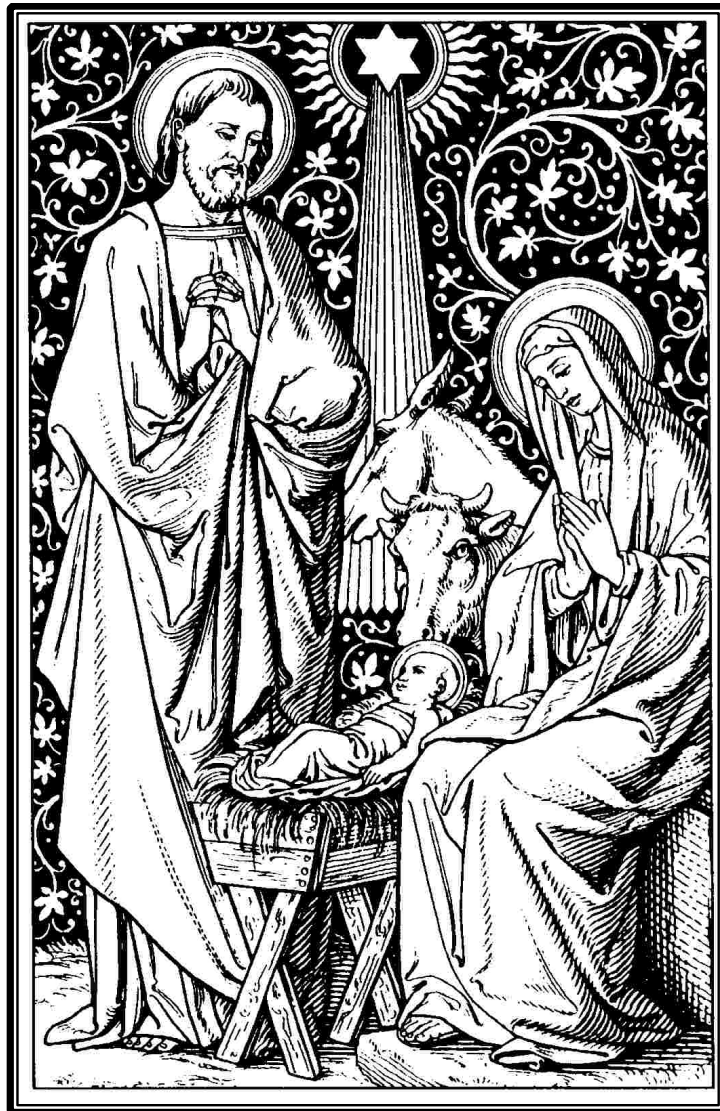


Our Saviour

Lutheran Church



FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS 2023

A Service of Holy Communion

A Christmas Poem

This is a poem by St. Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours (1055-1133). It was translated by John Mason Neale, an Anglican priest.

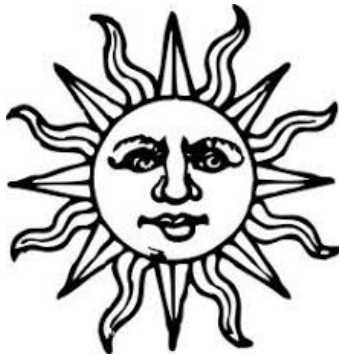
Two Suns appear to man to-day: one made,
One Maker: one eternal, one to fade.
One the stars' King; the King of *their* King, one:
This makes, – that bids him make, – the hours to run.

The Sun shines with the True Sun, ray with ray,
Light with light, Day with Him That makes the day.
Day without night, without seed bears she fruit,
Unwedded Mother, Flower without a root.

She than all greater: He the greatest still:
She filled by Him Whose glories all things fill.
That night is almost day, and yields to none,
Wherein God flesh, wherein Flesh God, put on.

The undone is done again; attuned the jar:
Sun precedes day: the Morn, the morning star.
True Sun, and Very Light, and Very Day:
God was that Sun, and God its Light and ray.

