

REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Serving Absecon - Galloway Township
Rev. Heidi Link – Pastor
Brian Conover - Music Director

Sunday, November 27th, 2022
THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT / 10:00 AM

*** CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

Blessed be God's name forever. Amen.

Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep. Let us confront our sins, and confess them to the one who is merciful and just.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of new beginnings,

we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign. We have strayed from your paths. We prepare for war instead of peace. We dishonor one another and your creation. Purify us with your refining fire and set us again on your way of love, that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance, and welcome your coming among us. Amen.

People of God, a new thing is growing in our midst, a tender branch, a living sign. By water and the Spirit you are joined to this wonder. You have put on ☩ Christ, and your sins have been washed away. Rejoice in the way of the Lord. **Amen.**

*** OPENING SONG**

Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying



1 Wake, a - wake, for night is fly - ing, the watch-men
2 Zi - on hears the watch-men sing - ing, and all her



on the heights are cry - ing; a - wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, at last.
heart with joy is spring-ing. She wakes, she ris - es from her gloom.

... song continues...

* - Congregation Stands (If for any reason you are unable to stand during the service, please remain seated.)



Mid - night hears the wel - come voic - es, and at the
Her dear friend comes down, all glo - rious, the strong in



thrill - ing cry re - joic - es: "Come forth, you maid - ens! Night is past.
grace, in truth vic - to - rious: her star is ris'n; her light is come.



The bride - groom comes! A - wake; your lamps with glad - ness take!"
Now come, O Bless - ed One, Lord Je - sus, God's own Son.



Al - le - lu - ia! Rise and pre - pare the feast to share;
Sing ho - san - na! Oh, hear the call! Come one, come all,



go, meet the bride - groom, who draws near.
and fol - low to the ban - quet hall.

Text: Philipp Nicolai, 1556-1608; tr. composite
Music: WACHET AUF, Philipp Nicolai
Text © 1999 Augsburg Fortress

* GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

Let us pray: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 2:1-5 (see back of bulletin for text)

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 122

¹I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the LORD."

²Now our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

³Jerusalem is built as a city
that is at unity with itself;

⁴**to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD,
the assembly of Israel, to praise the name of the LORD.**

⁵For there are the thrones of judgment,
the thrones of the house of David.

⁶**Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May they prosper who love you.**

⁷Peace be within your walls
and quietness within your towers.

⁸**For the sake of my kindred and companions,
I pray for your prosperity.**

⁹Because of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek to do you good.”

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE OFFERING

Refrain: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! (Repeat)

**Oh, how right it is to give thanks to Him, our creator and our king;
We sing out our praise to the holy one; We rejoice, we rejoice in our God!** *(Repeat Refrain)*

SECOND READING: Romans 13:11-14 *(see back of bulletin for text)*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:2

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

Reading:

And God said let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light and it was good.. And God divided the light from darkness. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. He that follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.” The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. The lighting of candles has been a part of worship for centuries. Candles are a symbol of joy. Light is symbolic of truth. For all ancient people, new light meant new life. “For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and His name shall be called Wonderful counselor, the Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

CONGREGATIONAL SONG – “FATHER OF LIGHTS”

Verse 1:

**Father of lights, You delight in Your children
Father of lights, You delight in Your children**

Chorus:

**Every good and perfect gift comes from You
Every good and perfect gift comes from You
Every good and perfect gift comes from You
Father of lights**

Verse 2:

**Father of lights, You never change, You have no turning
Father of lights, You never change, You have no turning**

(Repeat Chorus)

PREPARING FOR THE NATIVITY

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:8-12

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Reading:

One of the most heart-warming expressions of Christmas is the Nativity. It speaks of the mystery of God’s wisdom. The Nativity scene has become a symbol of Divine-Human love. Why God chose to send his son into our world as a baby of humble birth, born in common surroundings, we do not know. What we do know is that God reached out to all people, including the poor and the wealthy, the simple and the wise, the powerless and the powerful. All who found him, knelt in humility before him. Knowing God is possible because he came to us at our level. Whenever we see a Nativity we find ourselves with Mary and Joseph; with the Shepherds, and with the Wise Men; bowing before the manger, overwhelmed by God’s expression of love in coming to us. The Nativity scene tells the story of a God of love, who comes to us as an infant, the most loving and trusting of human beings, to invite us to a new life. Each Sunday of Advent, we will add to our nativity until we celebrate its completion with the birth of our Lord and Savior.

*** HYMN OF PRAISE**



Come, Thou long-expect-ed Je-sus, Born to
set Thy peo-ple free; From our fears and sins re-
lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
In-rael's strength and con-so-la-tion, Hope of
al the earth Thou art; Dear de-sire of
ev-ry na-tion, Joy of ev-ry long-ing heart.

