

December 21, 2025  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent  
Messiah Lutheran Church, Amherst, NH

PRELUDE

Steve Kennedy

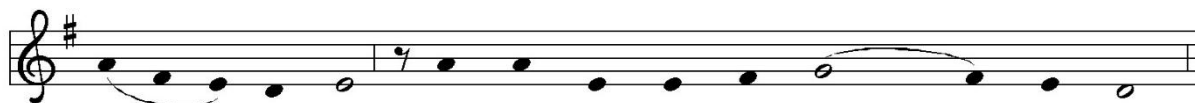


WELCOME

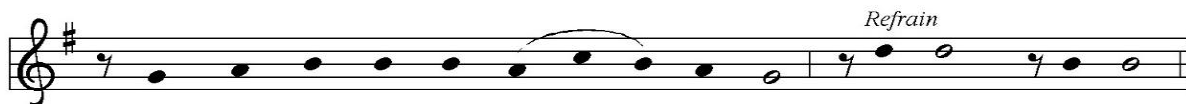
YULE LOG      ELW 257      O Come, O Come, Emmanuel vv. 1-4



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things  
3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on  
4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;  
Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law  
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!  
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.  
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

Text: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite  
Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.  
Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

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## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

One: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

**All: Amen.**

One: Let us confess our sin and come to God for healing.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

One: Gracious God,

**All: have mercy on us.  
We confess that we have honored you with our lips,  
but have harmed our neighbors with our tongues.  
The cravings at war within us  
cause conflicts and disputes.**

**In our desire to be first  
we make distinctions among ourselves.  
We place the needs of the poor and the suffering  
last.**

**In your great mercy, forgive us our sins.  
Draw near to us with grace in time of need,  
and turn us to follow in the way of Jesus Christ,  
our Savior and Lord.  
Amen.**

One: God promises to forgive our iniquity  
and to remember our sin no more.  
By grace you have been saved.  
In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ,  
the source of eternal healing,  
your sins are forgiven.

**All: Amen.**



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;  
2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.  
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,  
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev-'ry na-tion, joy of ev-'ry long-ing heart.  
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer-it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

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

All: And also with you.

## KYRIE

*Assistant:* In peace, in peace,

**Refrain**

*Assistant:* *Congregation:*

Let us pray to the Lord, have mer - cy, Christ, have mer - cy, Lord, have mer - cy. *to Verses*

*Assistant:* For the Reign of God, and for peace throughout the world, for the unity of all . . . (to Refrain)

*Assistant:* For your people here, who have come to give you praise, for the strength to live your Word . . . (to Refrain)

*Assistant:*

Help, save and de - fend us, O God.

*Congregation:*

A - men.

## NOW THE FEAST

### Refrain

*Congregation:*

Now the feast and cel - e - bra - tion,  
all of cre - a - tion sings for joy  
to the God of life and love and  
free - dom: praise and glo - ry for ev -  
er - more!

### Verse 1

*Congregation or Congregation 1:*

1. Now is the feast of the Lamb once  
slain, whose blood has freed and u -  
nit-ed us to be one great peo - ple of  
God. *to Refrain*

## Verse 2

*Congregation or Congregation 2:*

2. Pow - er and rich-es, wis - dom and  
might, all hon - or and glo - ry to Christ  
for ev - er. *to Refrain*

## Verse 3

*Congregation:*

3. For God has come to dwell with us, to  
make us peo - ple of God; to make  
all things new. *to Refrain*

## SALUTATION

*Presider:**Congregation:*

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

One:        Let us pray

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**All:        Amen.**

## **FIRST LESSON**

One:        A reading from 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah chapter:

<sup>10</sup>The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup>“Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” <sup>13</sup>Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

Word of God, word of life.        **All:        Thanks be to God.**



## PSALMODY 80:1-7, 17-19 (sung)

MLC Psalm tones by J. Abrams 2024

MLC Psalm Tone IV



<sup>1</sup> Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;  
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.

<sup>2</sup> **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh,**  
**stir up your strength and | come to help us.**

<sup>3</sup> Restore | us, O God;  
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.

<sup>4</sup> **O Lord | God of hosts,**  
**how long will your anger fume when your | people pray?**

<sup>5</sup> You have fed them with the | bread of tears;  
you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.

