Fourth Sunday of Advent December 22, 2024

10:30 a.m. Worship in the Sanctuary

We ask that all present sign our Friendship Sheet. After you add your name to the sheet, please pass it toward the center aisle. Then return it to the outside aisle so that you become familiar



with our family in Christ. These sheets help our pastor and congregation with our ministry. If you are looking for a church home, we invite you to join us here at St. Matthew to worship and serve Christ together!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

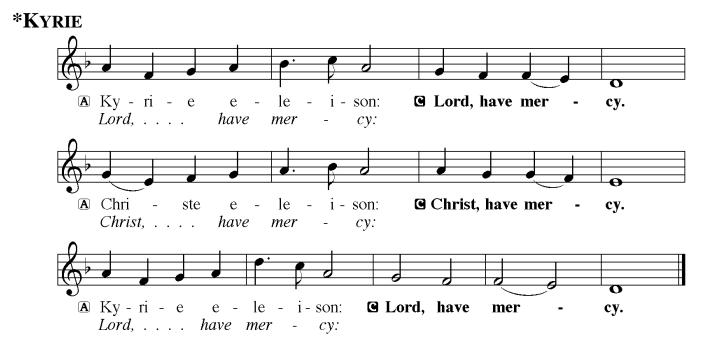
P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

C: Amen.

- P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
- P: God of mercy,
- *C*: we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.
- P: God of might,
- *C:* we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.
- P: God in our midst,
- *C:* we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us. Amen.
- P: A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through + Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.
- C: Amen.

*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.**



Glory to God

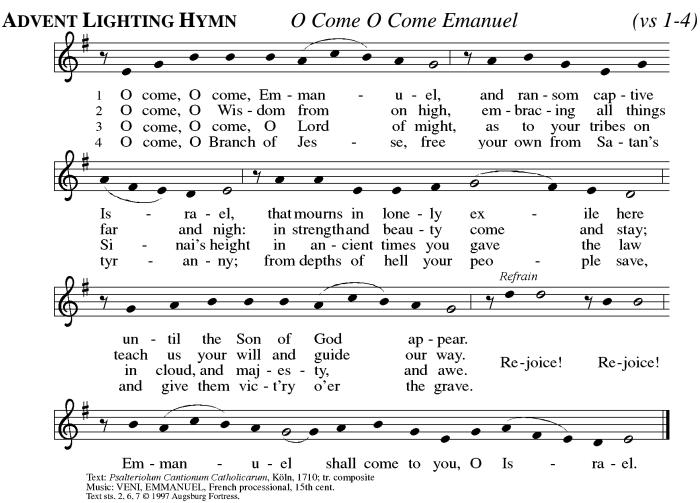




***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray ... Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *C:* Amen.

* LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES



FIRST READING: Micah 5:2-5a

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,

who are one of the little clans of Judah,

from you shall come forth for me

one who is to rule in Israel,

whose origin is from of old,

from ancient days.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time

when she who is in labor has brought forth;

then the rest of his kindred shall return

to the people of Israel.

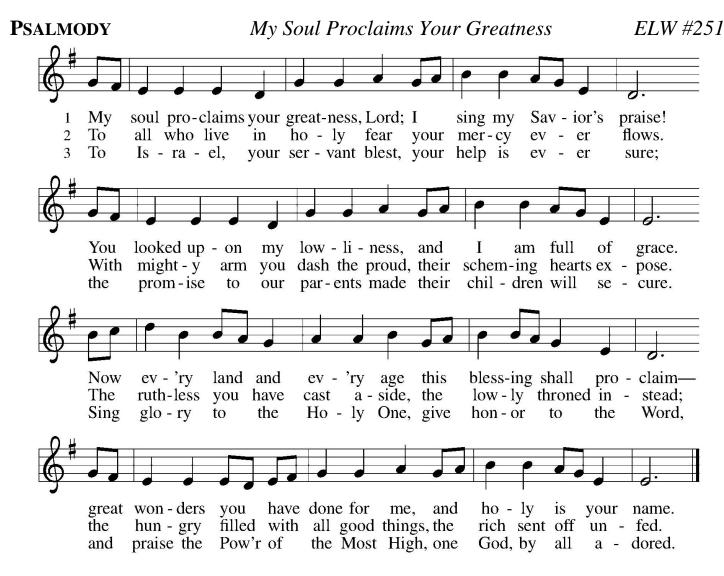
⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great

to the ends of the earth;

 5^{5a} and he shall be the one of peace.

