The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

#### **PRELUDE**

#### \*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

Blessed be God's name forever. Amen.

Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep. Let us confront our sins, and confess them to the one who is merciful and just.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of new beginnings,
we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign.
We have strayed from your paths.
We prepare for war instead of peace.
We dishonor one another and your creation.
Purify us with your refining fire
and set us again on your way of love,
that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance,
and welcome your coming among us.
Amen.

People of God,
a new thing is growing in our midst,
a tender branch,
a living sign.
By water and the Spirit you are joined to this wonder.
You have put on + Christ,
and your sins have been washed away.
Rejoice in the way of the Lord.
Amen.

#### \*GATHERING HYMN 1 Wake, a - wake, for night is the watch-men ing, the watch-men sing Zi - on hears and all her ing, 3 Glo - ri - a! Let heav'n a - dore Let saints and you! the heights are cry - ing; a - wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, at last. She wakes, she ris - es from her gloom. heart with joy is spring-ing. an - gels sing be - fore you, with harp and cym-bal's clear-est tone. Mid - night hears the wel - come voic and at the es, friend comes down, all glo rious, the strong in pearl, twelve por - tals gleam Gates of ing, lead us thrill-ing cry re-joic-es: "Come forth, you maid-ens! Night is past. grace, in truth vic - to - rious: her star is ris'n; her light is come. bliss be-yond all dream-ing, with an - gel choirs a - round your throne. take!" The bride - groom comes! A - wake; your lamps with glad - ness Now come, O Bless - ed One, Lord Je - sus, God's own Son. eye has caught the light, no ear the thun-d'ring might Al - le - lu ia! Rise and pre - pare the feast to share; Sing ho - san na! Oh, hear the call! Come one, come all,



we

will go:

what joy we'll know!

There

ry.

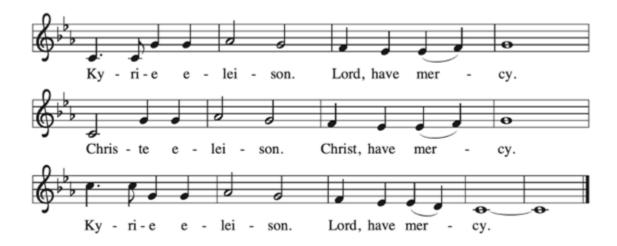
#### \*GREETING

such glo

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,...be with you all.

And also with you.

#### \*KYRIE



### \*PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture readings, preaching, and song.

#### FIRST READING

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 singing. 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. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; 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.

Hear the One who is coming.

Come, Word of God.

#### **PSALM**



#### **SECOND READING**

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.

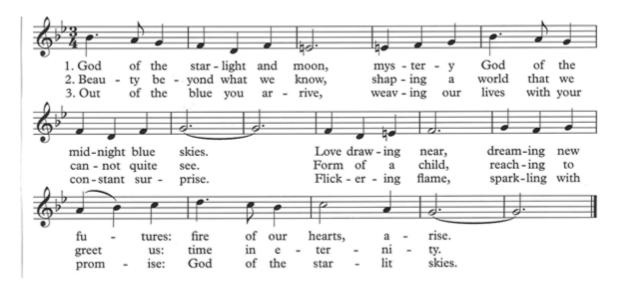
Hear the One who is coming.

Come, Word of God.

The assembly stands to greet the gospel.

#### \*CANDLELIGHTING

The assembly sings verse 1 on the hymn.



The first candle is lighted. The assembly sings verse 2 of the hymn. When deep bklue darkness has unfolded its mysteries

has unfolded its mysteries, we can measure our environment, understand it, move through it with confidence.

When we next return to deep darkness, we will know more and fear less.

This candle which we light represents our growing familiarity with God's purposes, where the stories we have heard and the traditions we have inherited resolve into new meaning for a new day. In time we will stride confidently forward into each new day, unwavering in devotion, unswerving in direction. But not yet, not fully.

#### \*GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. 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, the lepers 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 offence 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.** 

#### **SERMON**

After a brief silence for reflection, the assembly stands to proclaim the Word of God in song.

#### \*HYMN OF THE DAY

# Joyful Is the Dark



Text: Brian Wren, b. 1936

Music: LINDNER, Carlton R. Young, b. 1926

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#### \*NICENE CREED

Siblings in Christ, as we look to the coming of the Savior, let us confess the faith of the Church:

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 love the resurrection of the dead, +
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

#### \*PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Let us lift our prayers with all the faithful, joining the pleading of creation itself:

With your Church, that your Spirit may continue to enliven all the faithful, that we look with expectation to your coming among us everyday, and that your heart be in all those who serve your people, we pray: **Come, Lord Jesus.** 

With creation, as days grow shorter and colder, as bare branches and cold wind surround us, that we remember your life—as creation's life—is never finished, we pray: **Come, Lord Jesus.** 

With the nations of the world, that wars may cease in all places, that governments and leaders be formed to serve all people with equity and justice, and that all people live in trust and harmony, we pray: **Come, Lord Jesus.** 

With those who are sick and suffering, that your wings of healing be spread over them, that your wisdom, patience, and perseverance be with all those who care for another's needs, and that you visit those whose names and needs we lift up now: \_\_\_\_\_, we pray: **Come, Lord Jesus.** 

With those who cannot look with hope to your coming or with joy to this season, that love and comfort be with them, that beloved community surround those who mourn, that loving family surround those who are estranged or outcast from their places of belonging, we pray: **Come, Lord Jesus.** 

With whom else do we pray? With all those we hold dear, and those known only to you, we pray: **Come, Lord Jesus.** 

With all your faithful in every time and place who now worship the Prince of Peace, that the promises of baptism uphold us now until we gather with them, we pray: **Come, Lord Jesus.** 

Come, Lord Jesus, and quickly! Hear our prayers and all our needs and speak your peace to our expectant hearts. Amen.

