The FESTIVAL *of the* NATIVITY *of our* LORD

Christmas, 2016 AD

CHRIST ALONE LUTHERAN CHURCH

He Did It All!

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DECEMBER 25, 2016 CHRISTMAS

Welcome! Thank ou for joining us for worship this morning. In our service we gather before our almighty God to offer him our worship and praise. We also gather to strengthen ourselves through the study of God's holy and powerful word. Please take a moment to sign our guest register as you leave this morning.

- ✓ **Restrooms** are located across the hallway as you exit the gymnasium by the water fountains.
- ✓ **Cry Room:** Parents are free to use the hallway adjacent to the restrooms as a cry room for your children.

TODAY'S THEME:

THE FESTIVAL OF THE
NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

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PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CRHIST

The Kalends[1] of Christmas Day, from the door of the nave, draws upon Scripture to declare in a formal way the birth of Christ.

L: Today, the twenty-fifth day of December,
many ages after God created the heavens and the earth,
when man and woman were formed in his image;
long after the great flood, when God set the rainbow in the sky as a sign of the covenant;
twenty-one centuries from the birth of Abraham,
thirteen centuries from the exodus of the people Israel out of Egypt,
one thousand years from the enthronement of David as king,
in the six hundred and ninety-eighth Olympiad,
in the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the founding of the city of Rome,
in the forty-second year of the reign of Caesar Augustus,
in the sixth age[2] of the earth, at a time when the whole world was at peace,
it pleased God to send His only begotten Son and eternal Word to the world to become Man and to teach us God's love, to suffer, die and rise from the dead for our salvation.

Today is the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.

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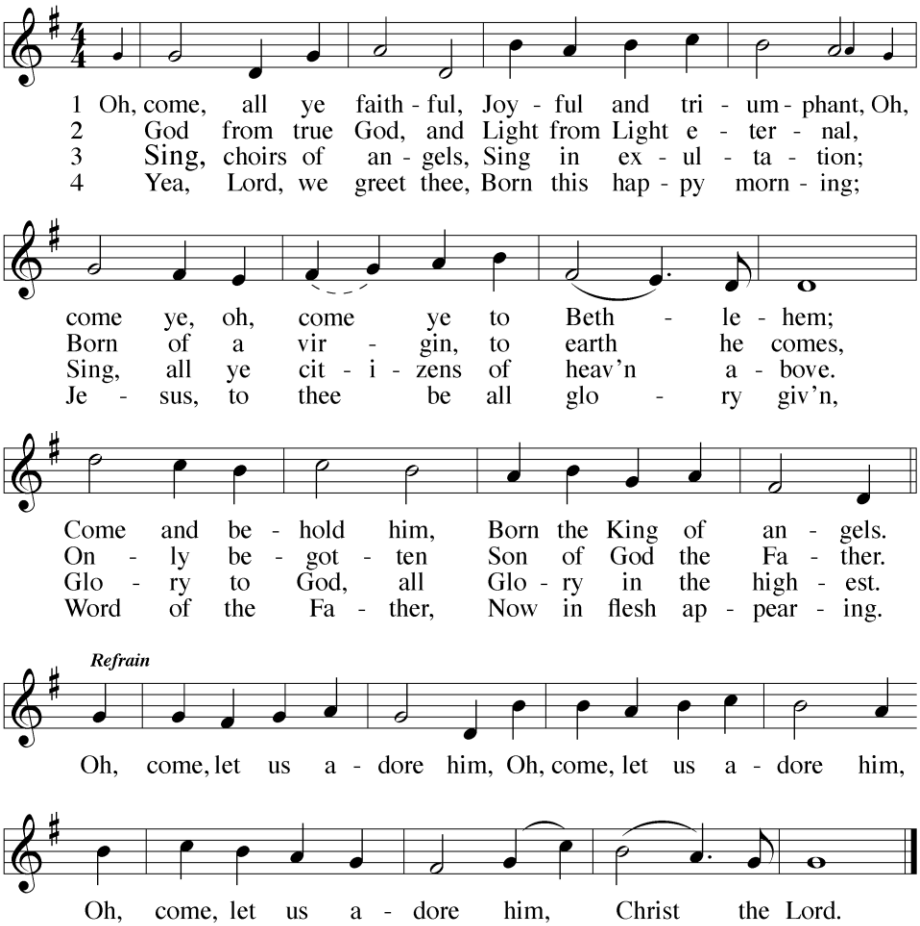
[1] The Romans called the first day of every month the "kalends," signifying the beginning of a new lunar phase. The English word calendar is derived from this word.