How bare the Virgin, ask'st thou, God and man?
I know not: but I know God all things can.



GATHERING

God brings us together in repentance and joy

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All stand as the presiding minister begins.

In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The presiding minister may comment briefly upon the service of the day, and then invites the assembly to confess.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.

Lord of grace and truth, we confess our unworthiness to stand in your presence as your children. We have sinned:
forgive and heal us.

The Virgin Mary accepted your call to be the mother of Jesus. Forgive our disobedience to your will. We have sinned:
forgive and heal us.

Your Son our Saviour was born in poverty in a manger. Forgive our greed and rejection of your ways. We have sinned:
forgive and heal us.

The shepherds left their flocks to go to Bethlehem. Forgive our self-interest and lack of vision. We have sinned:
forgive and heal us.

The wise men followed the star to find Jesus the King. Forgive our reluctance to seek you. We have sinned:
forgive and heal us.

The presiding minister announces God's forgiveness, beginning with the words of Ephesians 2:4-5.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
 2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
 3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,

once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
 God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.
 seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.
 ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing 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: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4
 Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

APOSTOLIC GREETING

As the song concludes, the presiding minister and the assembly greet one another with the words of 2 Corinthians 13:14.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

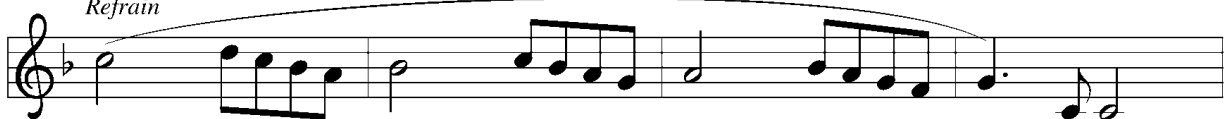
And also with you.



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
 2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi-lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



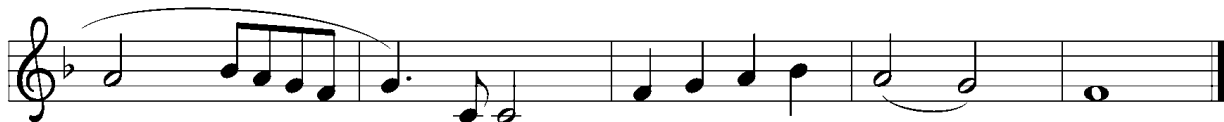
and the moun-tains in re - ply, ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
 What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
 come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king.

Refrain

Glo - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo -



- ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The presiding minister offers the Prayer of the Day.

Let us pray. Almighty God, you gave us your only Son to take on our human nature and to illumine the world with your light. By your grace adopt us as your children and enlighten us with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING

A reading from Isaiah.

(Isaiah 61:10-62:3)

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.

¹¹For 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.

^{62:1}For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.

²The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.

³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The reading concludes:

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE PSALM

(*Psalm 148*)

Hallelujah! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise God in the heights.

²Praise the LORD, all you angels; sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.

³Praise the LORD, sun and moon; sing praise, all you shining stars.

⁴Praise the LORD, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the
heavens.

⁵Let them praise the name of the LORD, who commanded, and they were
created,

⁶who made them stand fast forever and ever, giving them a law that
shall not pass away.

⁷Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;

⁸fire and hail, snow and fog, tempestuous wind, doing God's will;

⁹mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;

¹⁰wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds;

¹¹sovereigns of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the
world;

¹²young men and maidens, old and young together.

¹³Let them praise the name of the LORD, whose name only is exalted,
whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

¹⁴The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD. Hallelujah!

SECOND READING:

A reading from Galatians

(Galatians 4:4-7)

When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The reading concludes:

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel in the words of Colossians 3:15 & 16.