L: The word of the Lord. C: Thanks be to God.



Text: With One Voice, 1995, based on the Magnificat Music: KINGSFOLD, English folk tune Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress

SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:5-10

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,

but a body you have prepared for me;

⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings

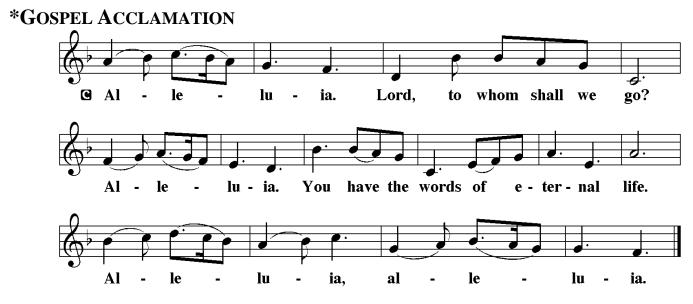
you have taken no pleasure.

⁷ Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God'

(in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."

⁸ When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), ⁹ then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

L: The word of the Lord. C: Thanks be to God.



*Gospel: Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

The holy gospel according to Luke. Glory to you, O Lord.

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." [

⁴⁶ And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

P: The Gospel of the Lord. C: Praise to you, O Christ.

HOMILY

Pastor Traci

*HYMN OF THE DAY

He Came Down

ELW # 253

*APOSTLES' CREED

- A: Let us confess our faith through the words of the Apostles' Creed.
- C: 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 the 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 OF THE CHURCH**

- *A:* As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.
- A: God our uniter, increase communication and cooperation in our relationships with those of other traditions and religions. Root your church in the radical message of your incarnation, and enable us to pursue your justice in the world. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**
- A: God our creator, we praise you for the beauty that surrounds us. Awaken in us a renewed sense of care for the wildlife in our communities. Form us into faithful stewards of what you have made. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**
- A: God our sovereign, Mary proclaims a new way of life that lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things. Nurture in local governments and municipalities a desire to care for all who are overlooked and ignored. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

- A: God our beacon, as the northern hemisphere begins its slow turn toward more daylight, remind us that even in the deepest nights, you are there. Comfort the lonely and bereaved. Hold closely the frightened, anxious, depressed, and ill. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**
- A: God our guide, shepherd the leadership of this congregation. Bless the council and staff in discerning future ministry and open their hearts to the voices of the community. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**
- A: God our life, you remember the promises you have made to your people. In gratitude for those who have died, we praise you for your faithfulness throughout history. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**
- *P:* Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ. *C:* Amen.

*THE PEACE

P: The peace of the LORD be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Please share the peace with those around you using a greeting that is comfortable for both you and them.

***Offertory Prayer**

An offering plate is located near the entrance to the nave; we offer thanks for the abundance God has first shown us:

A: Let us pray ... Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. C: Amen.

*GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

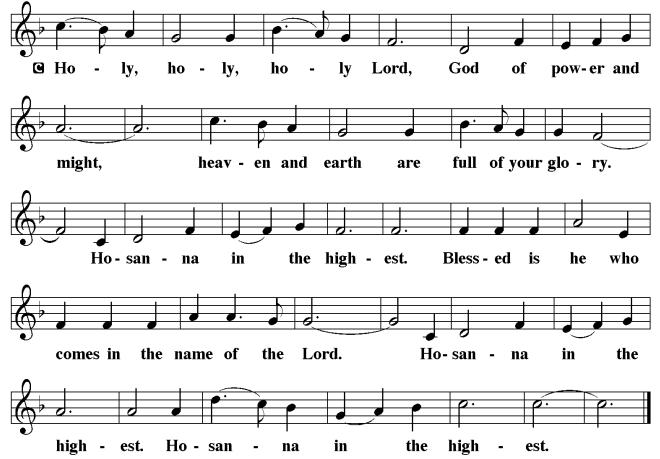
C: And also with you.