[2] Sixth Age: The early Christians considered the world to have seven ages: The First Age: From Adam to the Flood; The Second Age: From the Flood to Abraham; The Third Age: From Abraham to David; The Fourth Age: From David to the Captivity; The Fifth Age: From the Captivity to the Advent of Christ; The Sixth Age: The Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; The Seventh Age: The new heavens and new earth.

To God incarnate, to the Infant who humbled Himself and took our form, becoming a child of man to make children of God; to the One who later walked among us to teach us the way of salvation and who loved us so much as to give His life for it: to Him be glory, honor, and adoration forever and ever.

O come, let us adore Him!

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: *Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful*



Confession of Sins

L: Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: Holy and Merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

L: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Prayer of the Day

L: The Lord be with you.

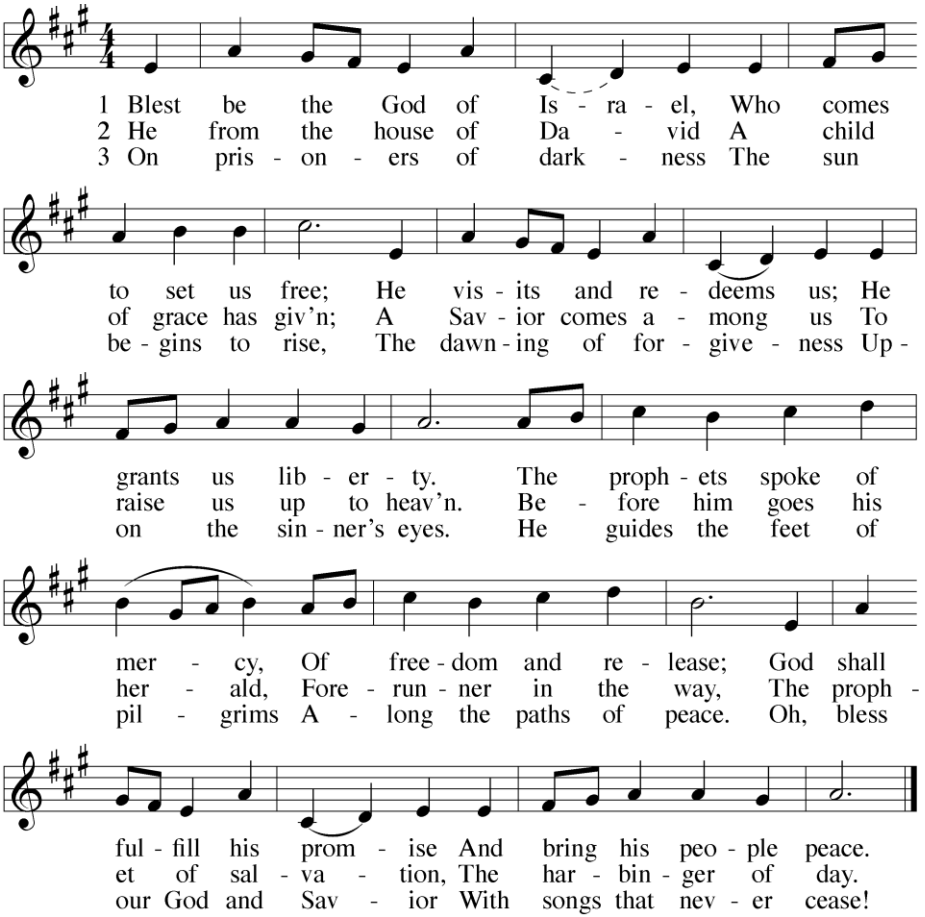
C: And also with you.

L: Let us pray.

The leader says the Prayer of the Day.

C: Amen.

