

# To Us A child is Born... To Us A Son is given...

lsaíah 9:6a



Family Candlelight Worship Christmas Eve 2023 5:00 p.m.

# St. Paul Lutheran Church

8100 Shady Grove Rd. Mechanicsville, VA 23111 saintpaul-lcms.com

804.427.7500

Rev. Rodney E. Bitely, Pastor Mr. Bill Moats, Choir Director Mr. Roger Sethmann, Organist Mr. Eric Burcham, Guest Organist Mrs. Debbie Harris, Church Secretary

# A Word About Communion

We Lutherans believe in the Real Presence, namely that Christ's body and blood are actually there with the bread and wine in a very special way (1 Cor. 10:16). Because we want to honor Christ and to grow closer to Him through this precious gift of forgiveness we practice close communion. Our faith in Christ brings us closer to Him and to each other. This sacrament is His way of keeping us close, that is, in union or communion with Him and fellow Christians. In order to build closeness, please read below before communing.

- I confess my sins to God and rely on Jesus Christ to save me from them.
- I believe that Christ is really present in this Sacrament and that with the bread and wine I actually receive His true body and blood.
- I intend, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to amend my sinful life and live a life that is pleasing to God.

#### As We Gather

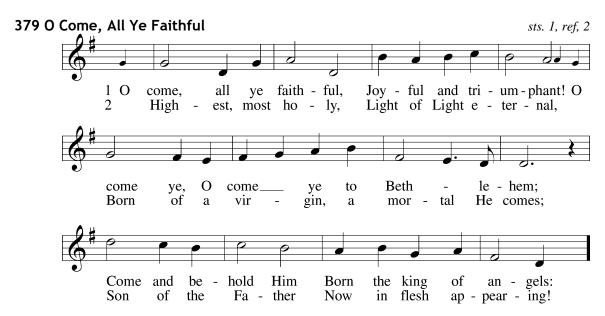
Who is the Son of God? That first Christmas, the baby lying in the manger appeared to be the son of Mary and Joseph. Yet, this infant boy is so much more Key:

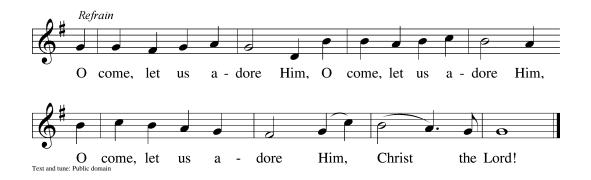
- $\mathbf{P}$  Pastor
- **A** Assisting Elder/Reader
- **C** Congregation
- $\triangle$  Stand

than meets the eye. He is the Son of God! How do we know? Just listen to God's Word in the proclamation of the angels: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). Or hear the words of John 1: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). This Christmas, through faith, you also are more than what meets the eye. You are a child of God! How do you know? God's Word connected to water declares it because you are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Celebrate this Christmas that "when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:4–5).

#### Prelude

Stand





#### Invocation

Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]

- $\mathbf{P}$  In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- **C** Amen.

# **Confession & Absolution**

Psalm 124:8; 130:3-4

- $\mathbf{P}$  Our help is in the name of the Lord,
- **C** who made heaven and earth.
- **P** If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?
- **C** But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.
- ▶ Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

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

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

- P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the +→ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- **C** Amen.

# Blessing

Philippians 1:6

May He Who began this good work within you bring it to completion on the Day of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

**C** Amen.

Sit

# Service of the Word

# Lesson One

# Reading

Genesis 3:8–16

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field;
on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.
I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." To the woman he said,

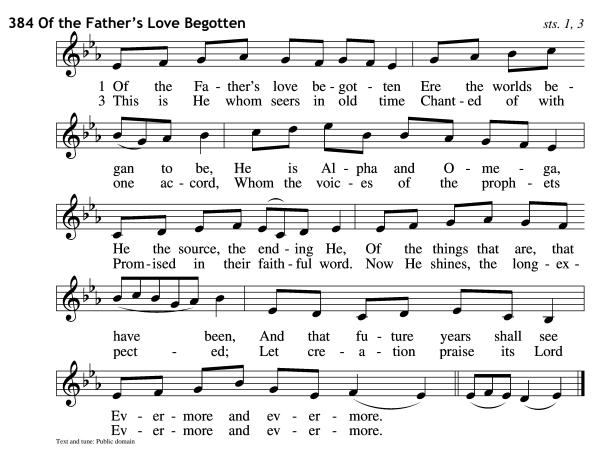
"I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;

in pain you shall bring forth children.

