



FOURTH SUNDAY OF

*Advent*

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**Sunday, December 22, 2024**

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Service Theme

**A REAL CHRISTMAS WILL LIFT UP THE LOWLY**

By this time of the holiday season, people are often weighted down. They feel guilty about presents that are not perfect, or parties that did not go as planned, or year-end projects that did not get completed. To top it all off, now is when it dawns on people how little attention they have given to the spiritual preparation Advent invites. If that is how we feel, perhaps the frenzy of December has done us a favour. We have been stretched to our limits. We have been made painfully aware of our shortcomings. We have been humbled. Perfect! For being made aware of our weakness does not disqualify us from God's care. It does the opposite. IT is what prepares us for the work he does best. He is a God who lifts up the lowly.

## Invocation and Lighting of the Advent Candles

**M:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** Amen

**M:** We light four Advent candles remembering Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Mary. He came to share our humanity.

**C:** We remember Jesus, whose name means Savior. He came to save his people from their sins.

**M:** We hear his call to give him a place in our hearts.

**C:** We light four Advent candles as a sign of our joy and hope.

**M:** Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

**C:** Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.

### 333 O Little Town of Bethlehem

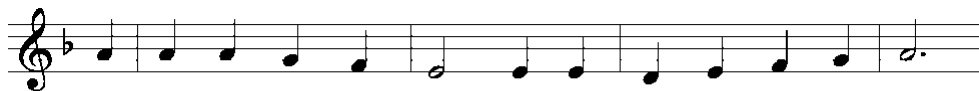
CW 333



1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove  
3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!  
4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
while mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won-d'ring love.  
So God im-parts to hu - man hearts the bless-ings of his heav'n.  
cast out our sin and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.  
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,  
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad ti - dings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
and prais - es sing to God the King and peace to all the earth.  
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.  
O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893, abr., alt.

Tune: Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

Text and tune: Public domain

## The Service *Setting One (p.154)*

### **Confession**

CW154

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just  
and will forgive us our sins  
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**Holy God, gracious Father,**

**I am sinful by nature**

**and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words,  
and actions.**

**I have not loved you with my whole heart;**

**I have not loved others as I should.**

**I deserve your punishment both now and forever.**

**But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins**

**with his innocent suffering and death.**

**Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a  
sinner.**

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

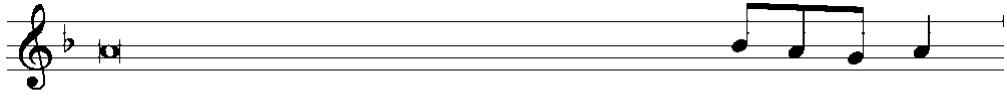
Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**Lord, Have Mercy**



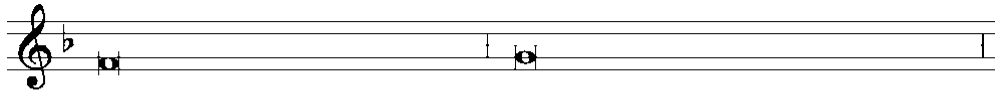
In peace let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



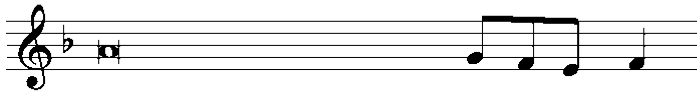
For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



**Lord, have mer - cy.**



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



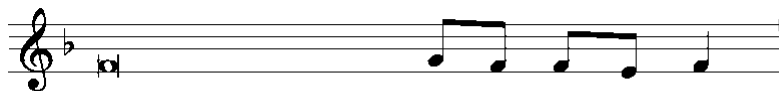
**Lord, have mer - cy.**



For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us



pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



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



**A - men.**

Tune: Kevin Becker

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## Glory Be to God on High

CW 157



Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we wor - ship you, we glorify you,



we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther Al - mighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world;

You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.

For you on-ly are holy; you on-ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the

Ho-ly Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

## The Word

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

## Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Take away the burden of our sins, and make us ready for the celebration of your birth, 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.

**Amen.**

## First Reading

Micah 5:2–5a

*The lowly little town of Bethlehem would be lifted up. There a special son would be born who would bring spiritual peace to the ends of the earth.*

<sup>2</sup>But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
though you are small among the clans of Judah,  
from you, will go out the one who will be the ruler for  
me in Israel.

His goings forth are from the beginning, from the days  
of eternity.

<sup>3</sup>Therefore the LORD will give them up,  
until the time when the woman who is in labor bears a  
child.

Then the remaining survivors from his brothers will  
return to the people of Israel.

<sup>4</sup>He will stand and shepherd with the strength of the  
LORD,

in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

They will dwell securely, for at that time he will be  
great to the ends of the earth.

<sup>5</sup>This one will be their peace.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

# 85A LORD, in Your Mercy, Hear My Prayer

Psalm 85A

## Refrain



## Tone



You, LORD, forgave the iniquity of your / people  
and covered / all their sins.

You set aside / all your wrath  
and turned from your fierce / anger.