- P: Lift up your hearts.
- C: We lift them to the Lord.
- *P*: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

***PROPER PREFACE**

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:



*EUCHARISTIC PRAYER & WORDS OF INSTITUTION

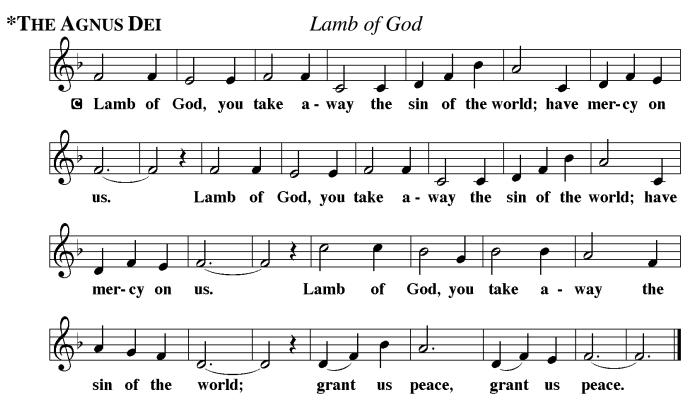
- *P:* Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty.
- When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.
- At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.
- 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.

- Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace.
- Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.
- Through him all glory and honor is your, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

C: Amen.

*LORD'S PRAYER

- P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:
- *C:* 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

P: God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

COMMUNION HYMN

Once in Royal David's City

*BLESSING

P: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. *C:* Amen.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

- A: Let us pray...Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name.
- C: Amen.

***BENEDICTION**

P: God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, + bless and keep you now and forever. *C*: Amen.

***SENDING SONG** Joy to the World ELW # 267

*DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel. *C*: Thanks be to God.

*POSTLUDE

Reprinted from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* copyright © 2006 Used by permission of Augsburg Fortress license #SB105031 Also, please be advised that our parking lot has surveillance cameras and that our worship service is video recorded and/or live-streamed on social media.

Today's Altar Flowers are placed to the Glory of God in memory of loved ones given by Sarah Detwiler.

Serving God and Us Our Ministers - the People of St. Matthew Our Pastor – Rev. Traci Marriott Our Organists – Mary Nelson, DeAnna Cree Our Missionary Family – Robin Abrol, On Eagle's Wings Our Administrative Assistant – Jen Ripka Our Assistant Administrative Assistant – Laura Orczeck Our Sexton – Phil Claar Our Acolyte – Gavin Kuster Our Assisting Minister – Youth Our Lector – Youth Our Usher – Paul Decker Our Altar Guild – Tina Harclerode, Jackie Lightner, and Jane Fagans Our Audio/Video Tech – Camden Kuster Our Offering Counters – Jim Barley, Beth Garner Fourth Quarter Ventures in Faith to "United Lutheran Seminaries"

This Week at St. Matthew: 814-793-2413: Office Hours

Jen – Mon., Thurs, Fri.: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

This Week Events

Today –	4 th Sunday of Advent
	Youth Led Worship
	Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
	Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Monday –	10:00 a.m. Employee Meeting, Fellowship Hall
Tuesday –	Office Closed
	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
	7:00 p.m. in Sanctuary
Wednesday –	Christmas Day
	Office Closed
Sunday –	Service of Lesson & Carols with Communion
	Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

Prayers are needed for our homebound: Mary Jane Allision, Fred Brandenburg, Linda Claar, Mary Creps, Gerry Girolami, Betty Helsel, Ruth Johnson, Audrey & Dan Kensinger. **Prayer Concerns:** Amy & Family, Avery, Randy Barrett, Greta Buchart, Caleb, Warren Campbell, Phillip Claar, Dave Clayton, Greg Comer, Terry Creek, Brian Fleck, Ron Focht, Jim Fritz, Rodger Hoover, Marilyn Horton, Baby James, Ruth Johnson, Darren Kreutzer, Connie Lamborn, Linda Lehman, Bill Lively, Kristen Malloy, Karrie McCall & Family, Betty McDowell, Rick McIntyre, Aunt Mica, Carl Miner, Pat Mountain, Nathan, Olga Perlov, Deb Peters, Dan Ross, John Russell, Paul Ruth, Karyl Sawinski, Dorothy Stahl, Jean Stonerook, Cindy Thomas, Steve Torres, Tiffany Townsend, Drew Wenzel, Susan Werner, Jean White, Joel Widmann, Pete Williams, Jody Zelanko, and for our **Missionaries: Robin Abrol, On Eagle's Wings.**

