

+DIVINE SERVICE III+  
OF THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST  
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS + 26 DECEMBER 2021

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**The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

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A member congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

902 S. Maple

Inglewood, CA 90301-3824

[tgslcms.org](http://tgslcms.org)

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# The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

“A Church where God gives and we receive.”

- ❖ The Rev. Edward Killian, Pastor (mobile) 424.293.6588
- ❖ Ms. Moira Killian, Secretary (Office) 310.671-7644
  - ❖ Mr. Jay Rogers, Organist/Music Director
  - ❖ Mr. Leon Tarr, Congregational Chairman
  - ❖ Mr. Greg Griffin, Acolyte

## Welcome to our Divine Service!

*We are pleased that you are with us.*

### +Worship Notes+

*The entire service, including the **rubrics** of when to sit and when to kneel or stand, and what to say, is printed out in this folder so you may follow along.*

**Welcome to weekly Divine Service at The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church!** We are a congregation that confesses the Holy Bible as inerrant, that justification is by faith according to the Holy Bible and confessed in the 1580 Book of Concord. God bless you.

**To all of you who are visiting** our service this morning, we extend a most cordial welcome in Jesus' name. Please introduce yourself to our pastor. It is our hope that you will feel at home in our midst and will be blessed by our message of Christ crucified and risen for the sins of the world. **If you are looking for a church home** and would like to know about our beliefs and practice, please see the pastor. He will be happy to visit with you at your convenience.

### A Note From the Organist:

Stephen Gabrielson was a Professor of Music at Augsburg College in Minneapolis. His delightful setting of this children's carol, very popular in Scandinavia, also incorporates part of "Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine," and Pietro Ton's beautiful "Jesu Bambino."

Edwin C. Johnson is also from Minneapolis, where he serves at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. His setting includes quotes from "For unto us a Child is Born" from Handel's "Messiah."

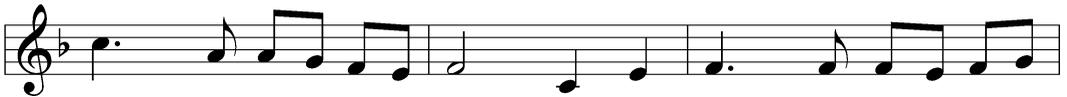
# Confession and Absolution

## Hymn of Invocation

376 Once in Royal David's City



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y Stood a  
 2 He came down to earth from heav - en, Who is  
 3 For He is our child - hood's pat - tern, Day by  
 4 And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His  
 5 Not in that poor, low - ly sta - ble With the



low - ly cat - tle shed, Where a moth - er laid her  
 God and Lord of all, And His shel - ter was a  
 day like us He grew; He was lit - tle, weak, and  
 own re - deem - ing love; For that child so dear and  
 ox - en stand - ing by Shall we see Him, but in



ba - by In a man - ger for His bed: Mar - y  
 sta - ble, And His cra - dle was a stall; With the  
 help - less, Tears and smiles like us He knew; And He  
 gen - tle Is our Lord in heav'n a - bove; And He  
 heav - en, Set at God's right hand on high. Then like



was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.  
 poor and mean and low - ly Lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.  
 feels for all our sad - ness, And He shares in all our glad - ness.  
 leads His chil - dren on To the place where He is gone.  
 stars His chil - dren, crowned, All in white, His praise will sound!

Text and tune: Public domain

*Stand*

*The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.*

## Invocation

**P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## Exhortation

LSB 184

- P** Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.
- P** Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
**C** **who made heaven and earth.**
- P** I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,  
**C** **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

*Kneel/Stand*

*Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.*

## Confession of Sins

LSB 184

- P** O almighty God, merciful Father,  
**C** **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

## Absolution

LSB 185

- P** Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the  Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**

*Stand*

# Service of the Word

## Introit

*Psalm 93:1, 3-4; antiphon: vv. 5, 2*

*Your decrees are very | trustworthy;\**  
*holiness befits your house, O LORD, for- | evermore.*  
*Your throne is established | from of old;\**  
*you are from ever- | lasting.*  
*The LORD reigns; he is robed in | majesty;\**  
*the LORD is robed; he has put on strength | as his belt.*

Yes, the world is es- | tablished;\*  
it shall nev- | er be moved.

The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted | up their voice;\*  
the floods lift up their | roaring.

Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves | of the sea,\*  
the LORD on high is | mighty!