BENEDICTUS[3]



[3] Benedictus is the first word of Zechariah's song at the birth of John the Baptist. Found in Luke 1:68, the song expresses the joy and home of knowing the Messiah would come to save his people.

THE WORD OF GOD

THE CHILDREN'S SERMON

THE FIRST LESSON: EXODUS 33:18-23; 34:5-7

18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

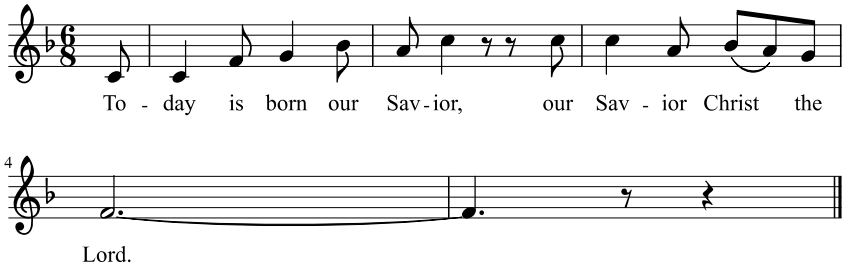
19 And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim
my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will
have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for
no one may see me and live."

21 Then the Lord said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. 22 When my
glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have
passed by. **23** Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be
seen."

5 Then the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name,
the Lord. 6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate
and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to
thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty
unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third
and fourth generation."

THE PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 96

The choir sings the verses. The congregation is invited to sing the refrain.



1. O sing to the Lord, a new song; O sing to the Lord, all you lands, O sing to the Lord, and bless God's name, and bless God's name. **Refrain**
2. Announce his salvation each day, his glory among all the nations; among all peoples his wondrous deeds, his wondrous deeds. **Refrain**
3. Let heaven and earth rejoice; let seas and what fills them resound; let plains be joyful and all there in, the trees of the forest exult. **Refrain**
4. Exult in the Lord, who comes, who comes to rule the earth, to rule the world with justice, the nations with truth. **Refrain**

THE SECOND LESSON: ROMANS 8:31, 32

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

THE CHRISTMAS GOSPEL: JOHN 1:1-18

It is a common practice in the Christian Church for The Gospel Book to be carried in the middle of God's assembled people as a symbol of the words of John 1:14. As we hear the words and works of Jesus, we know that he is still among us.

The cantor sings "Where Shepherds Lately Knelt."

Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel's word,
I come in half-belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred;
But there is room and welcome there for me.

In that unlikely place I find him as they said:
Sweet newborn Babe, how frail! And in a manger bed,
A still small voice to cry one day for me.

L: A reading from the Gospel of St. John, Chapter One.

[1]In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2]He was with God in the beginning.

[3]Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. [4]In him was life, and that life was the light of men. [5]The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

[6]There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. [7]He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. [8]He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. [9]The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

[10]He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. [11]He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. [12]Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— [13]children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

[14]The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

[15] (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") [16] Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. [17] For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. [18] No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

L: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ.

The cantor sings:

Can I, will I forget how Love was born, and burned
its way into my heart unasked, unforced, unearned,
To die, to live, and not alone for me?

SELECTED PORTIONS OF THE ATHANASIAN CREED

A Confession of Faith for Christmas

This creed is named after St. Athanasius, a staunch defender of the Christian faith in the fourth century. It was prepared to assist the Church in combating two errors that undermined Bible teaching. One error denied that God's Son and the Holy Spirit are of one being or Godhead with the Father. The other error denied that Jesus Christ is true God and true man in one person. The Athanasian Creed continues to serve the Christian Church as a standard of the truth. It declares that whoever rejects the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of Christ is without saving faith.

The section of the Athanasian Creed included here is the portion that confesses the Bible's teaching about Jesus Christ—true man and true God. This portion serves as a very fitting confession of faith for Christmas. A translation of the entire text of the Athanasian Creed may be found on pages 132-133 in Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal.

L: It is necessary for eternal salvation truly to believe
that our Lord Jesus Christ also took on human flesh.

All: Now this is the true Christian faith:

We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son,
is both God and man.

