

ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES

PRELUDE

WELCOME

GATHERING HYMN

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence ELW 490

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence



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



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



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

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

WEEK 3: JOY

Leader 1: We gather in the season of Advent, waiting and watching for the One who comes not in splendor, but in humility. The God of the universe has changed addresses—leaving heaven's throne to dwell

among us in a manger. This is grace: not earned, not expected, but freely given.

Leader 2: We light the candle of Joy, rejoicing in the fact that God's address is now among us.

ALL: Jesus, you chose to be born among our mess, not our perfection. Let your joy rise in us, even when things seem unfinished.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING SONG – JOY *To the tune of "Away in a Manger"*

Now Joy joins the chorus, a bright, laughing flame,
For God took on flesh and bore our own name.
In straw and in struggle, in laughter and tears,
God molds us with mercy through all of our years.

PRAYER:

God of joy, surprise us again in your presence. Let your Incarnation awaken laughter, song and celebration in our souls. Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Based on Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist asked, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"

We too bring our questions, our doubts, and our broken pieces before God.

Let us confess our sins and trust in God's promise of mercy.

(Silence for reflection)

Merciful God,

We confess that our lives feel unfinished.

We hold puzzle pieces of sorrow and regret.

We cannot see how they fit together.

We cling to pieces of anger and pride.

They leave gaps in our relationships.

We hide pieces of fear and doubt.

They weigh us down and leave us restless.

We have tried to complete the picture on our own.

But the picture is incomplete and broken without your grace.

Forgive us, Lord.

Place the missing piece of your mercy into our lives.

Transform us into people of hope.

Complete in us the good work you have begun.

Hear the good news! Jesus answered John's question not with arguments, but with signs of healing, life, and grace: *"The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them."* In Jesus Christ, the missing piece has been found.

In Jesus Christ, the picture is made whole.

Your sins are forgiven. Your questions are held in God's hands. Your broken pieces are gathered up in love. Walk now in the light of Christ. Live as people being made whole. For the puzzle of God's kingdom is coming together in you.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our eyes and ears to your guidance. Help us to see the ways in which your grace draws us into a community of love and inclusion. Empower us to respond with your love to the needs of our neighbors; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

READINGS

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 35:1-10

A reading from Isaiah.

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² 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.]]

³ Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.
⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
⁶ 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;
⁷ 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.

- ⁸ 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.
- ⁹ 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.
- ¹⁰ 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.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10

Theme of the Psalm: The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. (*Ps. 146:8*)

- ⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the Lord their God;
- ⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps promises forever;**
- ⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.
The Lord sets the captive free.
- ⁸ **The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous. R**
- ⁹ The Lord cares for the stranger;
the Lord sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the

way of the wicked.

¹⁰ **The Lord shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

SECOND LESSON: James 5:7-10

A reading from James.

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, 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. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



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

GOSPEL Matthew 11:2-11

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 11th chapter.



John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God’s judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus’ response indicates that God’s reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

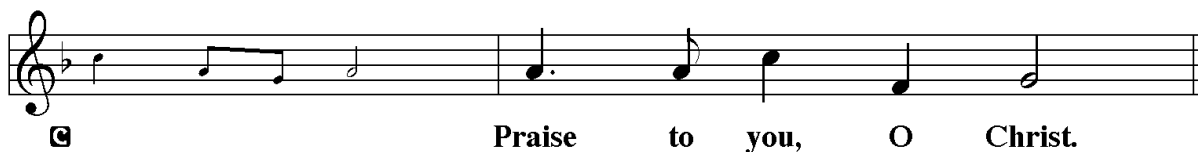
² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴ Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

⁷ 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? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ 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.’

¹¹ “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.”

The gospel of the Lord.



MESSAGE

HYMN OF THE DAY

Christ Be Our Light ELW 715

Christ, Be Our Light



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for
2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for
3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for
4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for
5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

NICENE CREED

Together, we profess our faith with the words of the Nicene Creed.

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Week 3 - Joy

As we wait for you, O loving God, we place before you our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

Silence for reflection.

God of joy, the church rejoices in the greatness of the Lord. You turn our hearts from fear to faith. Open your church to deep joy. God of promise,
Receive our prayer.

God of joy, you made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them. We need water for life, yet we misuse what you have given us. Restore us to live in right relationship with all creation. God of promise,
Receive our prayer.