### Gloria Patri

LSB 186



**C** Glo-ry be to the Fa-ther and to the Son and to the Ho-ly Ghost;



as it was in the be-gin-ning, is now, and ev-er shall be, world with-out end. A-men.

### Kyrie

LSB 186



**C** Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -



on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

### Gloria in Excelsis

LSB 187



**P** Glory be to God on high: **C** and on earth peace, good - will toward



men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we wor - ship Thee,



we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.



O Lord God, heav'n-ly King, God the Fa-ther Al - mighty.



O Lord, the only begotten Son, Je - sus Christ;



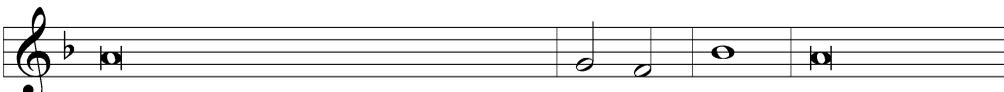
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,



that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy up - on us.



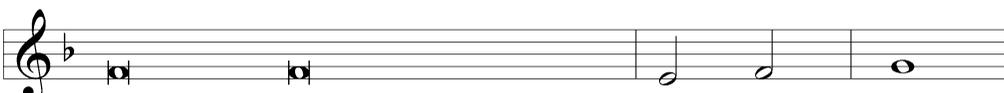
Thou that takest away the sin of the world, re-ceive our prayer.



Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy up -



on us. For Thou only art holy; Thou on - ly art the Lord.



Thou only, O Christ, with the Ho - ly Ghost,



art most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

### Salutation and Collect of the Day



**P** The Lord be with you.



**C** And with thy spir - it.



**P** Let us pray.

**P** O God, our Maker and Redeemer, You wonderfully created us and in the incarnation of Your Son yet more wondrously restored our human nature. Grant that we may ever be alive in Him who made Himself to be like us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



**C** A - men.

*Sit*

## Old Testament

*Isaiah 11:1-5*

- <sup>1</sup>There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
- <sup>2</sup>And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
- <sup>3</sup>And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.  
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,
- <sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
- <sup>5</sup>Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Psalm

*Psalm 89:1–8; antiphon: v. 8*

### I Will Sing of the Steadfast Love of the LORD

<sup>1</sup>I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, for- | ever;\*  
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all gener- | ations.

<sup>2</sup>For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up for- | ever;\*  
in the heavens you will establish your | faithfulness.”

<sup>3</sup>You have said, “I have made a covenant with my | chosen one;\*  
I have sworn to David my | servant:

<sup>4</sup>“I will establish your offspring for- | ever,\*  
and build your throne for all gener- | ations.”

<sup>5</sup>Let the heavens praise your wonders, | O LORD,\*  
your faithfulness in the assembly of the | holy ones!

<sup>6</sup>For who in the skies can be compared | to the LORD?\*

Who among the heavenly beings is | like the LORD,

<sup>7</sup>a God greatly to be feared in the council of the | holy ones,\*  
and awesome above all who are a- | round him?

<sup>8</sup>O LORD God of hosts,  
who is mighty as you are, | O LORD,\*  
with your faithfulness all a- | round you?

## Epistle

*Galatians 4:4–7*

<sup>4</sup>But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup>to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. <sup>6</sup>And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” <sup>7</sup>So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

*Stand*

## Alleluia

*LSB 190*



**C** Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia.

## Holy Gospel

*Luke 2:22–32*

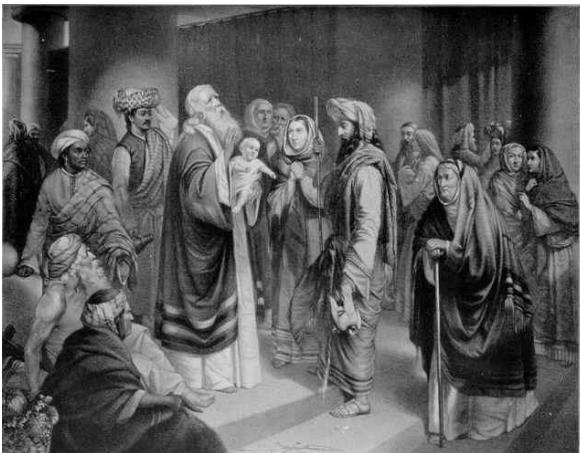
**P** The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.