*** THE WORD OF GOD: Matthew 24:36-44**

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew:

(see back of bulletin for text)

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

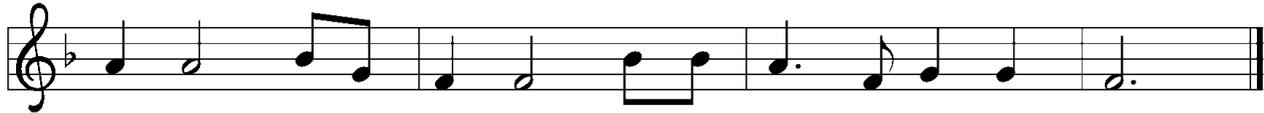
CONGREGATIONAL SONG

My Lord, What a Morning

Refrain



My Lord, what a morn-ing; my Lord, what a morn - ing; oh,



my Lord, what a morn-ing, when the stars be - gin to fall.



- 1 You will hear the trum - pet sound,
- 2 You will hear the sin - ner cry, to wake the na-tions un - der - ground,
- 3 You will hear the Chris-tian shout,



look-ing to my God's right hand, when the stars be - gin to fall.

Refrain

Text: African American spiritual
Music: BURLEIGH, African American spiritual

* NICENE CREED

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 INTERCESSION**

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

A brief silence.

God of all, your children everywhere cry out for mercy. Awaken the global church to the urgent needs of our time. Break down barriers of culture and custom and unite people of all faiths in your redemptive and healing work. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of wonder, the earth's beauty and abundance is your gift. Teach us your ways of sharing resources and caring for life. Guard fragile habitats, preserve the wild places, and protect endangered plants and animals. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of peace, you judge the nations. Beat our weapons into tools for serving the neighbor. Strengthen the resolve of all who work for an end to war. We pray for lasting peace in the land of Jesus' birth (*other places of conflict may be named*). God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of lovingkindness, you desire fullness of life for everyone. Fill those who hunger. Comfort the grieving and attend to those near death. Bring help and hope to any who are sick or needing your care (*especially*). God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of community, you are present when we gather in your name. Guide congregations in transition or conflict (*especially*). Give wisdom to congregational councils, call committees, and ministry leaders. Keep us alert to unexpected opportunities for mission. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of promise, your goodness is everlasting. We give thanks for the lives of the faithful who now rest in you. We trust that you will bring us into the company of all the saints with rejoicing. God, in your mercy,

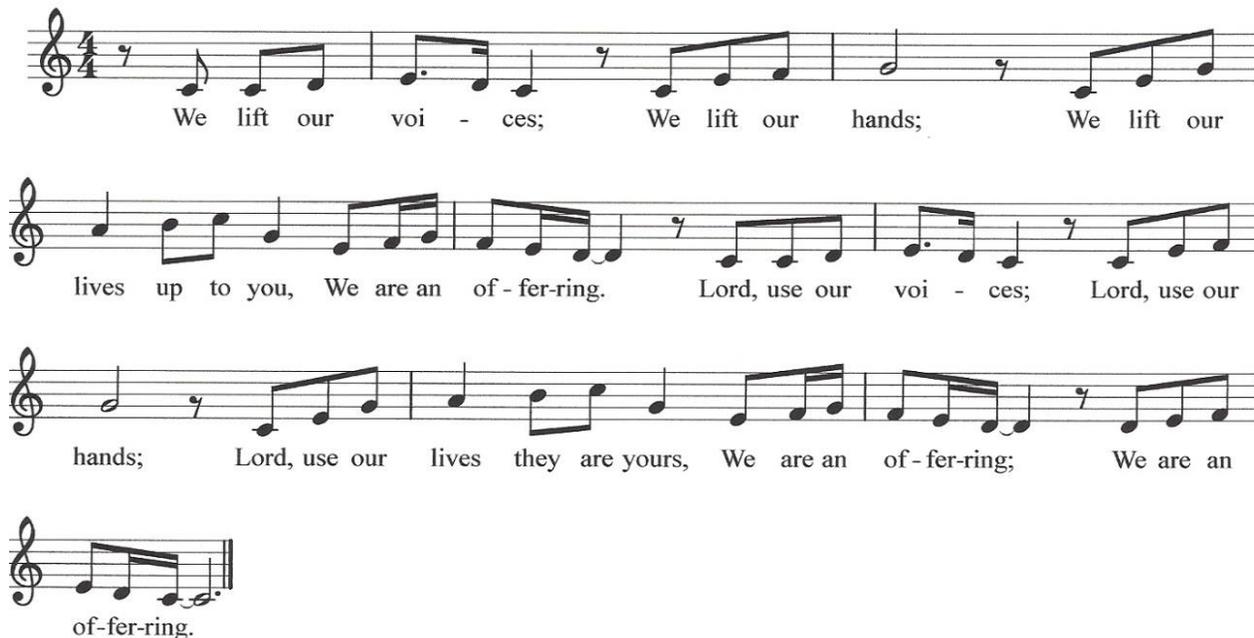
hear our prayer.

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

OFFERING / SPECIAL MUSIC

*** OFFERING SONG - "WE ARE AN OFFERING"**



We lift our voi - ces; We lift our hands; We lift our
lives up to you, We are an of - fer-ring. Lord, use our voi - ces; Lord, use our
hands; Lord, use our lives they are yours, We are an of - fer-ring; We are an
of-fer-ring.