<sup>6</sup> **You have made us the derision | of our neighbors,**  
**and our enemies laugh | us to scorn.**

<sup>7</sup> Restore us, O | God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.

<sup>17</sup> **Let your hand be upon the one at | your right hand,**  
**the one you have made so strong | for yourself.**

<sup>18</sup> And so will we never turn a- | way from you;  
give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.

<sup>19</sup> **Restore us, O Lord | God of hosts;**  
**let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.**



## SECOND LESSON

One: A reading from Romans the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter:

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, <sup>3</sup> the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup> and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup> through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, <sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup> To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

One: Word of God, word of life.

All: Thanks be to God.

## GOSPEL VERSE

*Congregation:*



Al-le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we  
go? You have the words of e - ter - nal  
life. Al - le - lu - ia!

*Optional Repeat*

One: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.

**All: Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." <sup>24</sup> When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

One: The Gospel of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God.**

## **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

## **SERMON**

1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;  
 2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;  
 3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;  
 4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;

he came down that we may have love;  
 he came down that we may have light;  
 he came down that we may have peace; hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er - more.  
 he came down that we may have joy;

Text: Cameroon traditional

Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional; arr. John L. Bell, b. 1949

Arr. © 1986 Iona Community, GIA Publications, Inc., agent, 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. [www.giamusic.com](http://www.giamusic.com), 800.442.3358.

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## **CREED**

One: Together we confess our faith in the words of the Apostles  
Creed:

**All: I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and dead,  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## PRAYERS

One: Let us pray:

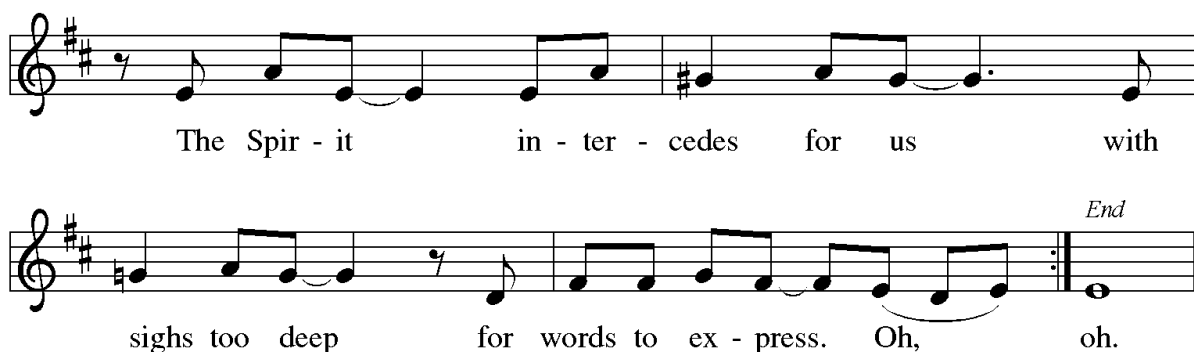
*A brief silence.*

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

*A brief silence.*

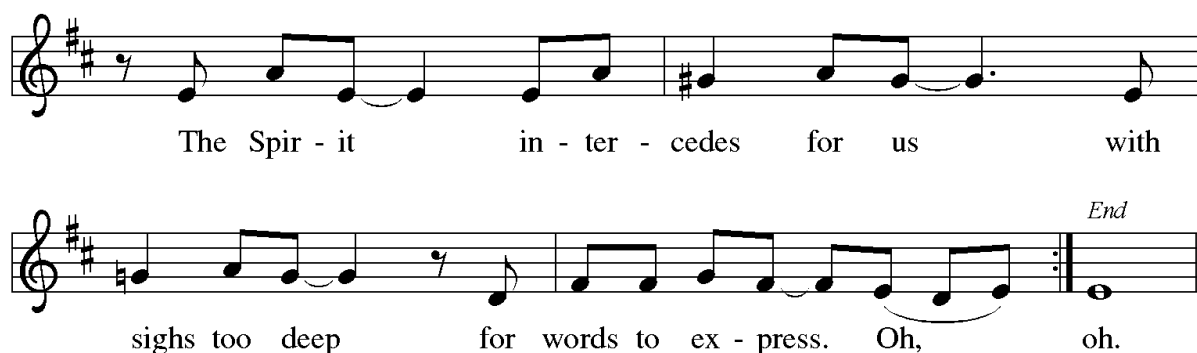
In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us.

