



**Third Sunday of Advent**

**December 14, 2025**

**We hope you feel welcome here.**

St. Thomas Lutheran Church is a Christ-centered community that lives, shares, and celebrates God's grace with all people!

As disciples of Christ who value the faith, gifts, and ministry of all God's people, and who seek justice, racial equity, and reconciliation, we welcome all God's children to an inclusive community. This welcome is extended without exception and regardless of sex, race, national origin, educational background, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical and mental ability, age, or economic condition.

## **We hope you can participate fully in worship.**

Today's worship service is printed in this bulletin; the hymns are found in the back third of the red *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW) or purple *All Creation Sings* (ACS) found under the seat in front of you. Places to stand are marked with \* and to respond are indicated with bold type. Please sit, stand, and move as you need to be comfortable. Use a blue chair with arms or move orange chairs to accommodate mobility needs. Assisted hearing devices and large-print worship aids are available from an ushers.

Our youngest worshipers may appreciate the Prayer Pond in the worship space or listening to the service from our unstaffed nursery. Activity bags are available in the narthex and children's bulletins are available from an usher.

## **We hope you know Holy Communion is for you.**

At communion, everyone is welcome. This includes doubters, young children, and folks who have yearned for this feast. Come forward at the direction of an usher and receive hand-torn bread or gluten-free wafers and pink wine or red grape juice. If you have mobility limitations, please take the closest available place at the altar, or ask an usher for Communion to be brought to you at your seat.

## **We hope you know our welcome extends beyond our building.**

Gifts placed in the offering plate during the worship service contribute to this mission. Today's 8:30 a.m. service is livestreamed. By attending this service, you are giving permission to be in the video we produce.

## **We hope you know we pray for you.**

We would love to pray for the concerns of your heart during this service. Prayer request slips are located on the table near the main doors.

## **+ GATHERING +**

### **PRELUDE**

Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness

Johannes Brahms

### **WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **\*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

**C: Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: To you, O God,

**C: all hearts are open, to you all desires known. We come to you, confessing our sins. Forgive us in your mercy, and remember us in your love. Show us your ways; teach us your paths; and lead us in justice and truth, for the sake of your goodness in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of word and sacrament in the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

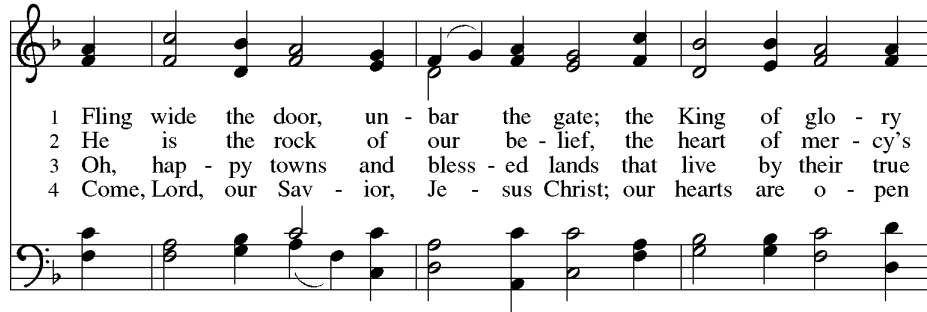
**C: Amen.**

\*ENTRANCE HYMN

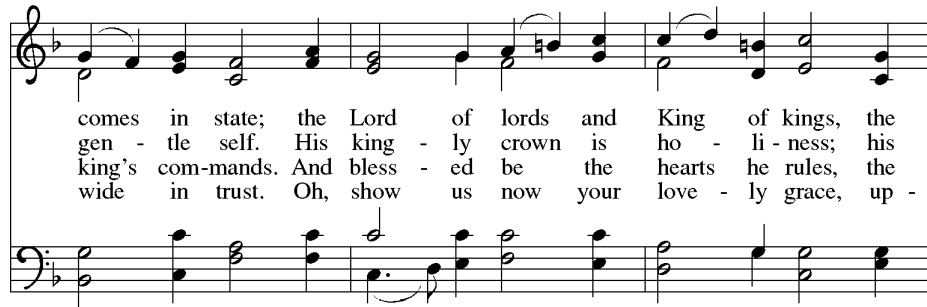
Fling Wide the Door

ELW #259

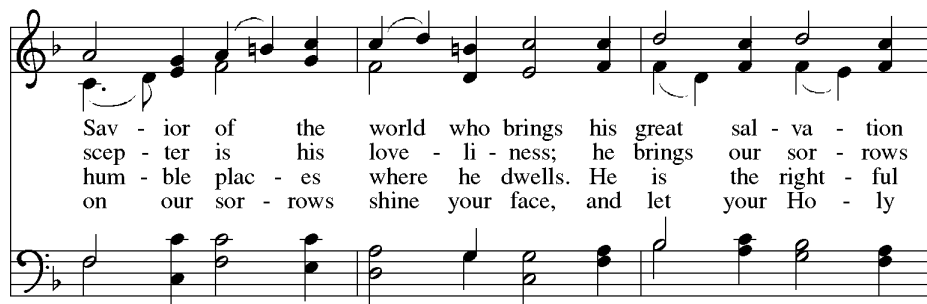
# Fling Wide the Door



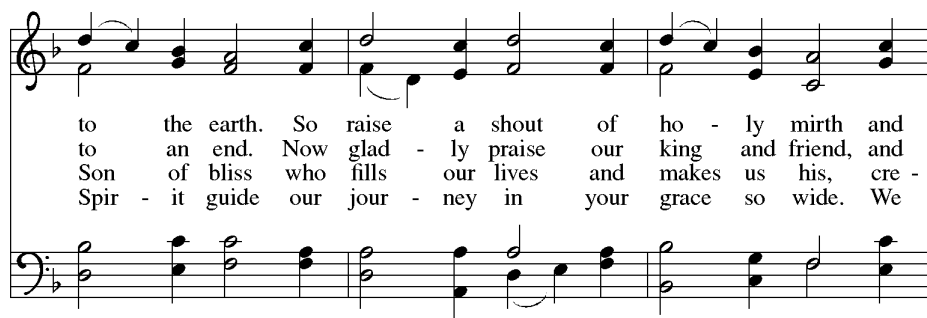
1 Fling wide the door, un - bar the gate; the King of glo - ry  
 2 He is the rock of our be - lief, the heart of mer - cy's  
 3 Oh, hap - py towns and bless - ed lands that live by their true  
 4 Come, Lord, our Sav - ior, Je - sus Christ; our hearts are o - pen