Your desire shall be for your husband,

and he shall rule over you."

- **A** This is the Word of the Lord.
- **C** Thanks be to God.



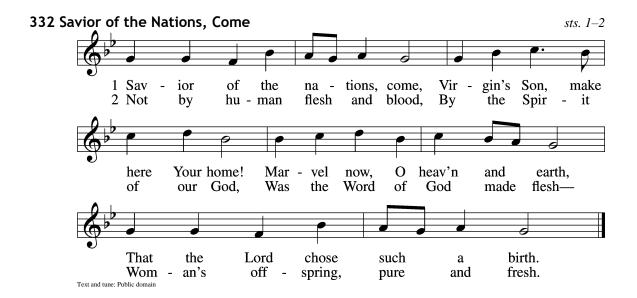
# Lesson Two

#### Reading

Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

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

**C** Thanks be to God.



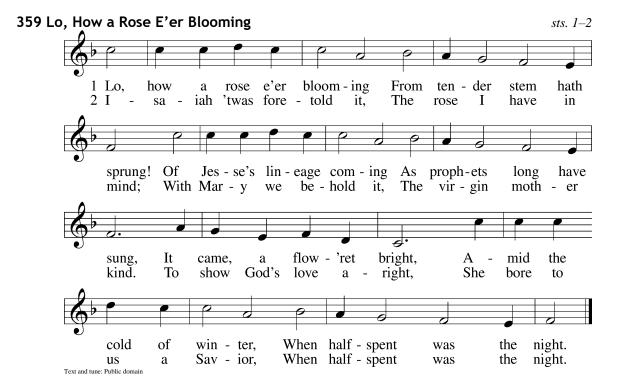
# Lesson Three

Reading

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. Isaiah 9:2, 6–7

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

- **A** This is the Word of the Lord.
- **C** Thanks be to God.



# Lesson Four

# Reading

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.

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

**C** Thanks be to God.

Isaiah 60:1-6



# Lesson Five

#### Reading

#### Luke 1:26-35, 38

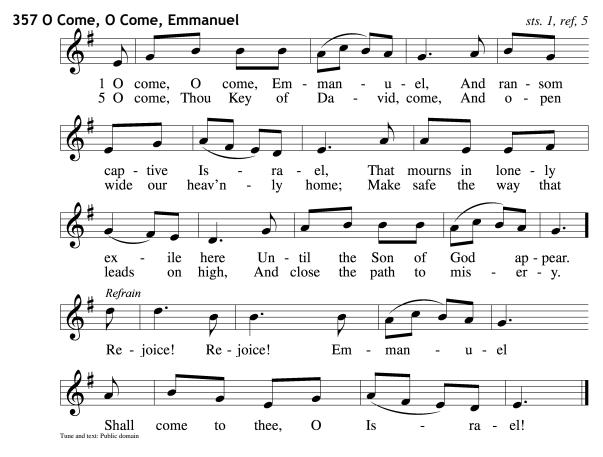
In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

- **P** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.



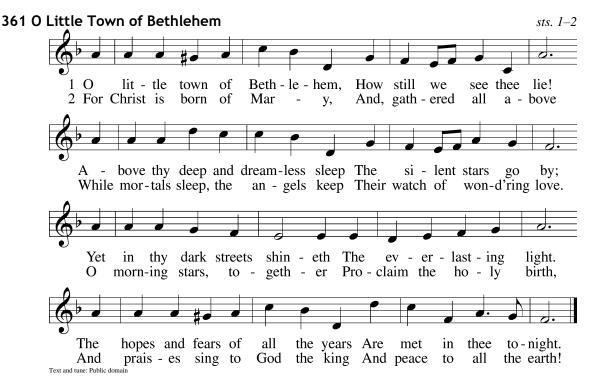
# Lesson Six

# Reading

Luke 2:1–7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

- **P** This is the Word of the Lord.
- **C** Thanks be to God.