**C** Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord.

### Jesus Presented at the Temple

<sup>22</sup>When the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, [Mary and Joseph] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord



to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup>(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") <sup>24</sup>and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." <sup>25</sup>Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for

the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup>And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup>And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup>he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

<sup>29</sup>"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,  
according to your word;

<sup>30</sup>for my eyes have seen your salvation

<sup>31</sup>that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and for glory to your people Israel."

**P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.



**C** Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

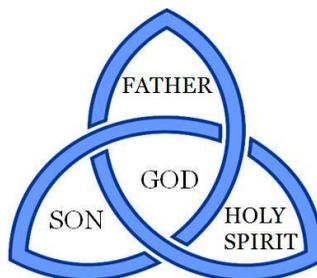
## Nicene Creed

**☐ I believe in one God,  
the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth  
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of His Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of Light,  
very God of very God,  
begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven  
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary  
and was made man;  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried.  
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures  
and ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of the Father.  
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,  
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord and giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,  
who spoke by the prophets.  
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,  
and I look for the resurrection of the dead  
and the life ✝ of the world to come. Amen.**

*Sit*



Hymn of the Day

382 We Praise You, Jesus, at Your Birth



1 We praise You, Je - sus, at Your birth; Clothed in flesh You  
 2 Now in the man - ger we may see God's Son from e -  
 3 The vir - gin Mar - y's lul - la - by Calms the in - fant  
 4 The Light E - ter - nal, break - ing through, Made the world to



came to earth. The vir - gin bears a sin - less boy  
 ter - ni - ty, The gift from God's e - ter - nal throne  
 Lord Most High. Up - on her lap con - tent is He  
 gleam a - new; His beams have pierced the core of night,



And all the an - gels sing for joy. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Here clothed in our poor flesh and bone. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Who keeps the earth and sky and sea. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 He makes us chil - dren of the light. Al - le - lu - ia!

5 The very Son of God sublime  
 Entered into earthly time  
 To lead us from this world of cares  
 To heaven's courts as blessed heirs.  
 Alleluia!

6 In poverty He came to earth  
 Showing mercy by His birth;  
 He makes us rich in heav'nly ways  
 As we, like angels, sing His praise.  
 Alleluia!

7 All this for us our God has done  
 Granting love through His own Son.  
 Therefore, all Christendom, rejoice  
 And sing His praise with endless voice.  
 Alleluia!

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*Stand*

## Offertory

LSB 192



**C** Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -  
 new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -  
 way from Thy pres - ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it  
 from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -  
 tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir-it. A - men.

**Offering** *Collected after service in the back of the church.*

## Prayer of the Church

*The proper response is "Lord, have mercy."*

- P** In peace, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** For grace to rejoice in Christ's blessed incarnation; in thankfulness that, in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem us and give us the adoption as Your sons and heirs; and to grant us a glad new year, let us pray to the Lord:
- P** For the Church, that all who have been baptized into Christ may embrace the Christ Child by Word and faith, and so be ready to depart whenever they are called, let us pray to the Lord:
- P** For the families of all Christians, that the heavenly Father from whom all fatherhood on earth is named would bless them with His promises; for parents, that they would be diligent and take delight in their work; for children,

that by God's favor they would grow in strength and wisdom; and for all widows, orphans and broken families, that God would comfort them with His mercy and give them joy in the redemption won for them in Christ, let us pray to the Lord:

- P** For delight in the fear of the Lord, that we may entrust ourselves only to Christ, who alone judges all matters in equity and righteousness; for princes and leaders of this world, who must judge by what they see and hear, that they would be blessed with health and wisdom; and for discernment, that we may honor them for the sake of conscience before our Lord, let us pray to the Lord:
- P** For the sick and suffering, especially those who desire our prayers *Alice, Carmen, Cynthia, the Conrad's, Dalton, David, Debra, Faith, Gloria, James, Jamesetta, Jod, Johnathan, Karen, Lynette, Marie, Marion and her family, Philip, Sabrina, Steve, and Susie*, that according to God's gracious will, they would be healed; and for those who mourn, that God would fill their hearts with the certain hope of the resurrection, let us pray to the Lord:
- P** For those who commune this day, that they would see their salvation in the very body and blood of Christ given them to eat and to drink and thus, with Simeon, be prepared to depart in peace, let us pray to the Lord:
- P** In thanksgiving for our brothers and sisters who have departed in the peace of faith; and that with them, we may behold the light of the nations and the glory of Israel in eternal life, let us pray to the Lord:
- P** Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C** Amen.