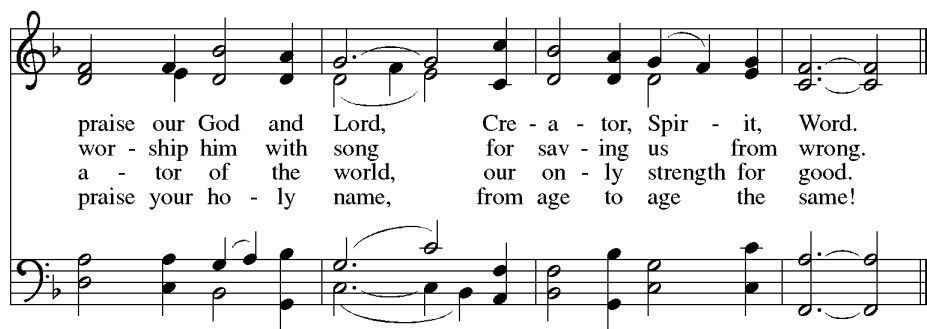
comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the  
 gen - tle self. His king - ly crown is ho - li - ness; his  
 king's com - mands. And bless - ed be the hearts he rules, the  
 wide in trust. Oh, show us now your love - ly grace, up -



Sav - ior of the world who brings his great sal - va - tion  
 scep - ter is his love - li - ness; he brings our sor - rows  
 hum - ble plac - es where he dwells. He is the right - ful  
 on our sor - rows shine your face, and let your Ho - ly



to the earth. So raise a shout of ho - ly mirth and  
 to an end. Now glad - ly praise our king and friend, and  
 Son of bliss who fills our lives and makes us his, cre -  
 Spir - it guide our jour - ney in your grace so wide. We



praise our God and Lord, Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Word.  
 wor - ship him with song for sav - ing us from wrong.  
 a - tor of the world, our on - ly strength for good.  
 praise your ho - ly name, from age to age the same!

\*GREETING

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

**C: And also with you.**



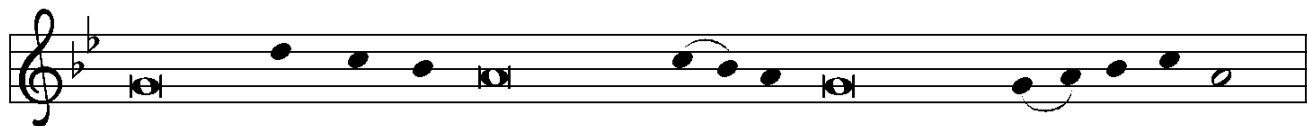
# \*KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



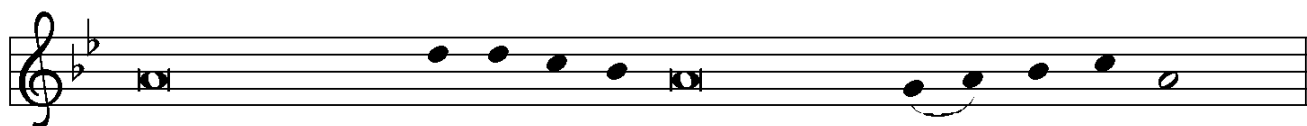
For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



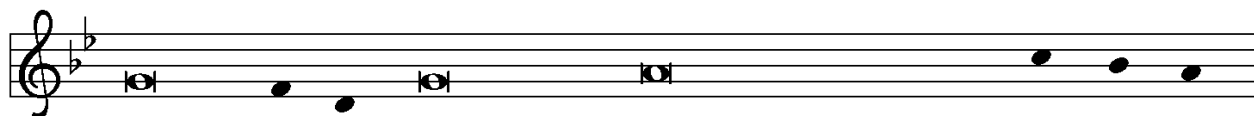
For the peace of the whole world, for the well - being of the church of



God, and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



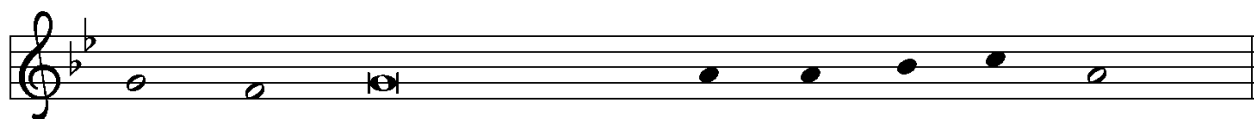
For this ho - ly house, and for all who offer here their wor - ship and



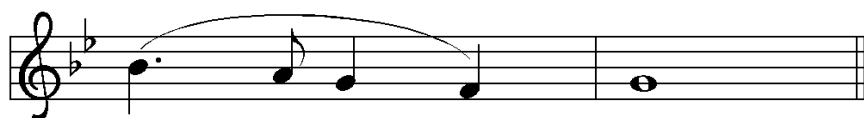
praise, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men.

## \*PRAYER FOR THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

P: Let us pray. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. Your prophets spoke of a day when the desert would blossom and waters would break forth in the wilderness. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Strengthen our hearts as we prepare for the coming of the Lord. May he give water to all who thirst, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever.

**C: Amen.**

## \*HYMN FOR THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;

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

December 14: peace, light, joy

December 21: peace, light, joy, love

## \*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray. Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## **+WORD+**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Pr. Lecia Beck

FIRST READING

Isaiah 35:1-10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and shouting.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord,  
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands  
and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
"Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

Who will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.

God will come and save you."