Away at School: Max Baker, Christopher Bush, Olivia Day, Jeff Hoenstine, Lacey Ripka.

Those Serving in our Armed Forces: Bradley Buchart, Melody Estep, Colin Guyer, Nathan Smith (Germany).



Hurricanes Helene and Milton Response

Hurricanes Helene and Milton hit the coast of Florida within weeks of each other as powerful and devastating storms impacting states across the Southeast. With your help, Lutheran Disaster Response will continue to be there to support people affected by Milton, Helene and any other storms that may strike this season.

Gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response equip us to respond to these disasters and others, whenever and wherever they strike.



Scan the QR code to give today.

By giving to Lutheran Disaster Response, you make it possible for the ELCA to act quickly after disasters such as Hurricane Helene and remain for as long as the recovery takes.

If you prefer to make your gift to Lutheran Disaster Response through a donation to St. Matthew, please designate which disaster and the amount on the memo line of your check or envelope.

A Christmas Message



In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to

the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. Luke 2:1-7

Years ago, at Christmas time, our family would travel back to where my parents grew up to visit with family that still lived there. It was a tradition. We would share the day together with gift giving, meals, and storytelling. Adults would chat and cousins would play. It would be a long day spent till we returned home, but it was always a wonderful time. I miss those days, that tradition, especially being back in this area – where memories come alive again for me.

What are your traditions at this time of year? Do you travel to see loved ones? Or do they travel to see you? Do you gather with friends? This is a time to remember how important our memories are and to realize that there are those who aren't able to travel, or don't have anyone traveling to see them. Who might you visit this year to share the joy of Christ's birth? Whose tradition, memories, might you help come alive again?

Merry Christmas from the Office of the Bishop +Bp Collins, Pastor Shock, Sue Ellen, Pastor Kratz & Michelle



Martinsburg Food Pantry

Volunteers from St. Matthew will be helping and assisting in the distribution of food on Thursdays, January 2 and January 16 from 9:00-11:00 a.m.



January food items most needed are: Fruit, Instant Oatmeal, Scalloped Potatoes, Ravioli, Rice Sides.

Our Thanks to all who have contributed food, supplies or monetary donations during this past year! We ask for your continued support and prayers in serving needy families in 2025.

Linda K. Smith

Mitten Tree Thanks!



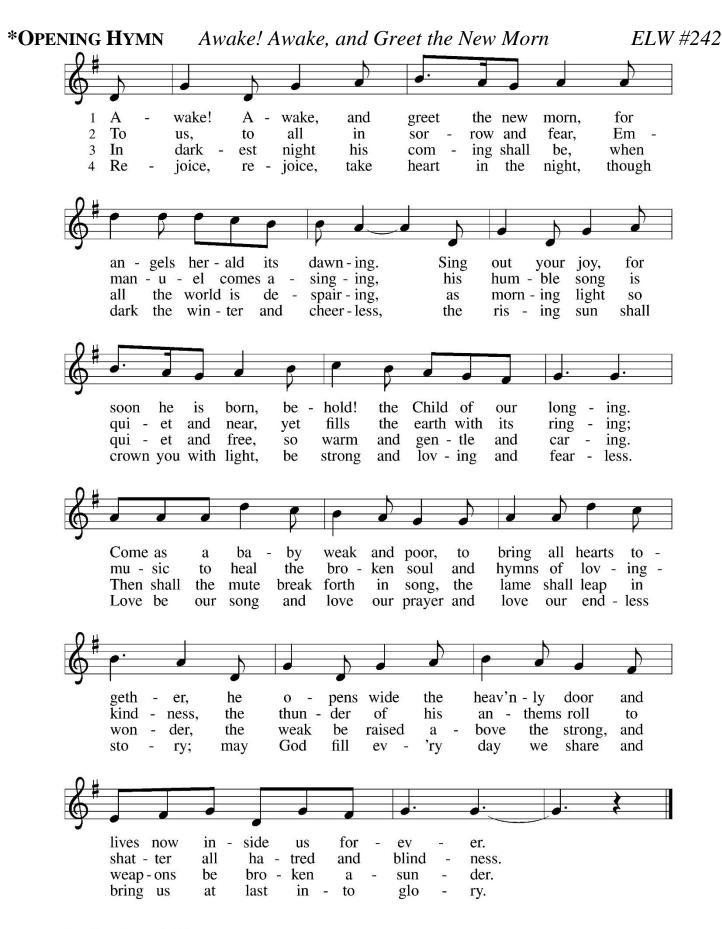
Many thanks to everyone who contributed generously to the "Mitten Tree" by bringing colorful homemade, bought items and financial gifts for needy elementary school children! Because of your kindness, they will have a Warmer Winter!