## Service of the Sacrament

### Preface

LSB 194



**P** The Lord be with you.



**C** And with thy spir - it.



**P** Lift up your hearts.



**C** We lift them up un - to the Lord.



**P** Let us give thanks un - to the Lord, our God.



**C** It is meet and right so to do.

### Proper Preface (Abbreviated)

*LSB 194*

**P** It is truly meet, right, and salutary . . . evermore praising You and saying:

### Sanctus

*LSB 195*



**C** Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth;



heav'n and earth are full of Thy glo - ry. Ho - san - na,



ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is He,



bless - ed is He, bless - ed is He that com - eth in the name of the Lord.



Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.



## The Words of Our Lord

LSB 197



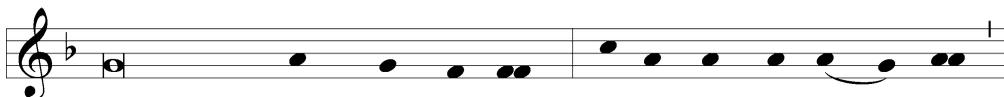
**P** Our Lord Je-sus Christ, on the night when He was be-trayed, took bread,



and when He had giv - en thanks, He broke it and gave it to the



dis-ci-ples and said: "Take, eat; this is My  $\text{†}$  bod - y, which is giv-en for you.



This do in re-mem - brance of Me." In the same way al - so



He took the cup after sup - per, and when He had giv-en thanks, He gave it



to them, say - ing: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in



My  $\text{†}$  blood, which is shed for you for the for-give-ness of sins.



This do, as often as you drink it, in re-mem-brance of Me."

## Pax Domini

LSB 197



**P** The peace of the Lord be with you al - ways.



☐ A - men.

### Agnus Dei

LSB 198



O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak - est a-way the sin of the



world, have mer - cy up - on us. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that



tak - est a-way the sin of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.



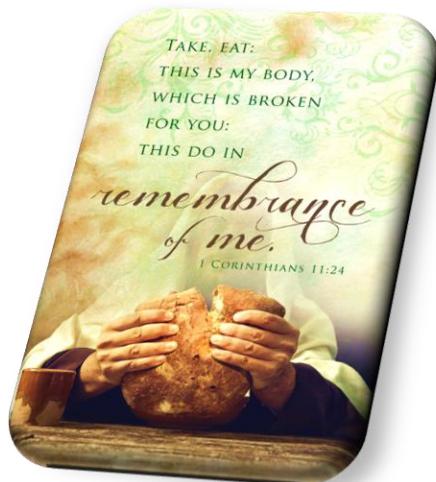
O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that tak - est a-way the sin of the



world, grant us Thy peace. A - men.

Sit

### Distribution



## Distribution Hymn

## 366 It Came upon the Midnight Clear



1 It came up-on the mid-night clear, That glo-rious song of old,  
2 Still through the clo-ven skies they come With peace-ful wings un-furled,  
3 All you, be-neath your heav-y load, By care and guilt bent low,  
4 For lo, the days have come to pass By proph-ets seen of old,



From an-gels bend-ing near the earth To touch their harps of gold:  
And still their heav'n-ly mu-sic floats O'er all the wea-ry world.  
Who toil a-long a drea-ry way With pain-ful steps and slow:  
When down in-to the cir-cling years Came Christ as was fore-told.



“Peace on the earth, good-will to all, From heav’n’s all-gra-cious king.”  
A-bove its sad and low-ly plains They bend on hov-’ring wing,  
Look up, for gold-en is the hour, Come swift-ly on the wing,  
His word of peace shall to the earth God’s an-cient prom-ise bring,



The world in sol-emn still-ness lay To hear the an-gels sing.  
And ev-er o’er its ba-bel sounds The bless-ed an-gels sing.  
The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the an-gels sing.  
And all who take this gift will hear The song the an-gels sing.

Text and tune: Public domain

## Distribution Hymn

## 392 God Loves Me Dearly



1 God loves me dear-ly, Grants me sal-  
2 I was in slav-’ry, Sin, death, and  
3 He sent forth Je-sus, My dear Re-  
4 Je-sus, my Sav-ior, Him-self did  
5 Now I will praise You, O Love E-



va - tion, God loves me dear - ly, Loves e - ven me.  
dark - ness; God's love was work - ing To make me free.  
deem - er, He sent forth Je - sus And set me free.  
of - fer; Je - sus, my Sav - ior, Paid all I owed.  
ter - nal; Now I will praise You All my life long.