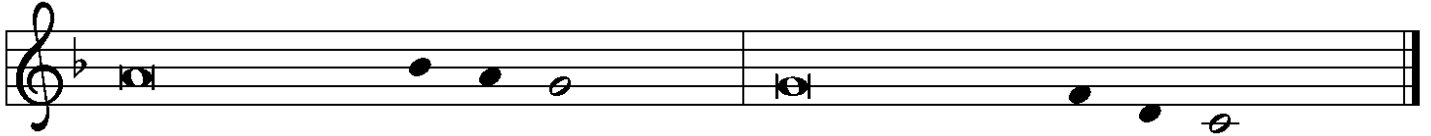
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;  
then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for  
joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.  
A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.  
No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on  
it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

L: Word of God, word of life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

Luke 1:46b-55



My soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior,  
**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on  
your | lowly servant.**

**From this day all generations will | call  
me blessed:**

you, the Almighty, have done great | things for  
me

and holy | is your name.

**You have mercy on | those who fear you,  
from generation to | generation.**

You have shown strength | with your arm  
and scattered the proud in | their conceit,  
**casting down the mighty | from their  
thrones**

**and lifting | up the lowly.**

You have filled the hungry | with good things  
and sent the rich | away empty.

**You have come to the aid of your | servant  
Israel,**

**to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,**  
the promise made | to our forebears,  
to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever.

## SECOND READING

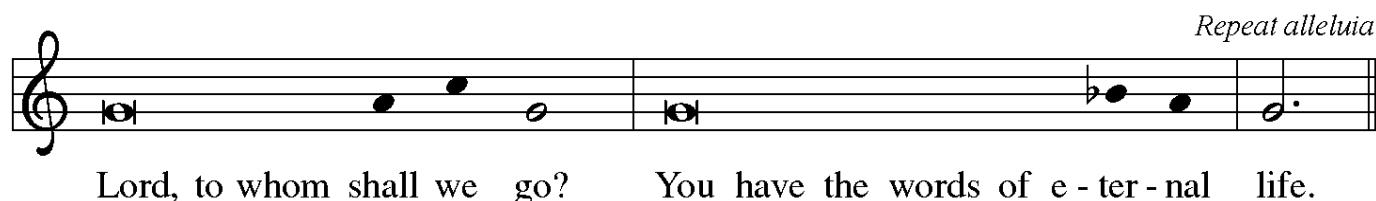
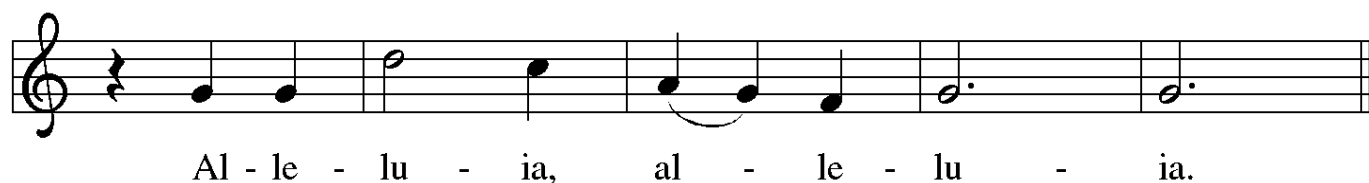
James 5:7-10

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

L: Word of God, word of life.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eleventh chapter.

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

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,



'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way before you.'

"Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

P: The Gospel of Our Lord!

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Pr. Adrienne Meier

\*HYMN OF THE DAY


Prepare the Royal Highway

ELW#264

# Prepare the Royal Highway



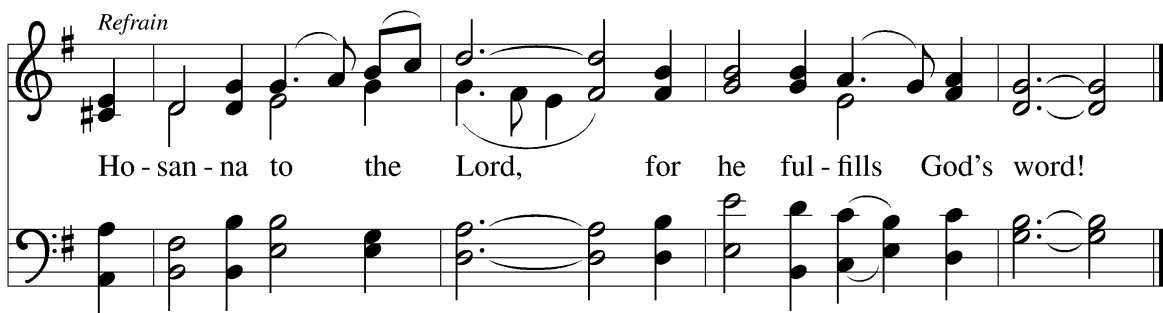
1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!  
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!  
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!  
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!  
Palm branch-es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!  
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.  
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!  
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:  
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



*Refrain*  
Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

**\*NICENE CREED**

**A: With the whole church, let us confess our faith.**

**C: 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 THE CHURCH

A: 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.*

A: God of mercy, we praise you for Jesus who came to the world not in a seat of power but among the marginalized. As we reach toward his birth, inspire your church toward resistance against oppression all over the world. God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: In this season of darkening days, help us to appreciate darkness as a holy part of your creation. Keep safe the animals and plants who use this season of darkness as one of rebirth. God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. In conflict, inspire people to compassion and love. God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: For those whose bodies or minds present challenges or uncertainty, we ask for your persistent presence, O God. We pray especially for David, Ken, Gloria, Jonathan, John, Leslie, Lynn, Dallis, Doug, Yvonne, Kent, and Mark. In times of bodily transition and change help us to find sanctuary within. God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant especially Hoosier Hills Food Bank and Bloomington Severe Emergency Winter Shelter. God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

A: As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith especially Mary, mother of Jesus, and John of the Cross. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace,