Alleluia. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
and let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

The holy gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God,

saying,

²⁹“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

³³And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was
being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to
his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the
rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so
that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword
will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of
the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her
husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the
age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there
with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she
came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all
who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

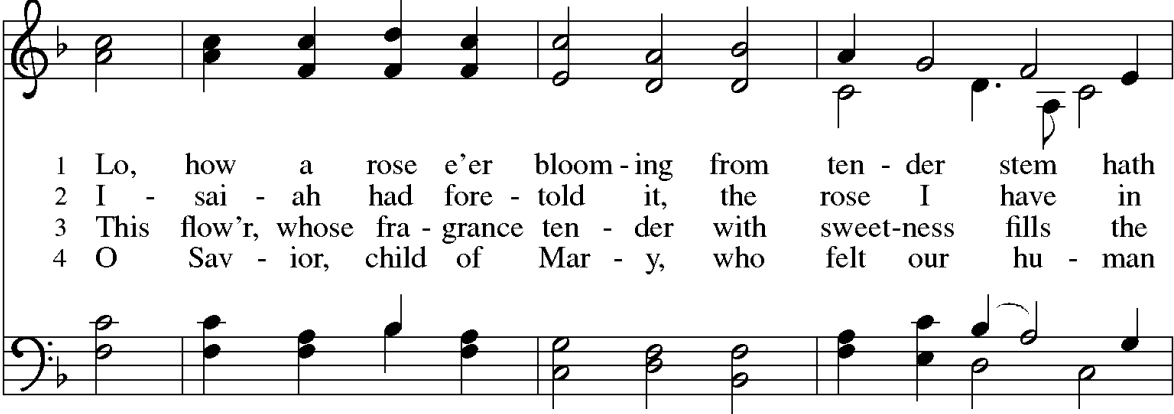
³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the
Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of
Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with
wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The gospel concludes:

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.


SERMON



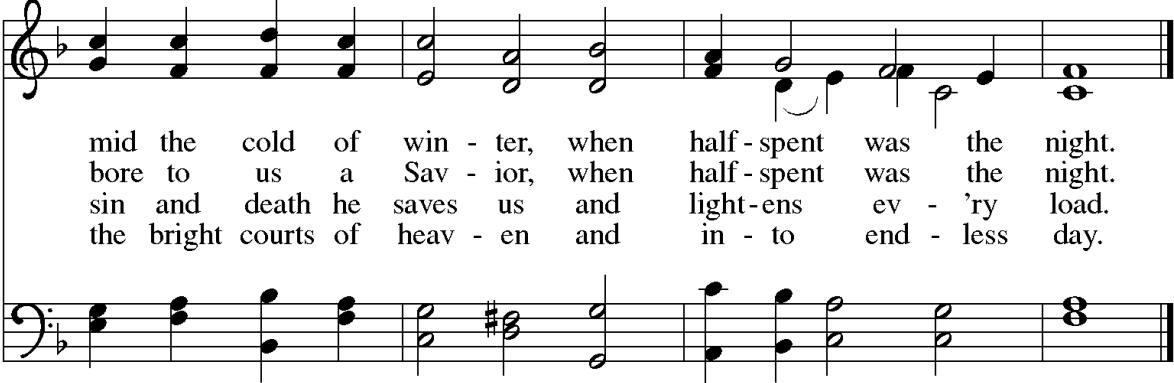
1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
 2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
 3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet - ness fills the
 4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man



sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
 mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
 air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
 woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who



seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
 vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
 dark - ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
 dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to



mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
 bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
 sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.
 the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851–1934, sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth,
 1845–1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876–1948, st. 4

Music: ES IST EIN ROS, *Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesänge*, Köln, 1599; arr. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621



THE 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, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.

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, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who 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

Prayers are offered for the church, the world, and all in need. After each petition:

Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

A brief silence.