... come Holy Spirit

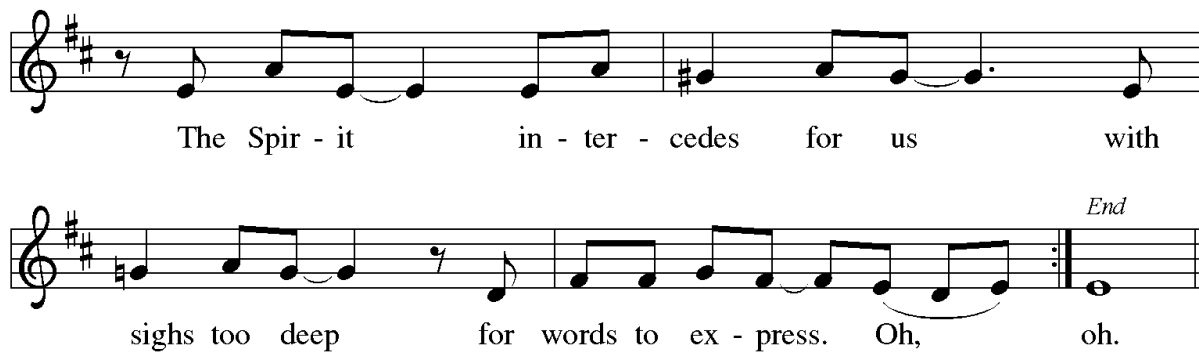


The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth.

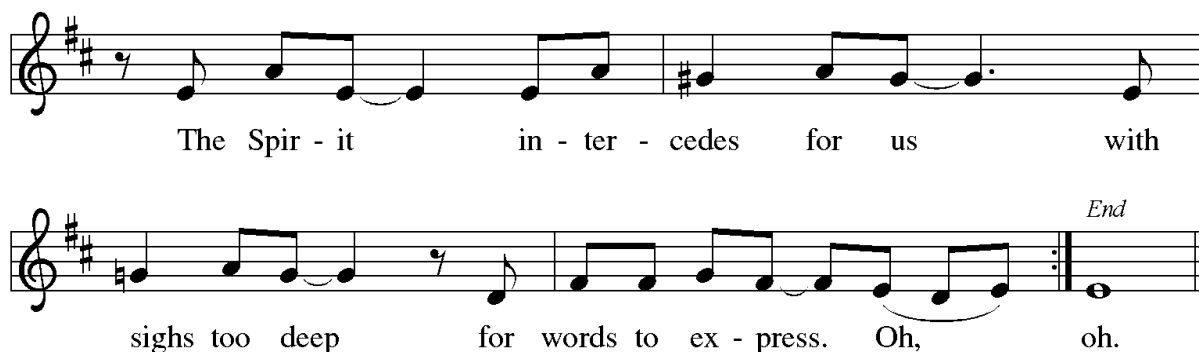
... Come Holy Spirit



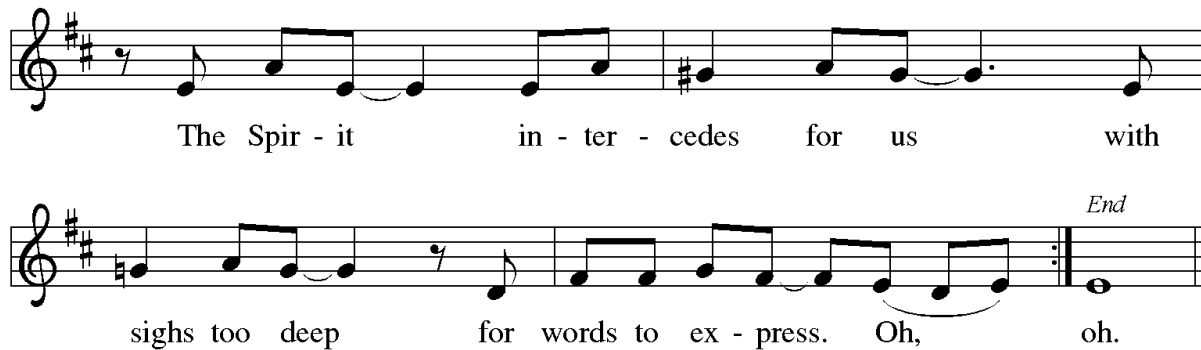
You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors.  
... come Holy Spirit