**C: hear our prayer.**

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

**C: Amen.**

**\*SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

*Share the peace with a wave, a bow, or maybe an elbow, checking in with your neighbor for whatever feels safe and conveys the spirit of peace and reconciliation this ritual intends.*

## OFFERING

*Please sign and pass the **Together In Community pads**. Make note of the names of your neighbors so you can introduce yourself after the service.*

*An offering is collected as a grateful response for all of God's gifts. Gifts support St. Thomas's mission of living, sharing, and celebrating God's grace with all people. A portion of our offerings support Lutheran Campus Ministries at IU/Rose House and many local, national, and international ministry partners. **You may place gifts in the offering plate as it reaches you or give on our website, [stlconline.org](http://stlconline.org) (the QR code above on the right will direct you).***



*Use the QR code on the left to add you volunteer hours to our 5000-hour challenge.*



8:30 a.m. only  
ORGAN OFFERTORY

Matthew Benkert

11 a.m. only  
CHORAL ANTHEM

E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come

Paul Manz

\*OFFERTORY HYMN  
People Look East

ELW#248  
*verse 3 only*

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,  
one more light the bowl shall brim,  
shining beyond the frosty weather,  
bright as sun and moon together.  
People, look east, and sing today—  
Love, the Star, is on the way

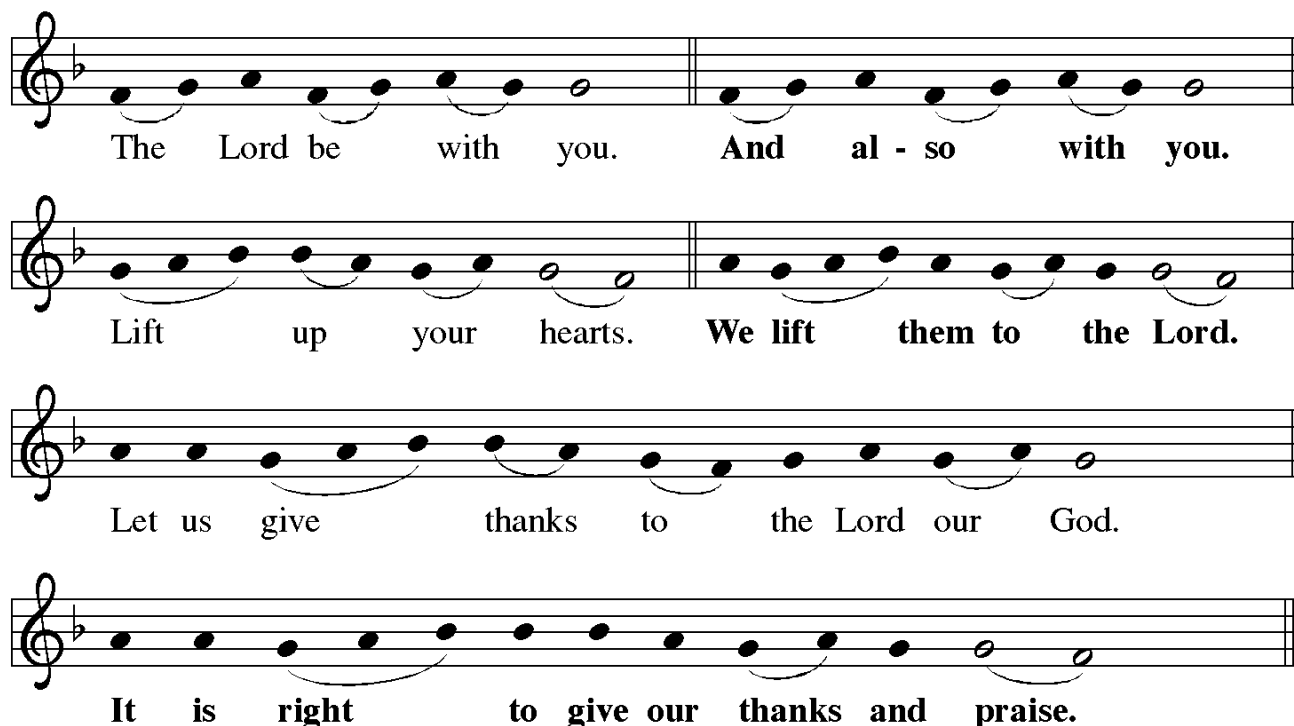
\*OFFERTORY PRAYER

A: Let us pray. God of abundance, we bring  
before you the precious fruits of your creation,  
and with them our very lives. Teach us patience  
and hope as we care for all those in need until  
the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

## + MEAL +

### \*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING



P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and

might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -

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

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -

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

## \*EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P: 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.

P: 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.

P: 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.

P: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P: 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.

**C: Come, Lord Jesus.**

P: 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.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit.**

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

**C: Amen.**

## \*LORD'S PRAYER

*Speak this prayer in your preferred language.  
The pastor will continue when all versions are  
complete. Ukrainian is provided on the next  
page.*

**C: 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.**

Otche nash, shcho yesi na nebesakh,  
nekhai sviatit'sia Im'ia Tvoie.  
Khai priide Tsarstvo Tvoie,  
nekhai bude volia Tvoia  
Yak na nebi, tak i na zemli.  
Khlib nash nasushchnyi dai nam s'ohodni.  
I prosty nam provyny nashi,  
yak i my proshchaiemo vynuvsiam nashym.  
I ne vvedy nas u spokusu,  
ale vyzvoly nas vid lukavoho.  
Bo Tvoie ye Tsarstvo, i sila, i slava naviky.  
Amin'.