He is God, eternally begotten from the nature of the Father, and he is man, born in time from the nature of his mother, fully God, fully man, with rational soul and human flesh,

equal to the Father as to his deity, less than the Father as to his humanity;

and though he is both God and man, Christ is not two persons, but one,

one, not by changing the deity into flesh, but by taking the humanity into God;

one, indeed, not by mixture of the natures, but by unity in one person;

for just as the rational soul and flesh are one human being,
so God and man are one Christ.

He suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose the third day from the dead.

He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty,

and from there will come to judge the living and the dead.

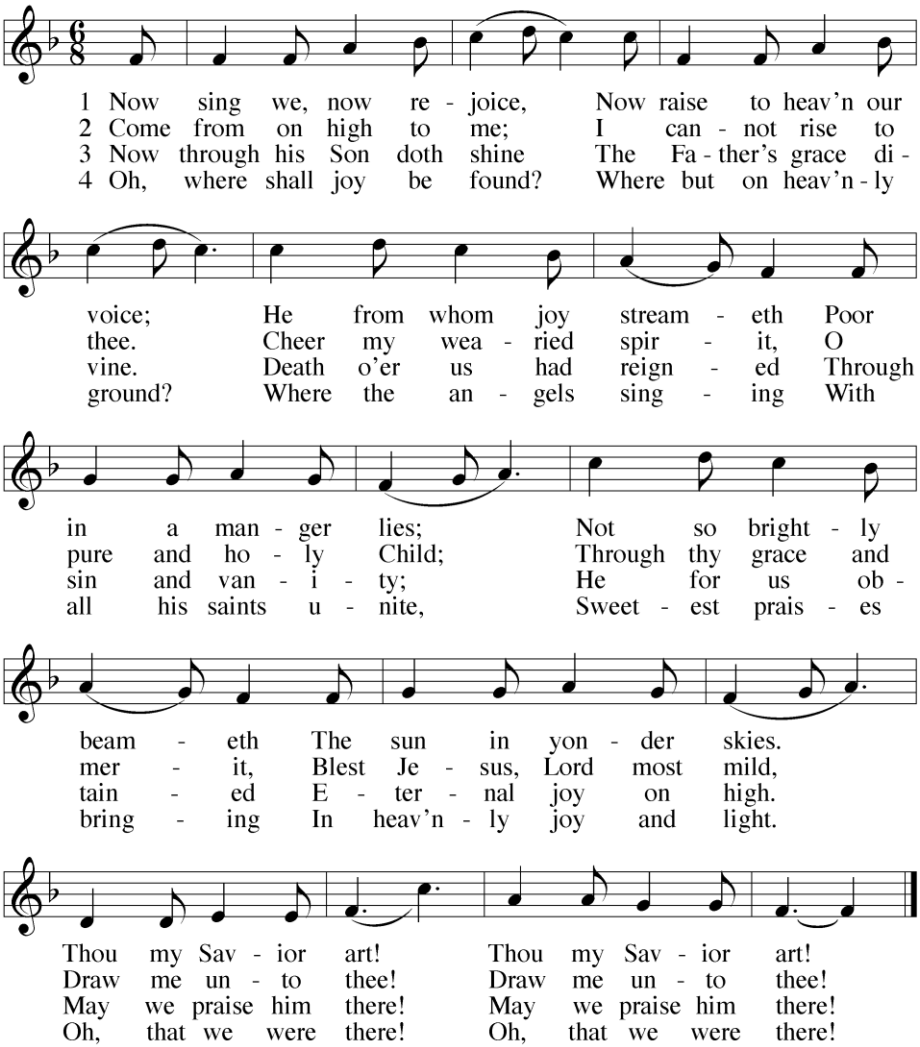
At his coming all people will rise with their own bodies to answer for their personal deeds.

Those who have done good[4] will enter eternal life,
but those who have done evil will go into eternal fire.

L: This is the true Christian faith.
Whoever does not faithfully and firmly believe this cannot be saved.

[4] Here "doing good" or "doing evil" is not the cause of eternal life or eternal death. As Jesus tells us in the Matthew 25, the good deeds of believers are the evidence of faith in Jesus which saves and evil deeds are the evidence of a lack of faith which condemns.