# Lesson Seven

# Reading

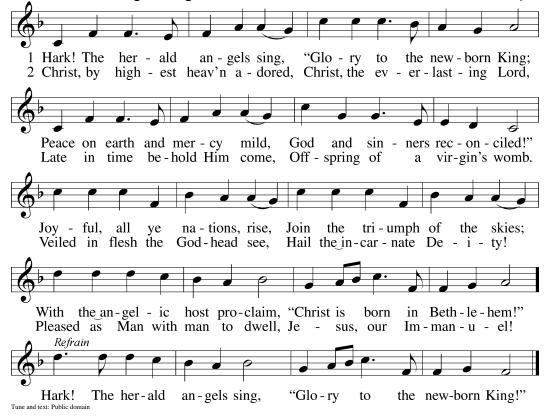
Luke 2:8–14

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

- **P** This is the Word of the Lord.
- **C** Thanks be to God.

380 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing



# Lesson Eight

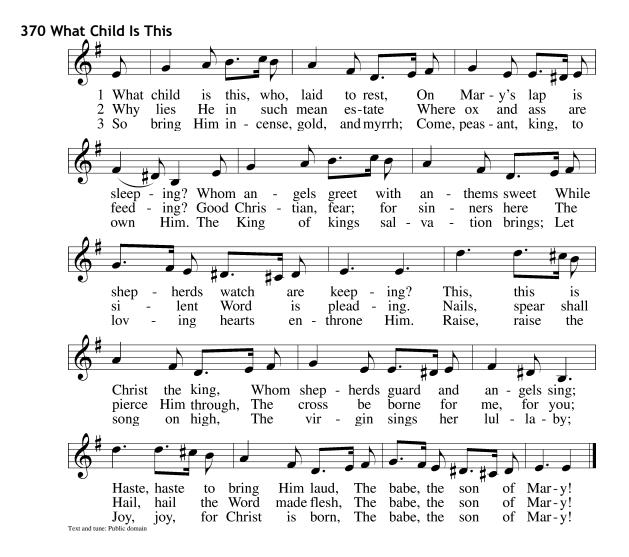
# Reading

Luke 2:15–20

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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

**C** Thanks be to God.



# Collect of the Day

▶ Let us pray... Father in heaven, You sent forth Your Son to be born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem us who were under the law. Grant that through faith we might rejoice in our baptismal adoption as Your children and our connection to Christ; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

Choral Anthem – "O Holy Night"

arr. John Behnke

# "This is my beloved Son; With whom I am well pleased."

Matthew 3:17



Message - Luke 2:8-20, "The Greatest Gift"

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace among those with whom He is pleased." Luke 2:14

Stand

**Apostles' Creed** 

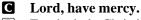
**C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life + everlasting. Amen.

# Prayer

- **P** In peace let us pray to the Lord:
- **C** Lord, have mercy.
- ▶ For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:



**P** For the holy Christian Church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:

# **C** Lord, have mercy.

- ▶ For this nation, for our cities and communities, and for the common welfare of us all, let us pray to the Lord:
- **C** Lord, have mercy.
- **P** For seasonable weather and for the fruitfulness of the earth, let us pray to the Lord:
- **C** Lord, have mercy.
- **P** For those who labor, for those whose work is difficult or dangerous, and for all who travel, let us pray to the Lord:
- **C** Lord, have mercy.
- ▶ For all those in need, for the hungry and homeless, for the widowed and orphaned, and for all those in prison, let us pray to the Lord:
- **C** Lord, have mercy.

- **P** For the sick and dying and for all those who care for them, let us pray to the Lord:
- **C** Lord, have mercy.
- **P** For . . . [additional bids for prayer may be inserted here] . . . let us pray to the Lord:
- **C** Lord, have mercy.
- **P** Finally, for these and for all our needs of body and soul, let us pray to the Lord:
- **C** Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Amen.

# Offering

# Voluntary

Stand

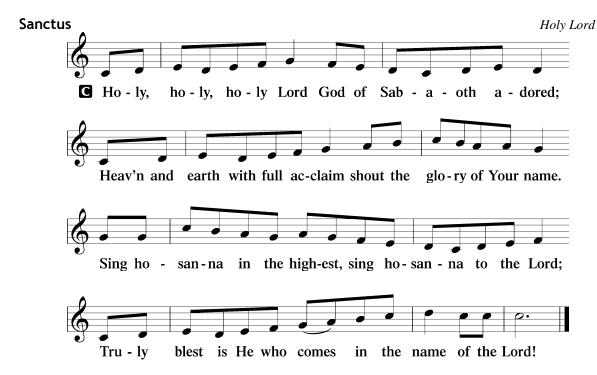


# Service of the Sacrament

#### Preface

2 Timothy 4:22; [Colossians 3:1]; [Psalm 136]

- **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 Him thanks and praise.
- It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:



# 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.

The Words of Our LordMatthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25POur Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had<br/>given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My +<br/>body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

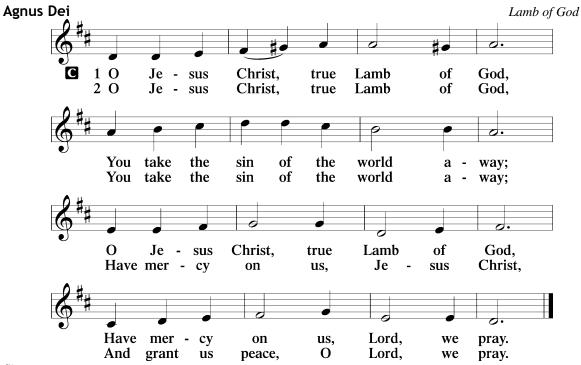
In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My + blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

# Pax Domini

Peace of the Lord

 $\mathbf{P}$  The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C** Amen.



Sit

# Distribution

The pastor and those who assist him receive the body and blood of Christ first and then distribute them to those who come to receive.

This evening we will follow a practice known as "Continuous Communion." As you approach the front of the center aisle the Pastor will serve the Host (bread). Proceed then to one of the two Elders, one will be serving the "Individual Cups" and the other the "Common Cup". Then return to your seat. The Ushers will be there to guide you through Communion.

If you have children who are not yet Confirmed in the Lutheran Church, feel free to bring them up with you and the Pastor will give them a blessing.

Stand

# **Communion Dismissal**

After all have communed the Pastor dismisses the communicants saying:

- The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen and preserve you in the one true faith from this life and into life everlasting. Depart + in peace. Serve the Lord.
- **C** Amen.

# **Post-Communion Collect**

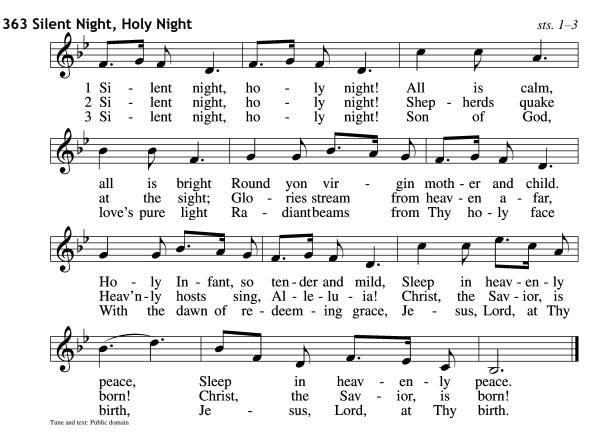
 P Let us pray... We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and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

**C** Amen.

# **Candle Lighting**

Please tip only the unlit candle to avoid spilling wax as you light your candle and please supervise any children you allow to hold burning candles.

Singing will be accompanied by the St. Paul Hand Chimes Choir



# **Lesson Nine**

# Reading

John 1:1–14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<b>C</b> ]	Fhanks	be	to	God.
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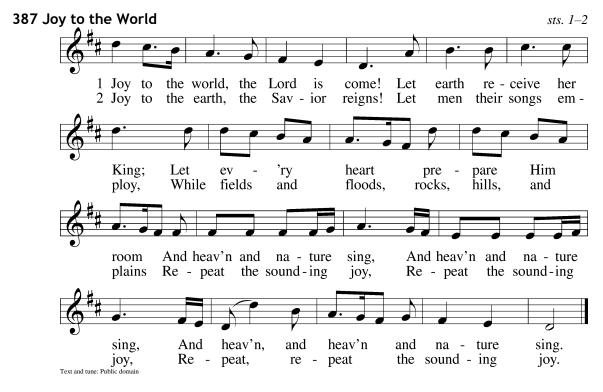
# Benediction

- P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.
- **C** Amen.

**P** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**C** Alleluia! Christ is born!

Please extinguish your candles



Postlude

Acknowledgments

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Service, 2022-12-24, Christmas Eve - Lessons & Carols.docx

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"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

John 1:14