#### \*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

*We believe that God is our host and that all people are welcome to this feast of grace, community, and forgiveness. Come forward at the direction of an usher, and receive bread or gluten-free wafer and wine in a common chalice or pink wine and red grape juice in individual cups. If you wish to receive a blessing, cross your arms over your chest.*

# AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you

take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

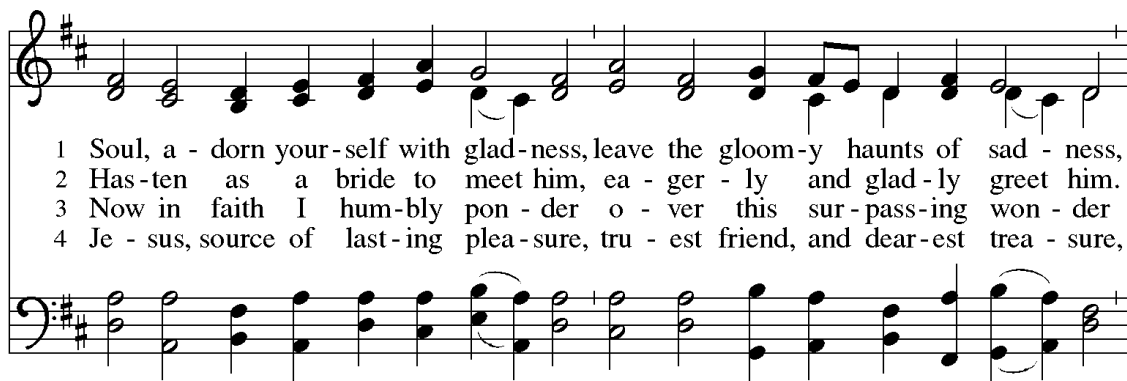
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world; grant us peace, grant us peace.



# COMMUNION HYMNS

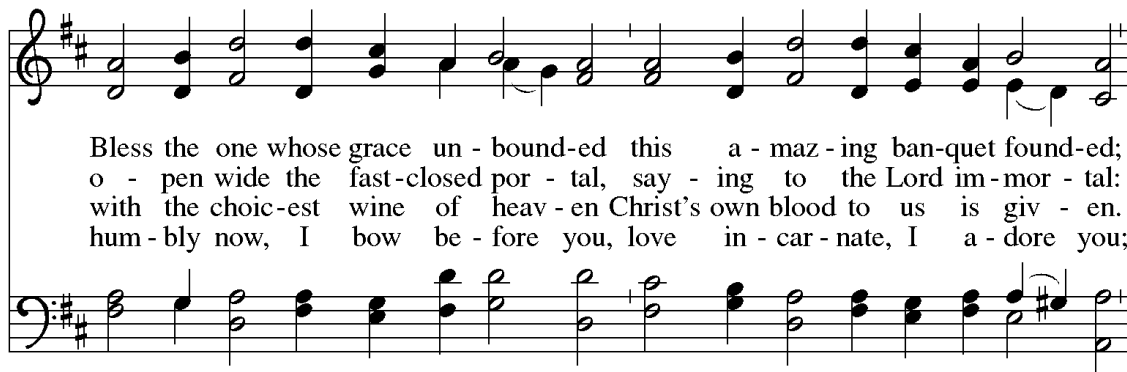
## Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness ELW#488



1 Soul, a - dorn your-self with glad-ness, leave the gloom-y haunts of sad - ness,  
2 Has - ten as a bride to meet him, ea - ger - ly and glad - ly greet him.  
3 Now in faith I hum-bly pon - der o - ver this sur - pass - ing won - der  
4 Je - sus, source of last - ing plea - sure, tru - est friend, and dear - est trea - sure,



come in - to the day-light's splen - dor, there with joy your prais-es ren - der.  
There he stands al-read - y knock-ing; quick - ly, now, your gate un - lock - ing,  
that the bread of life is bound-less though the souls it feeds are count-less;  
peace be - yond all un - der - stand - ing, joy in - to all life ex - pand - ing:



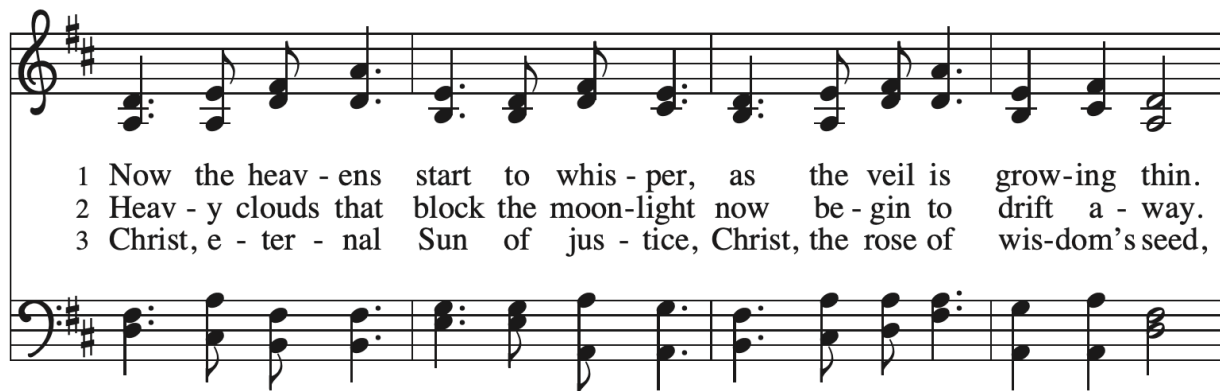
Bless the one whose grace un - bound-ed this a - maz - ing ban-quet found-ed;  
o - pen wide the fast-closed por - tal, say - ing to the Lord im-mor - tal:  
with the choic-est wine of heav - en Christ's own blood to us is giv - en.  
hum-bly now, I bow be - fore you, love in - car - nate, I a - dore you;