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray: Eternal God, you make the desert bloom and send springs of water to thirsty ground. Receive these simple gifts of bread, wine, and money, and make us messengers of your mercy and love for all in need of your healing and justice. We ask this through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

*** THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

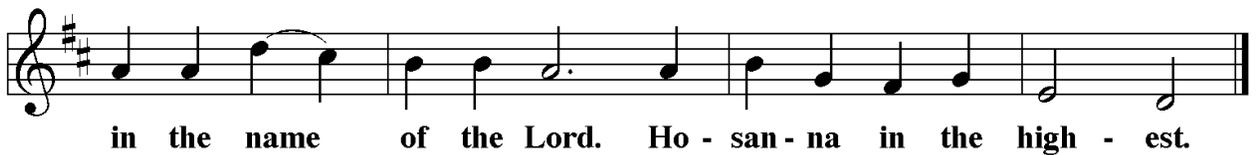
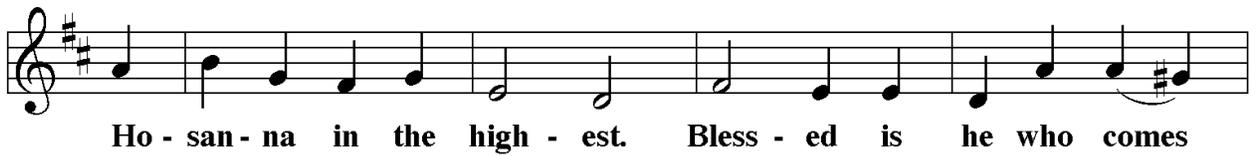
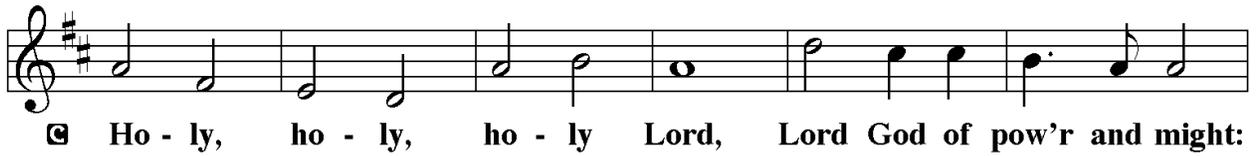
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and salutary...*(Here the minister continues with the preface appropriate to the day or season, concluding:)* we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



* WORDS OF INSTITUTION

* THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

**Be strong, do not fear! Come! Here is your God, who has come to save you.
We come.**

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

(BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS who believe that the risen Christ is present in the Eucharist to forgive sin and renew life are invited to either come to the altar area for communion as directed or share at your pew. If you come forward, you will receive bread and a pre-filled cup of wine. If you choose to receive at your seat, please remain there, kneel as you are able, and receive the elements using the communion packets available from the ushers. If there are other special needs, please speak to an usher.)

*POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

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

*** POST COMMUNION HYMN**

Soon and Very Soon



1 Soon and ver - y soon
2 No more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,
3 No more dy - in' there,
4 Soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon
no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,
no more dy - in' there,
soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon
no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King.
no more dy - in' there,
soon and ver - y soon



Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, we're goin' to see the King!

Text: Andraé Crouch, b. 1945
Music: VERY SOON, Andraé Crouch
Text and music © 1976 Bud John Songs, Inc./Crouch Music, admin. EMI Christian Music Publishing

*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray: Faithful God, in this meal you have remembered your mercy, bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ. As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery. Guide us toward your promised future, coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

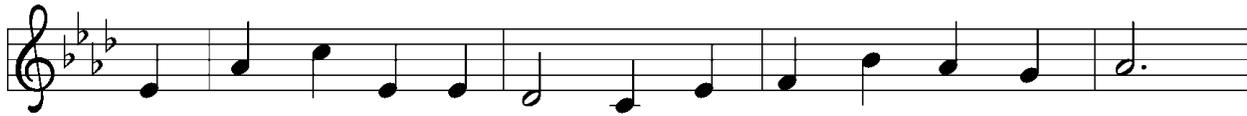
Amen.

*** BLESSING**

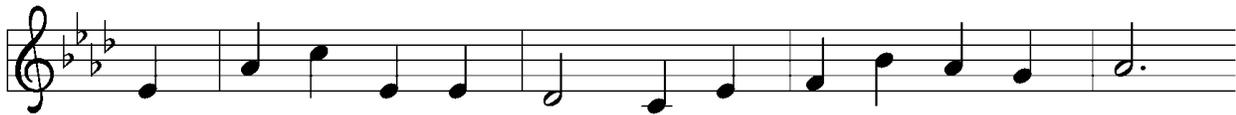
And now a blessing: God the eternal Word, who dwells with us in Jesus, and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit, ✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

* CLOSING SONG

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers



1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'rings bore,



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.
shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.



The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.
in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907
Music: HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG, Swedish folk tune

* SENDING

Go in peace. Christ is near.
Thanks be to God.

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