#### **\*THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.** We greet one another with a sign of peace. Please be mindful of touch.

#### **OFFERING**

#### **\*OFFERTORY HYMN**



#### \*OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray:

Eternal God,

you make the desert bloom

and send springs of water to thirsty ground.

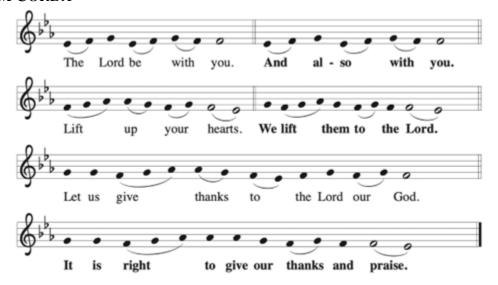
Receive these simple gifts of bread, wine, and money, and make us messengers of your mercy and love for all in need of your healing and justice.

We ask this through Christ our Savior.

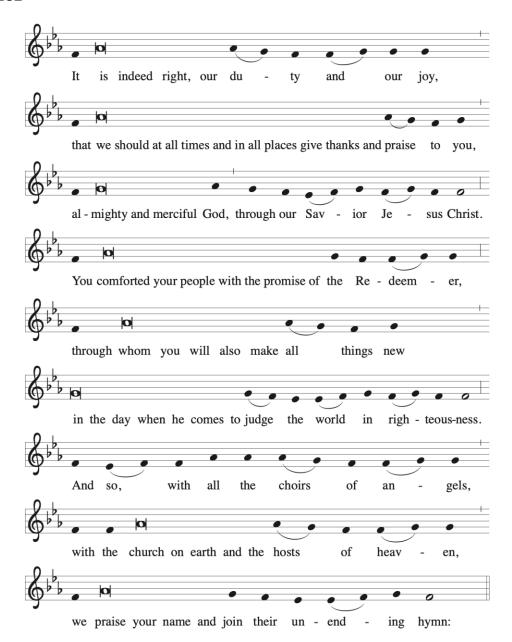
# Amen.

## \*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

## \*Sursum Corda



### \*PREFACE



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# \*SANCTUS



#### \*EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

We praise you, living and loving God, that you have sent your Son to this world. Christ is your Wisdom, sweetly ordering all creation, our Lawgiver, burning with justice, the Branch from Jesse's tree, sprouting flowers from old roots, the Key of David, opening our prison doors. And let the people cry, **O come and save us.** 

We praise you, serving and saving God,
that you send your Son also to this table,
who on the night before he died 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.

And let the people cry, **O come and save us.** 

We beg you, mighty and merciful God: send us the Spirit of your Son.

Dwell in this food and in all who share it, that the earth may rejoice in your presence.

In Christ, the Dawning Day, enlighten a darkened world, reign as Sovereign to unite all peoples, and live among us, Emmanuel, our deepest desire now and forever.

And let the people cry, **O come and save us.** 

Even so, come, Lord Jesus, with your Father and your Spirit, to the church, and receive our praises, now and forever.

Amen.

### \*LORD'S PRAYER



#### \*INVITATION TO THE TABLE

#### **COMMUNION**

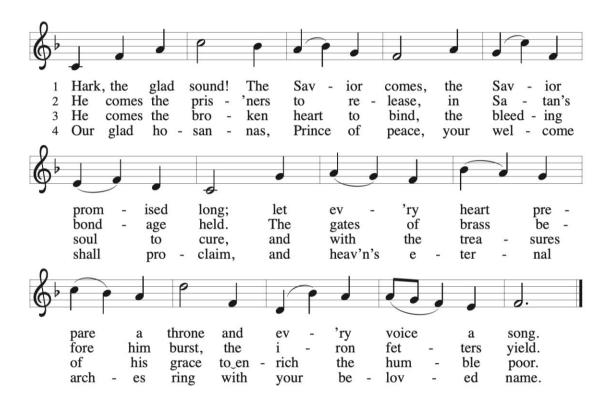
### HYMNS DURING DISTRIBUTION



# Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers



Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907 Music: HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG, Swedish folk tune



Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702–1751 Music: CHESTERFIELD, Thomas Haweis, 1734–1820

#### **POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray:

Faithful God,

in this meal you have remembered your mercy, bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ. As we wait for the day

when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery. Guide us toward your promised future, coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. **Amen.** 

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

#### \*BLESSING





#### \*DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is near. Thanks be to God.