Show us your unfailing / love, LORD,  
and grant us your sal- / vation. *Refrain*

I will listen to what God the / LORD says;  
he promises peace to his / people.

Surely his salvation is near those who / fear him,  
that his glory may dwell / in our land.

Love and faithfulness meet to- / gether;  
righteousness and peace kiss each / other.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son  
and to the Holy / Spirit,**

**as it was in the be- / ginning,  
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

Text: Hal H. Hopson

Tune: Hal H. Hopson

Setting: Kermit G. Moldenhauer

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## Second Reading

Hebrews 10:1-10

*We could not possibly raise ourselves up to God. So, the Son of God obeyed the law for us and by his sacrifice has made us holy. Christ has lifted up the lowly.*

<sup>1</sup>In fact, the law is only a shadow of the good things to come, not the actual realization of those things. It will never be able to make perfect those who continually offer the same sacrifices year after year. <sup>2</sup>If it could do this, wouldn't they have stopped bringing sacrifices, because the worshippers, once they were cleansed, would no longer have a bad conscience about sins? <sup>3</sup>Instead, these sacrifices reminded them of their sins year after year. <sup>4</sup>The fact is that the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins.

<sup>5</sup>Therefore when he entered the world, Christ said:

Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,  
but you prepared a body for me.

<sup>6</sup>You were not pleased  
with burnt offerings and sin offerings.

<sup>7</sup>Then I said, "Here I am.

I have come to do your will, God.

In the scroll of the book it is written about me."

<sup>8</sup>First he said:

Sacrifices and offerings that were offered according to the law,

both burnt offerings and sin offerings,  
you did not desire,

and you were not pleased with them.

<sup>9</sup>Then he said:

Here I am.

I have come to do your will.

He does away with the first in order to establish the second.

<sup>10</sup>By this will, we have been sanctified once and for all,  
through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Gospel Acclamation

CW 161



### Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

### Tone



Come to us, Em - man - u - el; come and set your peo - ple free.

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## Gospel

Luke 1:39-55

*In Spirit-wrought humility, Mary knew she needed a Savior. God lifts her up, making her the mother of that Saviour.*

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary got up and hurried to the hill country, to a town of Judah. <sup>40</sup>She entered the home of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>Just as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup>She called out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup>But why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup>In fact, just now, as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy! <sup>45</sup>Blessed is she who believed, because the promises spoken to her from the Lord will be fulfilled!"

<sup>46</sup>Then Mary said,

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

<sup>47</sup>and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup>because he has looked with favor on the humble state of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed,

<sup>49</sup>because the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.



*Refrain*

And ho - ly is your name through all gen - er -  
a - tions! Ev - er - last - ing is your mer - cy to the  
peo - ple you have cho - sen, and ho - ly is your name!

Text: anonymous, alt.  
Tune: Scottish  
Text and tune: Public domain

## Sermon – Hebrews 10:1-10

**The Merry Christmas that ushered in a Happy New Year**

- 1) Jesus fulfilled the Old...
- 2) To bless us with the New.

## 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 in unity with the Father and the Son**

**is worshiped and glorified,**

**who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy Christian 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.**

## **Reception of Rebecca Zhou as Member of Divine Word**

**M:** Dear members of Divine Word Evangelical Lutheran Church, *Rebecca Zhou*, having been baptized and instructed in the teachings of the Word of God, desires to become a members of this congregation.

**M:** *Sister* in Christ, our Lord Jesus Christ promises to confess before his Father in heaven those who faithfully confess him on earth. You have come before this Christian congregation to declare your faith and to unite with us in Christian love and fellowship.

Therefore, lift up your heart(s) to the God of all grace and joyfully answer these questions:

Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? If so, answer: I do.

**R: I do.**

M: Do you believe that the teaching of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as you have learned to know it from Luther's Small Catechism, is faithful and true to the Word of God? If so, answer: I do.

**R: I do.**

M: Do you intend to continue steadfast in the true Christian faith, be diligent in the use of God's Word and sacraments, and lead a godly life even to death? If so, answer: I do, and I ask God to help me.

**R: I do, and I ask God to help me.**

M: Will you support with your prayers, time, talents, and offerings the work our Lord has given to this congregation? If so, answer: I will, and I ask God to help me.

**R: I will, and I ask God to help me.**

M: Having heard your promises, we, the members of Divine Word Evangelical Lutheran Church, receive you in fellowship and love, and invite you to share in our worship and mission, in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

M: Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, author and perfecter of our faith, in mercy you joined *this sister in Christ* to your Church when *she* were born again of water and the Spirit. In mercy you taught *her* your saving truth. Grant that *she* may offer *herself* as a living sacrifice to you as *her* spiritual act of worship. Transform *her* by the renewing of *her* mind so that *she* will not conform to the pattern of this world.

Help us live in love and harmony with one another and work together in serving you. Keep us united in your Spirit, and bring us at last to your eternal kingdom, where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**M:** Go in peace.

### **Prayer for Advent**

Come, dear Savior. We long for your appearing!