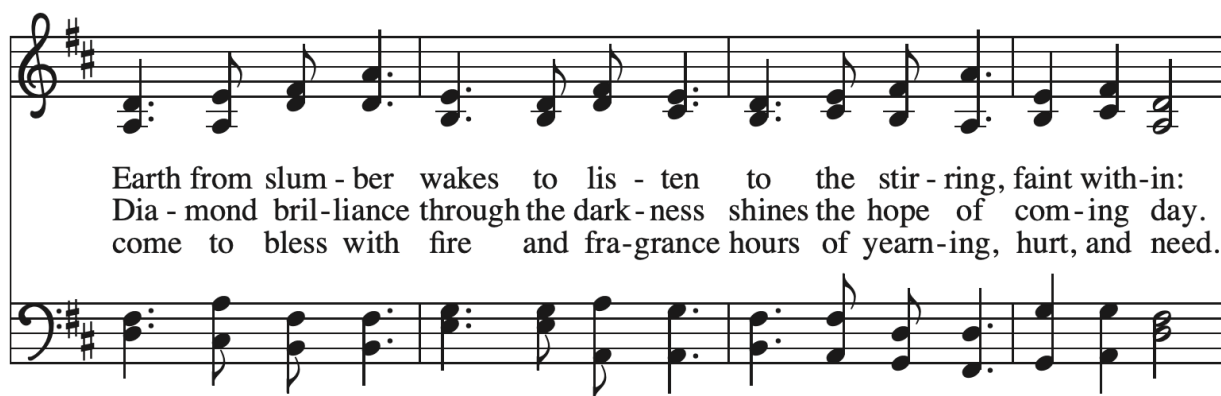
Christ, though heav'n-ly, high, and ho - ly, deigns to dwell with you most low - ly.  
"Come, and leave your loved one nev - er; dwell with-in my heart for - ev - er."  
Oh, most glo - rious con - so - la - tion, pledge and seal of my sal - va - tion.  
wor - thi - ly let me re - ceive you, and, so fa-vored, nev - er leave you.

# Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

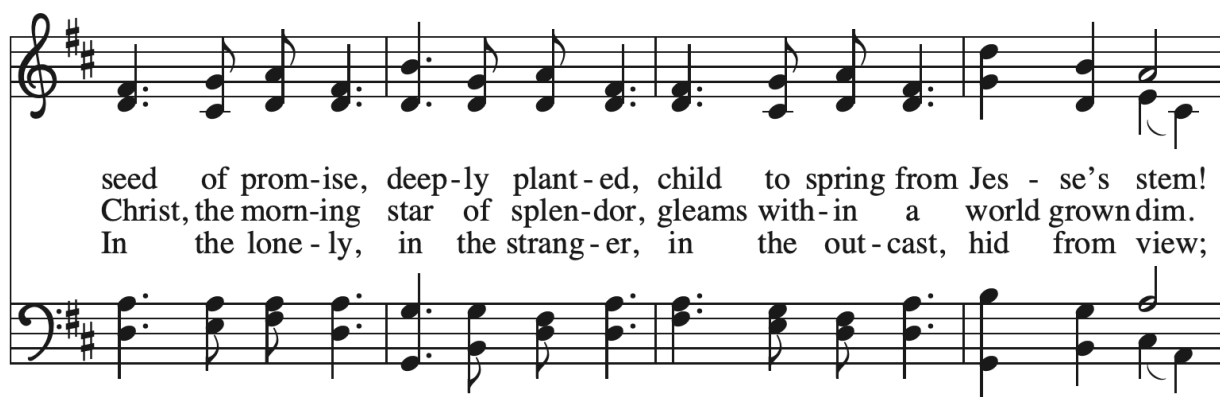
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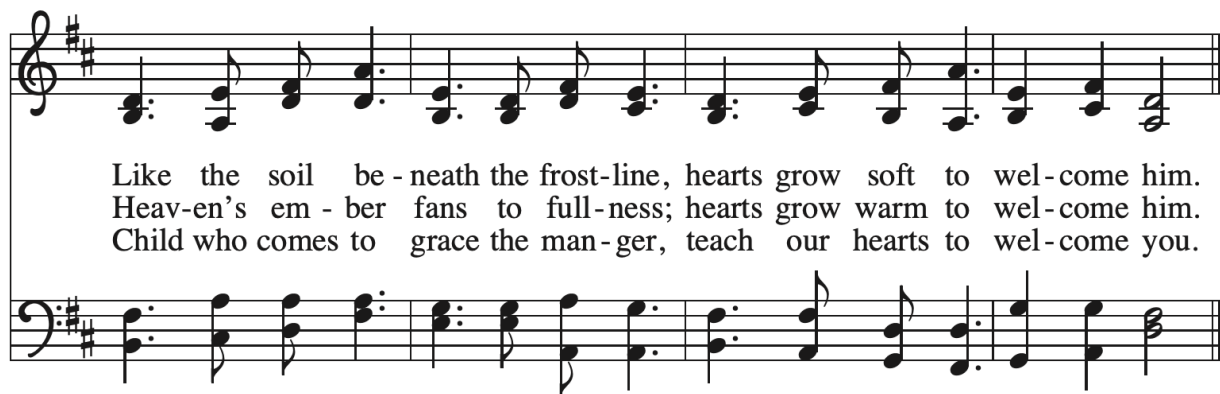
1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow-ing thin.  
2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon-light now be - gin to drift a - way.  
3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis-dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with-in:  
Dia - mond bril-liance through the dark-ness shines the hope of com-ing day.  
come to bless with fire and fra-grance hours of yearn-ing, hurt, and need.



seed of prom-ise, deep-ly plant-ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!  
Christ, the morn-ing star of splen-dor, gleams with-in a world grown dim.  
In the lone - ly, in the strang-er, in the out-cast, hid from view;



Like the soil be - neath the frost-line, hearts grow soft to wel-come him.  
Heav-en's em - ber fans to full-ness; hearts grow warm to wel-come him.  
Child who comes to grace the man-ger, teach our hearts to wel-come you.

**\*EUCCHARISTIC BLESSING**

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace.

**C: Amen.**

**\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

A: Let us pray. God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**+ SENDING +**

**\*BENEDICTION**

P: The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and your minds in ☩ Christ Jesus.