God of joy, you toss the mighty off their thrones and raise up the lowly. You fill the bellies of those without enough to eat, and send the rich away hungry. You frustrate the ways of the wicked. God of promise,
Receive our prayer.

God of joy, when we are weak in mind, body, or spirit, bring us strength. We pray for those in our community in need, both for those who have asked, and for those who have not. Help us to recognize the fragments of joy that surround us each day. God of promise,
Receive our prayer.

God of joy, the fatigue of this season is real. You are at work through the ministry of our congregation. Meet us in our needs and open us to meet the needs of our neighbors. God of promise,
Receive our prayer.

God of joy, our ancestors in the faith knew and passed along the joy they received from you. Guide us to pass it to future generations of your followers. Join us all together in praise at your heavenly throne. God of promise,
Hear our prayer.

Joyfully, we trust you wholly to answer our prayers.
Amen.

PEACE

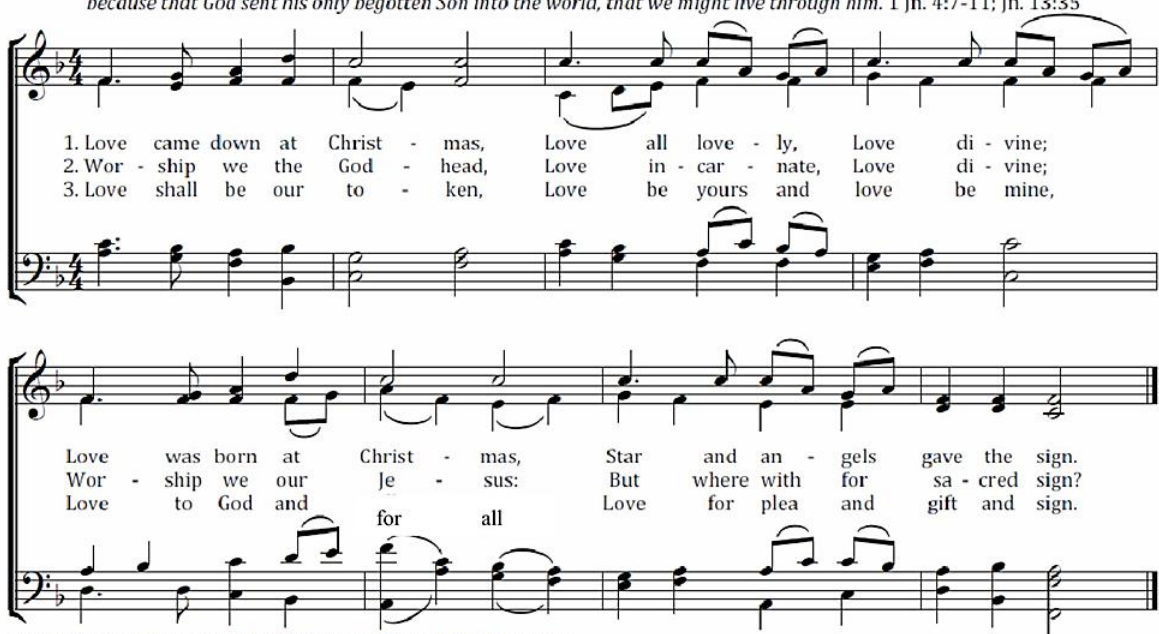
May the peace of God be with you and ignite in you the joy of faith that Christ has come, is here, and will come again.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Love Came Down at Christmas

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God.... In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 1 Jn. 4:7-11; Jn. 13:35



1. Love came down at Christ - mas, Love all love - ly, Love di - vine;
2. Wor - ship we the God - head, Love in - car - nate, Love di - vine;
3. Love shall be our to - ken, Love be yours and love be mine,

Love was born at Christ - mas, Star and an - gels gave the sign.
Wor - ship we our Je - sus: But where with for sa - cred sign?
Love to God and for all Love for plea and gift and sign.

WORDS: Christina G. Rossetti, pub. 1885. MUSIC: "Gartan"; Irish melody. Public Domain.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of the manger and the mud, We give thanks that you are not a god at a distance but God who came to live with us. You have never been far off—from creation's first breath to the

cries in Bethlehem's stable, you've chosen the ground floor, the messy places, the ordinary lives, to reveal your extraordinary grace. Receive these gifts as signs of our gratitude and trust. Take what we offer today— our coins, our commitments, our cracked hearts— and mold them with your holy hands. Infuse them with your mercy, multiply them with your love, and use them to build your kingdom right here, in the muck and miracle of everyday life. In Jesus' name, who meets us where we are,

Amen.