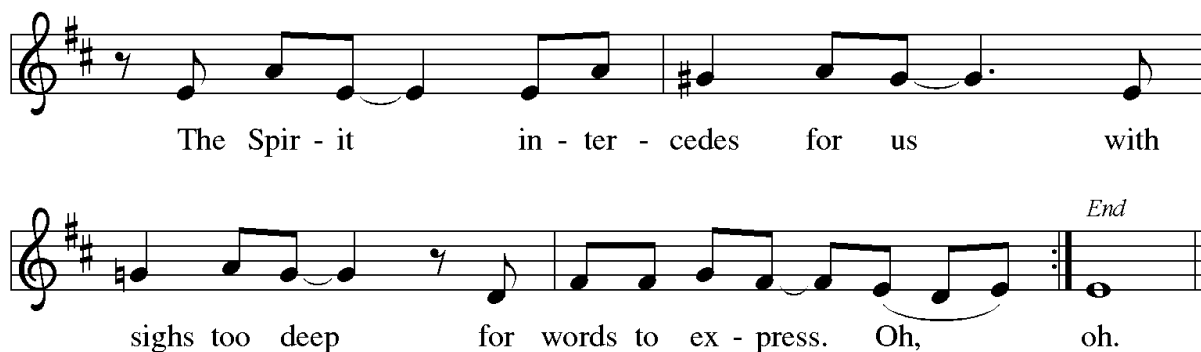
When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill (*especially*) Claudette Briere, Ed Costa, Norm and Polly Cote, Deloris Jay, Carol Clark, Elia Herlinda Soteldo Cuica, Kayann Laughlin, Timothy Alexander, The Wurst Family, Rev Bob Kocher, Carly Hoeni, Shelly Stama, Eric Ball, Connor McCaffrey, Marc Bouchard, Jeffery Lindenberg, Jim Bellig, Diane Hazel, Linnea Micciulla, Phil Stinnett, Susan Poutre, Krista Seckinger, Carly King, Christine Covell, the Demello family, Connie Wisneski, John and Wilma Minnick.  
... come Holy Spirit



You invite all people to your table of grace. Make this a community of radical hospitality where all feel loved and celebrated. Show us how to better welcome visitors and bless the ministries of hospitality in this place such as ELCA World Hunger and our local food pantries including Share, bless the efforts of AMMPARO, the ELCA congregations of the New Hampshire conference, Habitat for Humanity, Lutheran Disaster Response, Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Family Promise of Southern New Hampshire, Border Servant Corps, His mansion.  
...come Holy Spirit



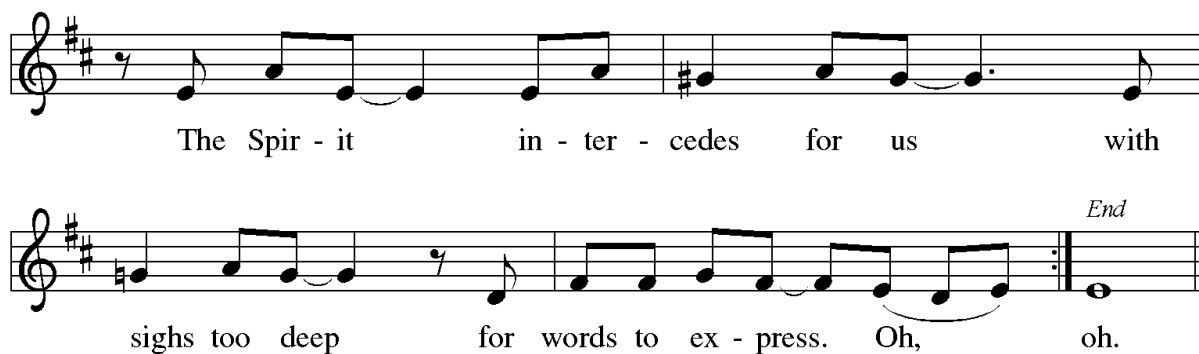
Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them.  
... come Holy Spirit



*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your in love.  
... come Holy Spirit





Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

**Amen.**

## **PEACE**

One: The peace of the Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

## **OFFERING**

## AS THE GRAINS OF WHEAT

### Refrain

*Congregation:*



As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were  
gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread;  
so may all your peo-ple from all the ends of earth be  
gath-ered in - to one in you.