**C: Amen.**

**\*SENDING HYMN**

Hail to the Lord's Anointed

ELW#311

# Hail to the Lord's Anointed



- 1 Hail to the Lord's a - noint - ed, great Da - vid's great - er Son!
- 2 You come with res - cue speed - y to those who suf - fer wrong,
- 3 You shall come down like show - ers up - on the fruit - ful earth;
- 4 Kings shall fall down be - fore you, and gold and in - cense bring;



Hail, in the time ap - point - ed, your reign on earth be - gun!  
 to help the poor and need - y, and bid the weak be strong;  
 love, joy, and hope, like flow - ers, spring in your path to birth.  
 all na - tions shall a - dore you, your praise all peo - ple sing.



You come to break op - pres - sion, to set the cap - tive  
 to give them songs for sigh - ing, their dark - ness turn to  
 Be - fore you on the moun - tains shall peace, the her - ald,  
 To you shall prayer un - ceas - ing and dai - ly vows as -



free, to take a - way trans - gres - sion and  
 light, whose souls, con - demned and dy - ing, are  
 go; and righ - teous - ness in foun - tains from  
 cend; your king - dom still in - creas - ing, a



rule in eq - ui - ty.  
 pre - cious in your sight.  
 hill to val - ley flow.  
 king - dom with out end.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt.

Music: FREUT EUCH, IHR LIEBEN, Leonhart Schröter, 1540–1602

## \*DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Keep awake.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Hal Hopson

*We depart in peace to continue our worship  
in lives of witness to Christ's love  
in work, play, service, and care for creation.*

\*\*\*

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Today's readings are selected from the Revised Common Lectionary. The texts for the scripture readings are from the *New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition*, emendations are provided by the pastoral staff of St. Thomas.

The hymn for the lighting of the advent wreath is He Came Down, ELW#253. Text & Music: Cameroon Traditional. Music arr. John L. Bell, b. 1949. Iona Community, GIA Publications, © 1986.

## **At A Glance: This Week at St. Thomas**

### **Sunday December 14**

#### **Third Sunday of Advent**

*Advent Fundraiser for Sister Parish*

8:30 a.m. Worship/Livestream Worship

9:30 a.m. Lumin Lunch Grab and Go

9:45 a.m. GPS Healing after Religious Harm

9:45 a.m. Adult Forum

9:45 a.m. Sunday School

11 a.m. Worship

12 p.m. Lumin Lunch Grab and Go

4 p.m. Adult Choir Concert

Reception to follow in Heritage Hall

#### **Monday December 15**

9:45 a.m. Worship at Redbud Hills

1 p.m. Pastor's Bible Study

#### **Wednesday December 17**

6 p.m. Soup Supper

7 p.m. Holden Evening Prayer

#### **Thursday December 18**

5:30 p.m. Brown Bag Dinner

7 p.m. Adult Choir Rehearsal

#### **Saturday December 20**

10 a.m. Children's Christmas Program

Rehearsal

2 p.m. Cider & Carols at Friendly Beasts

## **Sunday December 21**

### **Fourth Sunday in Advent**

8:30 a.m.	Worship/Livestream Worship
10:15 a.m.	Children's Christmas Program
11 a.m.	Worship
12:15 p.m.	Council Meeting
7 p.m.	Longest Night Worship Service

## ***Next Steps***

Looking for a way to get involved at STLC? Try this next step:


### **Acolytes**

Assist the pastors and assisting minister throughout the service by lighting and extinguishing candles, and helping with communion. This role is best for children and tweens in grades 2-8.

Sign up on the bulletin board next to the west bathrooms if you have been trained for this role. Contact the church office if you are interested in receiving training.

[parishadmin@stlconline.org](mailto:parishadmin@stlconline.org)

# Advent at St. Thomas: Gifts that Matter



*This Advent, we endeavor to discover a Sanctuary Within—a space where hope and healing take root in practice, through presence, honesty, joy, vulnerability, and through generosity. This season, let us gather together gifts that matter to build a living sanctuary of care that extends beyond our congregation.*

## Gifts of Nourishment – Food & Household Collection

When we stay awake to hunger and hardship, we become present to Christ among our neighbors. Provide staples and essentials for neighbors facing food insecurity or homelessness.

## Gifts of Warmth – MUSH Tree

Honest care starts with small acts—acknowledging real needs with warmth. Mittens, underwear, socks, and hats go to MCCSC’s social workers to share with children who need them most this winter.

## Gifts of Joy – Christmas Gifts for Local Children

Joy deepens when it’s given away. Bring smiles to children this Christmas. On Sunday, December 7 select a gift tag, shop for a child, and help families experience the joy and dignity of giving and receiving. Return gifts on December 14. Join the wrapping party on Dec. 17.

## Gifts of Learning – Guatemala Scholarship Shares

Help students in Chichipate continue their education and build a brighter future. Choose a share—such as a uniform, computer class, or a month of school fees—and invest in a student’s future. Our project goal is \$5000. Your gift opens doors and grows hope.



The adult choir of St. Thomas Lutheran Church, together  
with musicians from the Jacobs School of Music, presents

# MAGNIFICAT IN D Major, H 772

C.P.E. Bach

## VOM HIMMEL KAM DER ENGEL SCHAR

Johann Schelle

Benjamin Wegner, Choir Director  
Matthew Benkert, Organist and Director of Music

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 at 4:00 p.m.

## St. Thomas Lutheran Church

3800 East Third Street, Bloomington, Indiana - [stlconline.org](http://stlconline.org)

Free and open to the public. St. Thomas is handicap-accessible.  
A free-will offering will be collected at the door.



*This concert is sponsored by St. Thomas Worship and the Arts.*

### **LuMin Grab and Go Lunch Today!**

Free grab and go lunches are available for students **after each service today** in the library. Students are invited to fill a bag with snacks and treats of your choice and stick around as long as you like for conversation.

### **Advent Fundraiser for Sister Parish Today!**

Don't miss this opportunity to pick up last-minute gift items handcrafted and donated by our congregation's members & friends while supporting our upcoming North/South delegations. Available in the narthex all morning.

### **Order Poinsettias to help Decorate St. Thomas for Christmas Eve**

Help decorate our worship space for the Christmas Eve services. The cost per plant is \$16. The poinsettia you purchase can be taken home after the 8 p.m. service on Christmas Eve. Sign up at the Welcome Desk.