THE HYMN OF THE DAY: *Now Sing We, Now Rejoice*

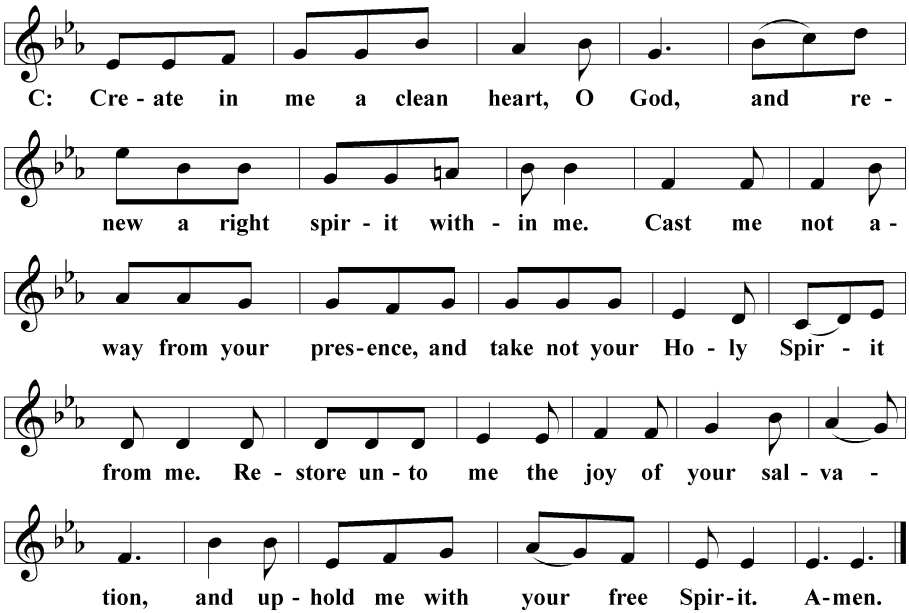


THE SERMON:

The Day Far Came Near

John 1:1-18

RESPONSE:



THANKSGIVING

THE OFFERING:

The members of Christ Alone Lutheran Congregation have joined together to do the Lord's work in this community and around the world. Visitors need not feel obligated to participate in this offering which supports our ministry.

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH:

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

C: 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.

THE SACRAMENT

✓ *Christ Alone Lutheran Church practices close communion. We ask that only members partake of the Sacrament.*

L: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

L: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

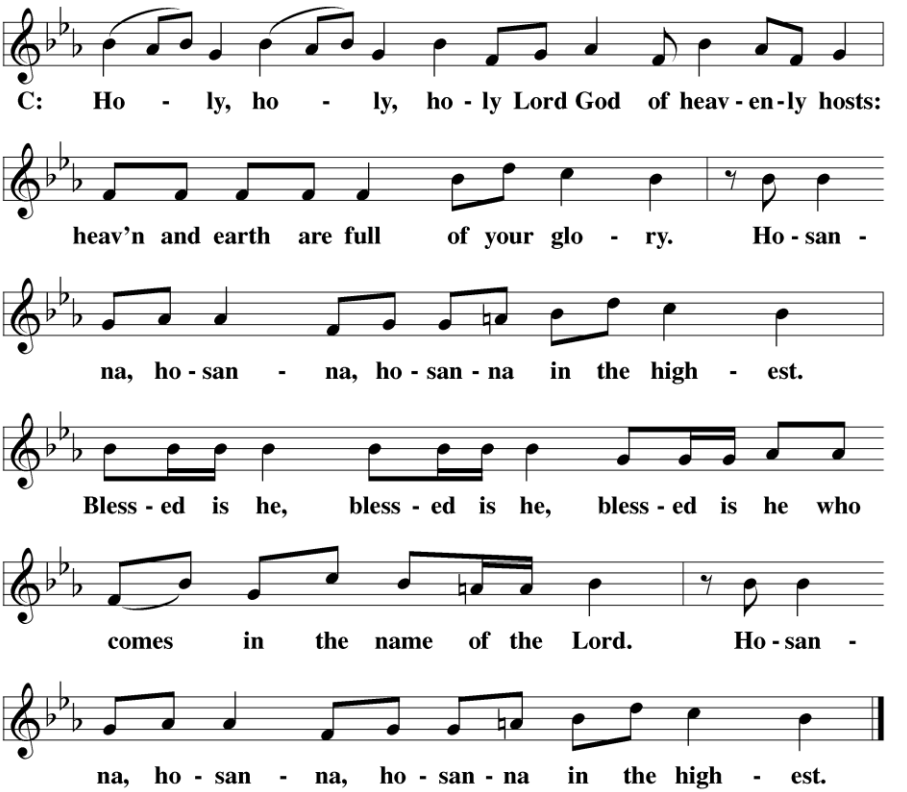
L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