### Verses



1. As this cup of bless-ing is shared with-in our midst  
2. Let this be a fore-taste of all that is to come when  
may we share the pres-ence of your love.  
all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

One: Let us pray:

Merciful God,

**All: everything in heaven and earth belongs to you. We joyfully release what you have entrusted to us. May these gifts be signs of our whole lives returned to you, dedicated to the healing and unity of all creation, through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

# THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*Presider:* *Congregation:*

The Lord be with you. And al - so with

*Presider:* *Congregation:*

you. Lift up your hearts. We

*Presider:*

lift them to the Lord. Let us give

*Congregation:*

thanks to the Lord our God. It is

right to give God thanks and praise.

## PREFACE

In altar version of "Now the Feast and Celebration"

*Congregation:*

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly are you, God of pow - er and  
might; Heav - en and earth are filled with your  
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est! Bless - ed is the  
One who comes in your name. Ho - san - na in the  
high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est!

## EUCHARISTIC ACCLAMATION 1 (for use with other Eucharistic prayers)

*Presider:*

Christ has died. Christ is ris - en. Christ will

*Congregation:*

come, come a - gain. Christ has died. Christ is  
ris - en. Christ will come, come a - gain.

## EUCCHARISTIC ACCLAMATION 2

*Presider:*

A - men. Come, Lord Je - sus. A -

*Congregation:*

men. Come, Lord Je - sus. A - men. Come, Lord

Je - sus. A - men. Come, Lord Je - sus.

## EUCCHARISTIC ACCLAMATION 3

*Presider:*

A - men. Come, Ho - ly Spir - it. A -

*Congregation:*

men. Come, Ho - ly Spir - it. A - men. Come, Ho - ly

Spir - it. A - men. Come, Ho - ly Spir - it.

## THROUGH CHRIST, WITH CHRIST, IN CHRIST

*Congregation:*

The musical score is written on four staves in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: 'Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the u - ni - ty of the Spir - it, all glo - ry and hon - or is yours, O God, now and for ev - er. A - men.' The final note of the melody is a whole note on the G# line, followed by a double bar line.

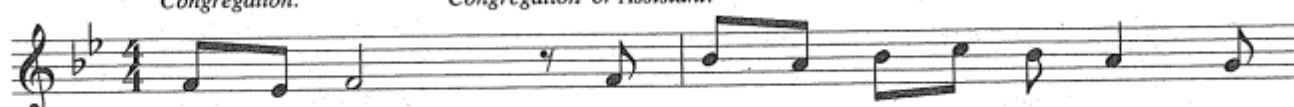
Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the  
u - ni - ty of the Spir - it, all glo - ry and hon - or is  
yours, O God, now and for ev - er.  
A - men.

One: Together we pray the prayer our Lord taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven,  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
As we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**


# LAMB OF GOD

*Congregation:*      *Congregation or Assistant:*




Lamb of God,      you take a - way the sin of the  
 \* you break the chains of ha - tred and  
 you are the way of jus - tice and  
 you are the way of mer - cy and

*Congregation:*




world:  
 fear:      have mer - cy on us,      mer - cy on us,  
 peace:  
 love:

*Final time Cong. or assistant:*

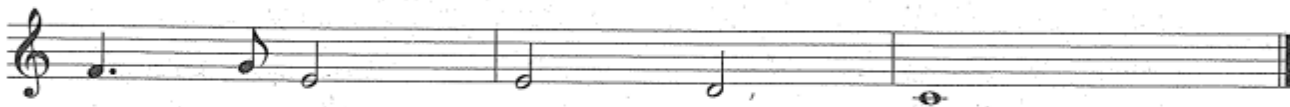


mer - cy on us.      Lamb of God,      you

*Congregation:*



take a - way the sins of the world:      grant us peace,



grant us peace,      grant us peace.