## **Healing after Religious Harm: Group Peer Support**

We know that faith should be a force for healing and wholeness in our lives, but sometimes faith leaders and faith communities do harm. If you have been harmed in a faith community—by unwelcoming messages, hurtful theology, or painful actions—you are invited to peer support group lead by trained facilitators focused on healing. This group will not make up for counseling or mental health support that many of us will need on our way to wholeness but can complement such work and provide support on your healing journey. This group is free and open to the public. **Meet on Sundays, December 14, and January 12 between services (9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.)**

## **Cider & Carols at Friendly Beasts**

On **Saturday, December 20, at 2 p.m.**, experience the joy of music and the warmth of community as you enjoy tasty, seasonal cider from [Friendly Beasts](#) and a Christmas carol sing-along lead by Matt Meier and Pr. Adrienne.

## **Children's Christmas Program**

You don't want to miss the creative, heart-warming story played by our church's growing youth! The students have written a story that will take us to celebrations of Christmas around the world. The program will be **Sunday, December 21 at 10:15 a.m. in Heritage Hall.** You are invited to bring Christmas cookies to share for a cookie reception after the program to celebrate their work!

## **Longest Night: A Service of Remembrance and Hope**

As we live the shortest days of the year remember loved ones, name grief, and be assured of God's presence with you and all people at The Longest Night: A Service of Remembrance and Hope at **7 p.m. on Sunday, December 21.**

## **Caroling and Cheer**

Bring some holiday joy to St. Thomas members and friends with carol singing **at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, December 23.** A sign-up sheet is on the Welcome Desk.

## **Christmas Eve: Wonder and Worship**

As evening falls, hear the story of Jesus's birth told in beloved carols, Scripture readings, Holy Communion, and shared light at our **Wonder and Worship Service at 4 p.m.**

## **Christmas Eve: Candlelight and Carols**

Gather in candlelight to hear the angels announce to field shepherds that Jesus is born. Sing timeless carols lead by our Adult Choir. Share the light of Christ and proclaim "joy to world" at our **Candlelight and Carols service at 8 p.m.** Children and Youth are invited to share their musical gifts with one or two brief songs during the prelude (beginning around 7:45 p.m.). Sign up on the Welcome Desk or contact the church office with your name and piece by December 19.

## **First Sunday of Christmas**

Let our gladness have no end! Continue the celebration of Christ's coming with worship and brunch! Enjoy our strum-along worship **on Sunday, December 28 at 9:30 a.m.** and bring a dish to share at the brunch which follows.

## **Epiphany Retreat on Saturday, January 3**

As we look to the new year, make plans to attend a half-day retreat on **Saturday, January 3, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.** Begin the new year with the presence of God and purpose. This retreat is for adult, teen, and middle school-aged members and friends of St. Thomas.

## **Prayers for those with health and safety concerns**

David Ellies, Ken Pedersen, Gloria Hitchcock, Jonathan Miller, John Kinzer, Leslie Main, Lynn Weddle, Dallis Fox-Nagal, Doug Bauder, Yvonne Leber, Kent Unger, and Mark Wilkes.

Contact the church office for inclusion in this list of concerns and to be included in the Sunday prayers.

A separate, confidential prayer chain is also available. Contact **Susan Colston** at [skcolston@aol.com](mailto:skcolston@aol.com) to join the prayer chain or make a request for prayer.

**The altar flowers are given**  
by Letty Newkirk  
in honor of Del Newkirk's birthday.

**The rose on the altar this week**  
is in celebration of  
the birth of Eleanor Alice Smith,  
daughter of Thomas & Jessica Smith,  
granddaughter of Eliot & Pamela Smith.

## **Today's Worship Leaders**

Altar Care: Sacha Arterberry, Shirley Mingee,  
Gail Seegert

Bread & Wine: Sacha Arterberry

Flower Guild: Gail Seegert

Coffee Crew: Casey Main, Marcus Hershberger,  
Matt Meier

Prayer Writer: Moriah Reichert

A/V Tech: Jim Ward

## **8:30 a.m. Service**

Assisting Minister: Carolyn Sowinski

Lectors: Sacha Arterberry, Carol Seaman

Ushers: Lynn & Ute Coyne

Communion Steward: Ian Bensberg

Greeters: Mary Sasse, Kari Esarey

Council Coordinator: Dean Arnold

## **11 a.m. Service**

Assisting Minister: Kathleen Boggess

Lectors: Susan Colston, Gerhard Glomm

Acolyte: Julianna Drake

Ushers: Brock DeMark

& Savannah Hadley-DeMark

Communion Steward: Leah Iversen

Greeters: Randy & Nancy Nye

Council Coordinator: Ashley Ahlbrand



## ST. THOMAS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

3800 East Third Street  
Bloomington, Indiana 47401  
Office Hours 9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.  
Phone: (812) 332-5252  
[stlconline.org](http://stlconline.org)

*Partners in ministry with*  
**Lutheran Church of  
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Cherokee, North Carolina

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**Sister Parish**  
Iglesia Santo Domingo  
de Guzman, Chichipate  
Parish of San Pedro, El Estor,  
Izabal, Guatemala

*In covenant with*  
**Lutheran Campus Ministry  
at Indiana University**  
Rev. Amanda Ghaffarian,  
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[lutheran@iu.edu](mailto:lutheran@iu.edu)  
Phone: (812) 333-2474  
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Rev. Adrienne Meier  
Senior Pastor  
[pastor@stlconline.org](mailto:pastor@stlconline.org)

Rev. Lecia Beck  
Pastor of Youth and Christian Nurture  
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Matthew Benkert  
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Ben Wegner  
Adult Choir Director  
[choir@stlconline.org](mailto:choir@stlconline.org)

Melissa de Graaf  
Children's Choir Director

**St. Thomas Lutheran Church and LCM-IU  
are Reconciling in Christ Ministries**

**We are a Christ-centered community that lives,  
shares and celebrates God's grace with all people!**