These items were distributed to Martinsburg and Spring Cove Elementary Schools. The total items received were 95 items! (56 hats, hat/mittens/gloves sets, 18 pairs of gloves/mittens. 3 sweat pants, 1 sweater, 1 pair slip on shoes).



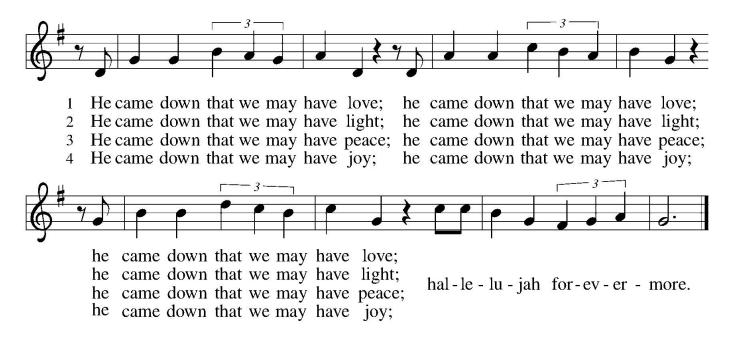
Altar Flowers

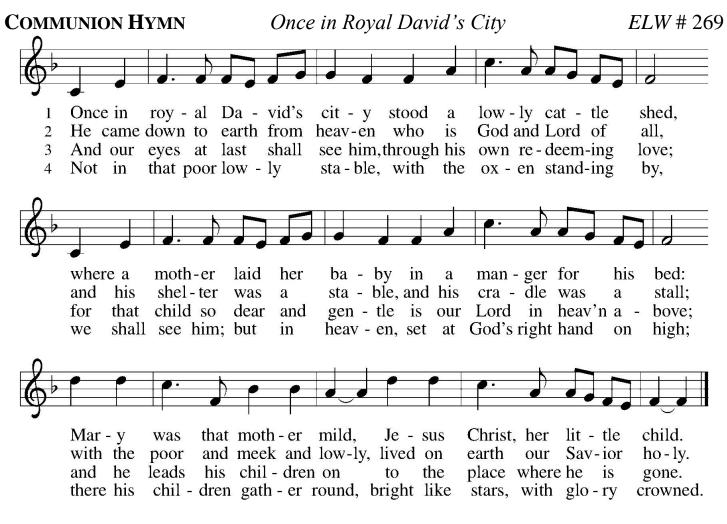
The 2025 Altar Flower chart is posted on the Narthex bulletin board. Altar Flowers are a perfect way to remember loved ones or to honor loved ones. There are plenty of dates available. Please sign up now for the Sunday you wish to place flowers on the Altar. Price: \$40.00



Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950 Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen Text and music © 1983 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission. ***HYMN OF THE DAY**

He Came Down





Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818–1895 Music: IRBY, Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805–1876 ***SENDING SONG**

Joy to the World

ELW # 267



Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748 Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872