*\*At the repeat, one or more of these verses may be sung, or one of the seasonal verses which follow.*

*Advent:*      You give us hope as we wait for you:



COMMUNION HYMN      ELW 496      One Bread, One Body

*Refrain*



One bread, one bod - y,                      one Lord of all;                      one cup of



bles - ing which we bless,                      and we, though man - y



through - out the earth,                      we are one bod - y in this one Lord.



1 Gen - tile or Jew,                      ser - vant or free,  
2 Man - y the gifts,                      man - y the works,  
3 Grain for the fields,                      scat - tered and grown,



*Refrain*

wom - an or man,                      no more.  
one in the Lord                      of all.  
gath - ered to one                      for all.

Text: John Foley, SJ, b. 1939

Music: ONE BREAD, ONE BODY, John Foley, SJ

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*After all have returned to their places, the minister may say these or similar words:*

*Presider:* May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the gifts of his body and blood strengthen, keep and unite us, now and for ever.

*Congregation:* **Amen.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **BLESSING**

One: Receive a blessing from the Lord:

May God bless us and keep us.

May God's face shine on us and be gracious

May God look on us with favor and ☩ give us peace.

**All: Amen.**

# SENDING HYMN    ELW 723    Canticle of the Turning



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the  
2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .  
3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a  
4 Though the na - tions rage from . . age to age, we re -



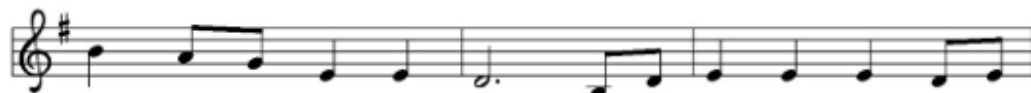
God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the  
work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the  
stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your  
mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.  
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.  
jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . from his throne.  
liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my  
Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to  
The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the  
This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my  
those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the  
food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry  
prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?  
strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.  
crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



*Refrain*  
My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.



Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat  
Music: STAR OF COUNTY DOWN, Irish traditional  
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One: Go in peace and serve the Lord  
All: **Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

**Steve Kennedy**

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flame image on yule log Designed by macrovector\_official / Freepik

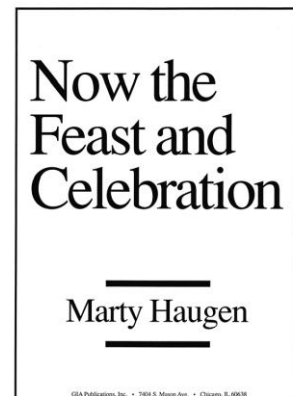
## WORSHIP LEADERS

Pastor Karl Hester

### **Musician**

Steve Kennedy

## LITURGY



Messiah Lutheran Church  
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Amherst, NH 03031  
[www.messiahnh.org](http://www.messiahnh.org)

<b>WORSHIP ASSISTANTS</b>	<b>Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent</b>	<b>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 4:00 pm</b>	<b>Dec. 28<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas</b>
<b>Preacher &amp; Presider</b>	<b>K. Hester</b>	<b>K. Hester</b>	<b>K. Hester</b>
<b>Liturgist</b>	<b>T. Costa</b>	<b>T. Costa</b>	<b>B. Mitchell</b>
<b>Musician</b>	<b>Steve Kennedy</b>	<b>J. Abrams</b>	<b>J. Abrams</b>
<b>Reader</b>	<b>S. Steffensmeier</b>	<b>K. Brundage</b>	<b>Doreen Rinas</b>
<b>Greeters/Ushers</b>	<b>Balls</b>	<b>G. De Noble</b>	<b>Drakes</b>
<b>Altar</b>	<b>R. Meldrum</b>		<b>T. Drake</b>
<b>Bread</b>	<b>Schurs</b>	<b>D. Cordts</b>	<b>T. Costa</b>
<b>Tech</b>	<b>D. Schur</b>		<b>R. Neukam</b>
<b>Snacks</b>	<b>R. Meldrum &amp; Doreen Rinas</b>	<b>Not Needed</b>	<b>K. Hester</b>
<b>Lead Counter</b>	<b>L. Rosse</b>		<b>B. Mitchell</b>