L: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for in the wonder and mystery of his birth you have opened our eyes to the glory of your grace and renewed in our hearts the fervor of your love. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Sanctus



THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION:

L: 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."

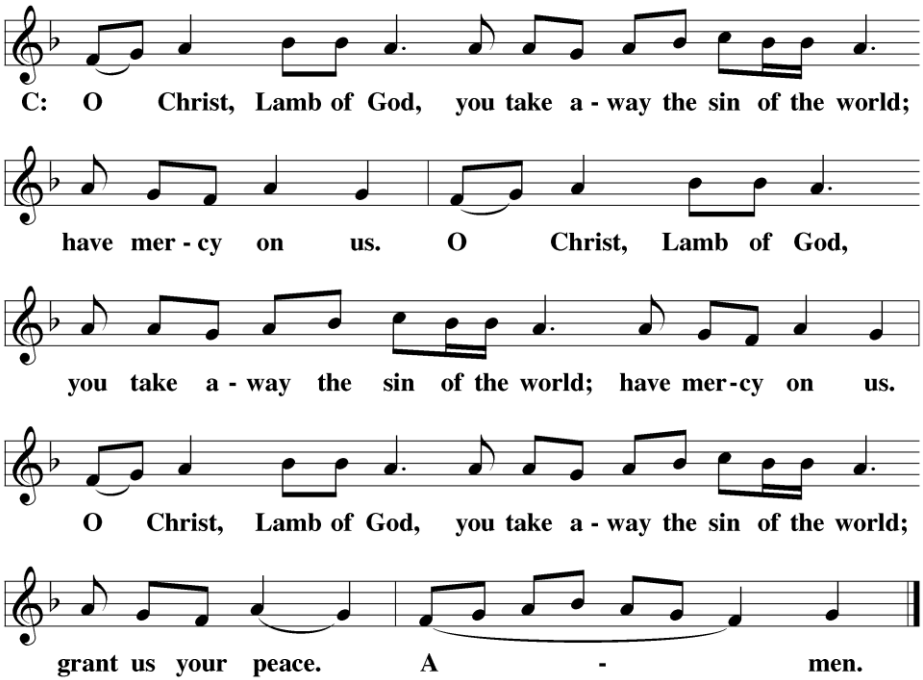
Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD

Agnus Dei



THE DISTRIBUTION:

HYMN: OF THE FATHER'S LOVE BEGOTTEN[5]

Cantor: Of the Father's love begotten ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see evermore and evermore.

All: Oh, that birth forever blessed when the virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race,
And the babe, the world's Redeemer,
First revealed his sacred face evermore and evermore.

Let the heights of heav'n adore him, angel hosts his praises sing
Pow'rs, dominions bow before him and extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent,
Ev'ry voice in concert ring evermore and evermore.

THE LORD'S BLESSING

L: 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.

C: Amen.

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Psalm 96 –Today Is Born Our Savior. Text and tune: © James Chepponis by GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

[5] This song was written by Aurelius Clemens Purdentius in 400AD and has been used by the Christian church for 1600 years. A beautiful poem that reflects on the gift of the Father in the incarnation of Christ, the hymn today is set to a plain chant melody dating from the 1200's.

Welcome to all our guests and visitors who are with us this morning.

No Bible Study and Sunday School on Dec. 25th and Jan. 1st – All Sunday School class will resume on the second Sunday in January.

Join us for worship next Sunday, January 1st at 10:30AM.