King Shall Come*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Saturday Evening Worship – 6:30 pm
Sunday Morning Worship – 10:30 am