*Refrain*  
There - fore I'll say a - gain: God loves me



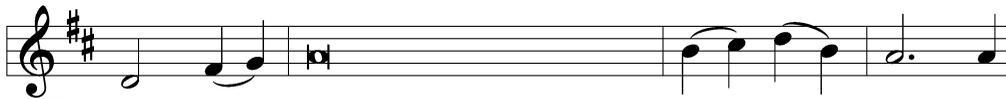
dear - ly, God loves me dear - ly, Loves e - ven me.

Tune and text: Public domain

*Stand*

## Nunc Dimittis

LSB 199



**□** Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de - part in peace ac -



cord - ing to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,



which Thou hast pre - pared be - fore the face of all people,



a light to light - en the Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of Thy

peo-ple Is - ra-el. Glo - ry be to the Father and

to the Son and to the Ho-ly Ghost; as it was in the beginning,

is now, and ev - er shall be, world with - out end. A - men.

### Thanksgiving

*LSB 200*

**A** O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,

**C** and His mercy endureth for - ev - er.

### Post-Communion Collect

**P** Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** A - men.

## Salutation

LSB 201



**P** The Lord be with you.



**C** And with thy spir - it.

## Benedicamus

LSB 202



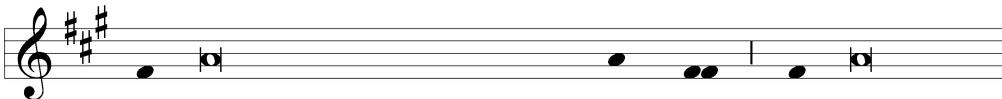
**A** Bless we the Lord.



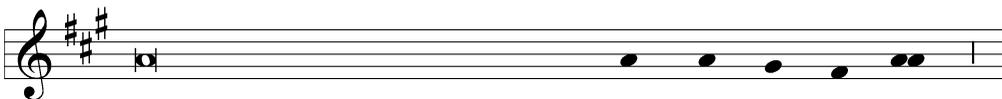
**C** Thanks be to God.

## Benediction

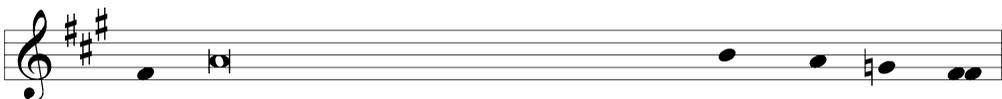
LSB 202



**P** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make



His face shine upon you and be gra - cious un - to you.



The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.



**C** A-men, a-men, a - men.

# Hymn to Depart

# 367 Angels from the Realms of Glory



1 An - gels from the realms of glo - ry, Wing your flight o'er  
 2 Shep - herds in the field a - bid - ing, Watch - ing o'er your  
 3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, Bright - er vi - sions  
 4 Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, Watch - ing long in  
 5 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther,



all the earth; Ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry,  
 flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing,  
 beam a - far; Seek the great De - sire of na - tions,  
 hope and fear, Sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing,  
 Spir - it, Son, Ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing



Now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth.  
 Yon - der shines the In - fant Light.  
 Ye have seen His na - tal star.  
 In His tem - ple shall ap - pear.  
 To the e - ter - nal Three in One.

*Refrain*



Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship;



Wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

Text and tune: Public domain

## Angels From The Realms of Glory

*Edwin C Johnson (b. 1942)*

### Acknowledgments

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✠ THIS WEEK'S NOTES ✠

## **Announcements**

+ Last Sunday's Attendance: 38

+ The church was beautifully decorated for Christmas this year, thanks to everyone's help and donations! We will be removing decorations on Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, following Epiphany. Volunteers would be greatly appreciated!

### **LWML Message**

**LWML Ladies:** Please note on the LWML bulletin board a Christmas letter from Paul and Ali Federwitz & family, whom we support, with Lutheran Bible Translators in Ghana, Africa. They are having special visitors for Christmas!