You are the source of love and joy, of hope and reconciliation. Bless bishops, pastors, deacons and lay leaders, so that these gifts may be found in your church by all who seek them. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your praise is sung throughout creation in all times and seasons. As the new year turns, ground us in your changeless and sustaining love. Keep us attentive to the rhythms of the cosmos and inspire us to live in harmony with all the earth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Give hope and stamina to leaders who work tirelessly for the sake of the most vulnerable. We pray especially for organizations working on behalf of children to provide basic needs, to protect from abuse and neglect, to address trauma, and to rescue from trafficking. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Let this community of faith be a joyful and welcome place for all ages and generations, and for all people in the fullness of their being. Raise up the gifts and the witness of people who are neurodivergent, living with disability, or bearing invisible illness. Teach us to honor the wisdom of children, the inquisitiveness of youth, the thoughtfulness of adults, and the knowledge of elders. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Sustain all people who, like Simeon and Anna, have been waiting for salvation and wholeness. We pray for anyone living with cancer or chronic illness, all people who are in physical rehabilitation or addiction recovery, and those experiencing complications from long COVID (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for all the beloved who lived with expectation and departed this life in peace (*especially*). Sustain us in joy until we join them around your throne. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

Amen.

PEACE

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

*The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.
The assembly is seated.*

MEAL

OFFERING

As the offering is gathered, we remain seated and sing.

Let All Mortal Flesh

ELW 490



1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and trem - bling stand;
2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on earth he stood,
3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van - guard on the way;
4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim with sleep - less eye,



pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed, for with bless - ing in his hand
Lord of lords in hu - man ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,
as the Light of light, de - scend - ing from the realms of end - less day,
veil their fac - es to the pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry:



Christ our God to earth de - scend - ing comes full hom - age to de - mand.
he will give to all the faith - ful his own self for heav'n - ly food.
comes, the pow'rs of hell to van - quish, as the dark - ness clears a - way.
"Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!"

Text: Liturgy of St. James; tr. Gerard Moultrie, 1829–1885, alt.

Music: PICARDY, French folk tune, 17th cent.

OFFERING PRAYER

The assisting minister offers this or a similar prayer.

Let us pray together. *[A brief silence]*

God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.

DIALOGUE

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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among
us, full of grace and truth.

We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.

We look with hope for his coming.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people.

Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God
incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

The presiding minister may introduce 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

The presiding minister addresses the assembly in the words of Isaiah 9:6:

**Unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given**

The assembly may be seated.

COMMUNION

All baptized Christians are welcome to receive Christ in his Supper. Those who do not receive may come forward with their arms crossed over their chest, and receive a pastoral blessing. Those who refrain from either or both may do so trusting that Christ is truly present for them according to his promise.

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say

**The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.**

and each person may respond

Amen.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

Music will play as all come forward to receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

BLESSING

After all have returned to their places, the assembly stands. The presiding minister gives a table blessing.

**May the true Body of our Lord Jesus Christ and his most precious Blood
bless you and preserve you unto everlasting life.**

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

The assisting minister offers this or a similar prayer.

Let us pray. *[A brief pause]*

God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

SOLEMN BENEDICTION

The presiding minister blesses the assembly

When he came to us as a man, the Son of God scattered the darkness of this world, and filled this holy day with his glory. May the God of infinite goodness scatter the darkness of sin and brighten your hearts with holiness.

Amen!

God sent his angels to shepherds to herald the great joy of our Savior's birth. May the God of infinite mercy fill you with joy and make you heralds of his gospel.

Amen!

When the Word became flesh, earth was joined to heaven. May the God of infinite love give you His peace and good will, and fellowship with all the heavenly host.

Amen!

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

Amen!





1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the
 2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der. Love is God now a -
 3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us! Love is life ev - er -



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;
 sleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his moth - er;
 last - ing and free. Love is Je - sus with - in and a - mong us.



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to
 what is the name her heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the
 Love is the peace our hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
 name she whis - pers; Love! Love! Je - sus, Im - man - u - el.
 gift of Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950

Music: UN FLAMBEAU, F. Seguin, *Recueil de noëls composés en langue provençale*, 1856

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DISMISSAL

The assisting minister sends the assembly into mission.

Go in peace. Christ is with us.

Thanks be to God.



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