COMMUNION

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

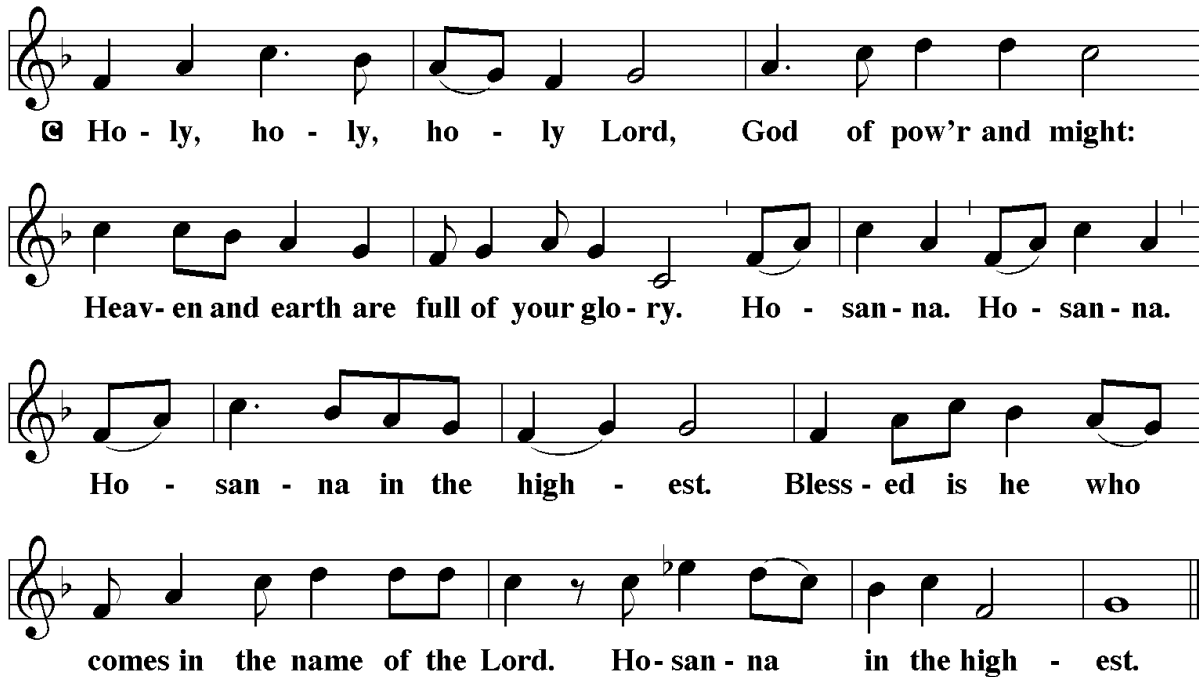
PREFACE

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:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:
Heav-en and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
you have brought us this far along the way.

In times of bitterness you did not abandon us,
but guided us into the path of love and light.
In every age you sent prophets
to make known your loving will for all humanity.
The cry of the poor has become your own cry;
our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.
In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant
to preach good news to the afflicted,

to break bread with the outcast and despised,
and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

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 all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection,
we await the day when Jesus shall return
to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.
Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen.

Amen.

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate,
to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup
with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the
world.

Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen.

Amen.

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age,
that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection,
we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son.
Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

**Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory,
forever and ever.**

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Each person responds

Amen.

COMMUNION SONG

One Bread, One Body ELW 496

One Bread, One Body

Refrain



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

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy and gracious God, who shaped the stars and stooped to cradle dust, we give thanks that you meet us not in lofty heights, but on the ground floor—where life is raw, real, and aching for redemption. In this holy meal, You have fed us with mercy that took on flesh, with love that changed addresses and moved into a manger. You have entered our brokenness, not with distant judgment, but with hands dirtied by creation, by carpentry, by cross-bearing grace. You meet us there—again and again—with bread, with wine, with grace. Send us now, nourished and renewed, to be your people: to serve, to love, to lift, to listen. Let our lives echo your humility, and let our hands bear your healing.

In the name of Jesus, who came down to raise us up.

Amen.

BLESSING

May God who comes down to meet us where we are,
Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel ELW 257

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



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.

5 O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery. *Refrain*

7 O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one;
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*

6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain*

8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

DISMISSAL

Go in joy. God's grace meets you where you are.
Thanks be to God.