Thank you,  
Gayle

## **Synod Sentences for the First Sunday after Christmas**

### ***The Seed of David Comes to His Temple***

A Rod has come forth from the stem of Jesse (Is. 11:1–5)—the Seed of David whose kingdom shall be established forever (2 Sam. 7:1–16). In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son Jesus to redeem us from the judgment of the Law (Gal. 4:1–7). Now He is presented in the temple in fulfillment of the Law and revealed to be “*a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel*” (Luke 2:22–40). Christ has enlightened us in baptism, giving us to be adopted as sons of God and heirs of eternal life. Receiving the Holy Sacrament of His body and blood, we are prepared to depart this world in peace, for our eyes have seen the salvation of God in Him.

### **A Prayer for the Week**

O almighty and everlasting God, mercifully direct our ways that we may walk in Your Law, and be made to abound in good works; through the same, Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. Amen.

### **An Excerpt from Luther's Writings**

“Now it must indeed excite wonder that such things were proclaimed openly by Simeon in that public and sacred place with reference to that poor and insignificant Child, Whose mother was so humble and lowly and Whose father Joseph was not wealthy. How could such a Child be considered the Savior of all men, the Light of the Gentiles and the glory and honour of all Israel? At present, after we have had so many proofs of Christ's greatness, these words do no longer seem so wonderful; but then, when nothing as yet was known of Jesus, they were indeed marvellous, and this lowly Child was very unlike the great and mighty being portrayed by Simeon. But Joseph and Mary believed it nevertheless, and just therefore they marveled. If they had not believed it, the words of Simeon would have appeared to them insignificant, untrue and worthless, and not at all wonderful. Therefore, the fact that they were marveling, shows that Joseph and Mary possessed a strong and sublime faith.” *From the Church Postil for the First Sunday after Christmas, 1522.*

## **A Snippet From 1517**

*As Simeon sang, you might lead your hearers in a song of defiant and hopeful confidence to close out a year characterized by death and despair.*

What would it take for your hearers to depart in peace? I am not talking about exiting the worship service this Sunday. Neither do I have in mind finally leaving behind 2020. I am talking about departing from this life. I am talking about dying. Unless the Lord returns first, you and each of your hearers will depart; some sooner than we expect. We need to be ready. In this way, we need to become like Simeon. Having seen the Lord, he was ready to depart in peace. His song may be the perfect tune to lodge in the ears and hearts of your hearers on this first Sunday after Christmas...

...While it may seem a bit of a downer to focus on death two days after Jesus' birth, the hallmark of Christian preaching is its brutal honesty.

Kolb shows how Luther faced death head-on.

"Although we do not wish to call the life we have here a death," said the reformer, "nevertheless, it is surely nothing else than a continuous journey toward death. Just as a person infected with a plague has already started to die when the infection has set in, so also because of sin and because of death, the punishment for sin, this life can no longer properly be called life after it has been infected by sin. Right from our mother's womb we begin to die."<sup>[2]</sup>

It should not be hard to help your hearers take seriously the concept of death this year. All jokes about moving past 2020 aside, this year has been a global wake-up call about the fragility of life for all ages.

Speaking of age, we do not actually know how old Simeon was in the text. Most works of art picture him as an old man with a flowing white beard. This may come from an Eastern tradition that he was one of the translators of the Septuagint, which would make him really old. But the text does not actually say anything about his age. This year I find myself imagining Simeon much younger.

The intrusion of death into the lives of people of all ages highlights the singular and central significance of Jesus' resurrection. Contrary to so many memes, our hope is NOT in getting to 2021. Even during Christmas, the good news is founded only on the empty tomb ([1 Corinthians 15](#)). This was how Luther prepared his hearers to die well. He proclaimed the promise of resurrection for all who, by faith and their baptism, are united to the crucified and risen Christ. It is your job (and joy) to proclaim this promise to your hearers. The One who has overcome death has shared His eternal life with you. Even during Christmas, the good news is founded only on the empty tomb.

In this way, you are doing in your sermon what the Holy Spirit did for Simeon before his encounter with Jesus. "It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ" ([Luke 2:26](#)). In your sermon you will be showing your hearers the Lord's Christ. Seeing Him by faith, they will not see death eternally. Death, for them, will be a passage to life. Their departure, then, is not something to fear, but something to recognize and anticipate in peace. This is not an act of resignation, but thanksgiving and active service toward others.

As Simeon sang, you might lead your hearers in a song of defiant and hopeful confidence to close out a year characterized by death and despair. "Lord, now you are letting your servant[s] depart in peace, according to your word; for [our] eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared [for us] in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." *Peter Nafzger, 2021*