Come to cheer us with your promises, as you once cheered your ancient people throughout their long night of waiting and watching.

Come to restore our hope. Rouse us from the slumber of despair; lift our hearts from petty, earthbound goals; and direct our eyes above, from where you will soon come to make all things right again.

Come and work in us a godly grief and a genuine sorrow over sin. Forgive us for the shameful way we have dishonored you and the shabby way we have dealt with one another. Through your mighty Word, stir up in us a ceaseless yearning to give ourselves to others, as you have given yourself for us.

Come also to rekindle our joy as we prepare to celebrate your first coming. Do not permit a frenzied busyness to rob us of your peace or to deprive us of times to ponder and to wonder at your Word. Set our hearts apart from the bustle and the clamor and the jostle of these days. Fill us with the quiet delight of finding you in the manger, and keep hearts and minds undisturbed by the great throng that streams by uncaring.

We pray also for those enduring great sorrow, for those undergoing spiritual trial, and for those whose restless hearts have no knowledge of your coming.

Comfort, strengthen, and illumine them with the sweet peace born of your love, and keep them in the way of peace by your Holy Word.

*Special prayers and intercessions may follow.*

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

*Silent prayer.*

Come quickly, dear Lord, and fill our longing eyes with the light of your coming! We wait, we keep watch, and in you we put our hope. Amen.

Offering

The Sacrament

### Preface

CW 165

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**



It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared when he called people to repentance and pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

## Holy, Holy, Holy

CW 167

The musical score is written on five staves in a single system. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in treble clef. The lyrics are placed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The score ends with a double bar line.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en - ly hosts:  
heav'n 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,  
bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Ho-san - na, ho-san - na, ho-san - na in the high - est.

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks to you, O God, through your dear Son, Jesus Christ, whom you sent to be our Savior, our Redeemer, and the messenger of your grace. Through him you made all things; in him you are well pleased. He is the incarnate Word, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. To fulfill your promises, he stretched out his hands on the cross and released from eternal death all who believe in you.

As we remember Jesus' death and resurrection, we thank you that you have gathered us together to receive your Son's body and blood. Send us your Spirit, unite us as one, and strengthen our faith so that we may praise you in your Son, Jesus Christ. Through him, we glorify and honor you, O God our Father, with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

**Lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,**

**and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

### **Words of Institution**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my T body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my T blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**Amen.**

## O Christ, Lamb of God

CW 169

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;  
have mer-cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,  
you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.  
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;  
grant us your peace. A - - - men.

The musical score is written on five staves in a single system. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: "O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; grant us your peace. A - - - men." The word "Amen" is written with a long horizontal line above it, indicating a long note or a pause.

<sup>3</sup>  
*Be seated*

## Distribution

*Stand*

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
**his mercy endures forever.**

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
**we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

# Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and T give you peace.

**Amen.**

## 331 From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

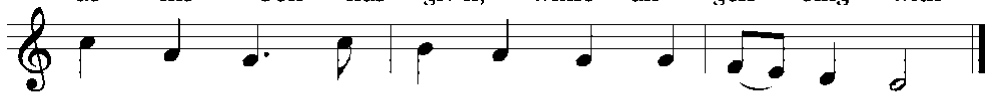
CW 331 sts. 1–3, 8, 15



1 "From heav'n a - bove to earth I come to bear good  
2 "To you this night is born a child of Mar - y,  
3 "This is the Christ, our God most high, who hears your  
8 Wel - come to earth, O no - ble Guest, thro' whom the  
15 Glo - ry to God in high - est heav'n, who un - to



news to ev - 'ry home; glad ti - dings of great  
cho - sen vir - gin mild; this lit - tle child of  
sad and bit - ter cry; he will him - self your  
sin - ful world is blest! You came to share my  
us his Son has giv'n, while an - gels sing with



joy I bring, where - of I now will say and sing:  
low - ly birth shall be the joy of all the earth.  
Sav - ior be from all your sins to set you free.  
mis - er - y, that you might share your joy with me.  
pi - ous mirth a glad new year to all the earth!

Text: tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.; Martin Luther, 1483–1546

Tune: Geistliche lieder, Leipzig, 1539, ed. Valten Schumann

Text and tune: Public domain

## Acknowledgments

Setting One from Christian Worship

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## **Church Cleaners**

December 29 – Mark // January 5 – Thomas

### DIVINE WORD'S TWO-WEEK CALENDAR

- Su (22) 9:00 am Sunday School / Bible Class**  
**10:30 am Worship with Communion**  
11:30 am Fellowship
- Tu (24) 2:00 pm Christmas Eve in Poltimore**  
**7:00 pm Christmas Eve at Divine Word**
- We (25) 11:00 am Christmas Day at Divine Word**
- Su (29) 10:30 am Worship**  
11:30 am Fellowship
- Th (2) 10:30 am Longfield Manor Devotion**
- Su (5) 9:00 am Sunday School / Bible Class**  
**10:30 am Worship with Communion**  
11:30 am First Fellowship  
3:00 pm **Worship in Poltimore**



**Divine Word**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church**

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