Holy Nativity Lutheran Church

3 Lenape Trail
Wenonah, NJ 08090

OUR MISSION

Graced by a loving God to be a caring community of faith the fellowship of Holy Nativity is called to support one another, warmly welcoming others into our community, sharing in the mission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed, and reaching out in witness and service to the communities to which we belong as one in the Body of Christ.

Worship Service for Sunday, November 29, 2026
1st Sunday of Advent LBW Holy Communion Setting One

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

In response to God's overwhelming love, we stand in awe of the wideness of God's mercy and by God's Spirit we welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. In faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, mindful of our Lutheran emphasis on grace, and rejoicing in the celebration of our shared baptismal journey, we welcome all as members of our church family including any who have ever felt excluded by the Church for any of the reasons that too often divide us.

We are so glad you have joined us today!

First-time guests: *Please fill out a Communion Card and place it in the offering plate.* Newcomer orientations are held on various days several times a year for those who are interested in learning more about HNLC.

Restrooms are located in the hallway between the lobby and our fellowship hall.

Today's Altar Flowers are given in loving memory wishing a happy "heavenly" birthday to Steve Harris from Laney and by Tony and Denise DiRienzo in memory of family members who have passed.

The Sanctuary Candle is given to the Glory of God.

PRELUDE *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* arr. L. Smith



Introduction to the day
Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

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

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS (The congregation responds with text in bold print.)
All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins...
Blessed be the holy Trinity, (+) one God, who calls out to the weary, whose word endures forever. **Amen.**

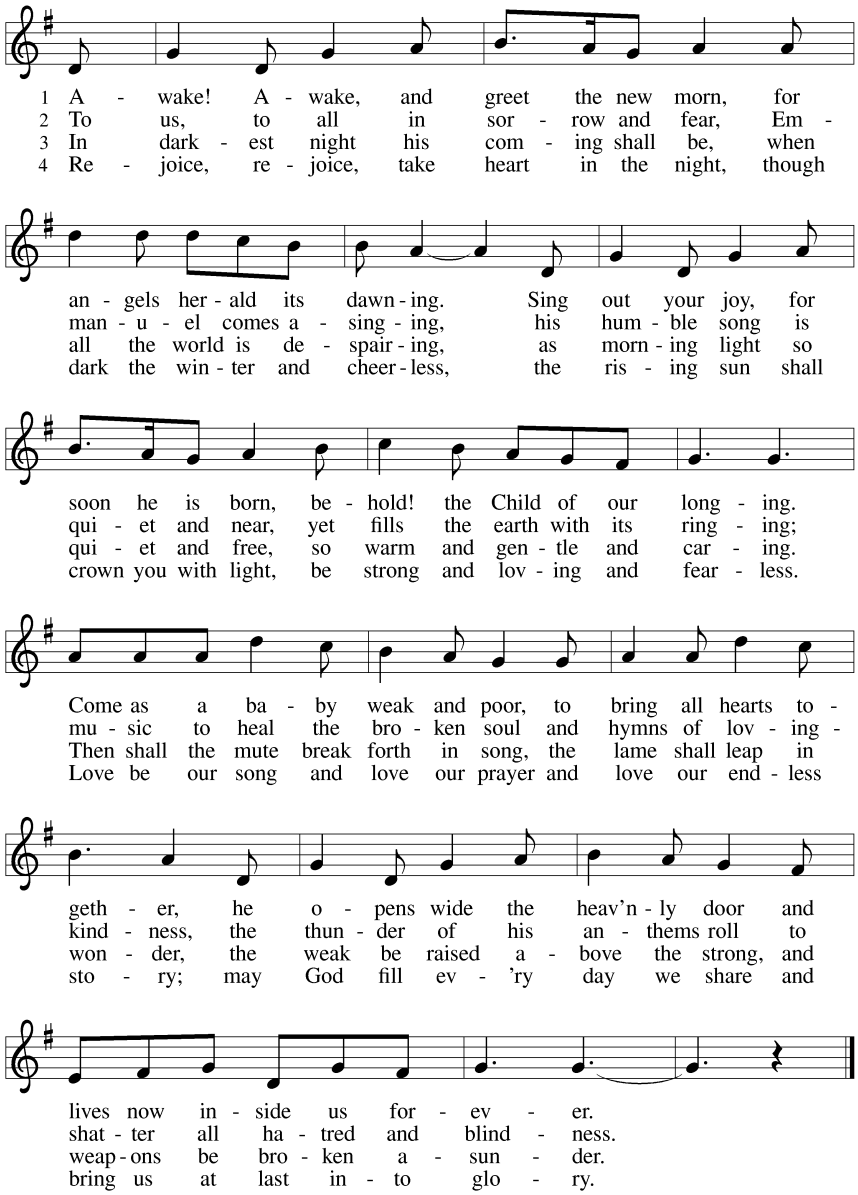
A voice cries out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord!" We are called to confess our sin and turn back toward God's love. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

Comforting God, **we are your people, but we have neglected to call on your name. We are your people, but we have not remembered your ways. We are your people, but we have forgotten your hold on us. We are your people, but now we fade like a leaf, and our sins, like the wind, take us away. Restore us as your people. Cleanse us from our sin, and clothe us in your righteousness. Amen.**

"Comfort, comfort my people!" says your God, who has clothed you with the garments of salvation and wrapped you in the robe of righteousness. God has given you a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. In the name of (+) Christ, your sins are forgiven: Rejoice in the Lord!

Rejoice in the Lord! **Amen. Thanks be to God!**

GATHERING SONG *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* (WOV 633 v. 1 & 2)

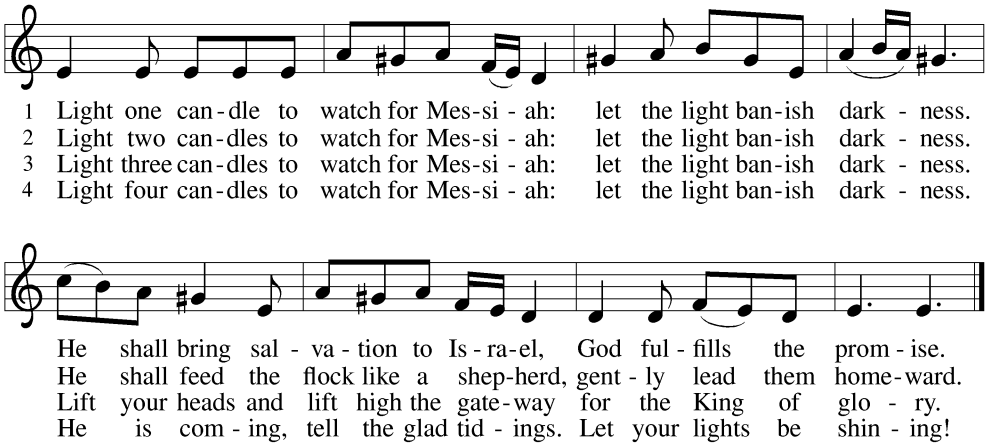


GREETING
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH
We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the first candle on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace,

and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.** *Light the first candle.*

CANDLE LIGHTING RESPONSE ***Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah*** **(WOV 630 v. 1)**



PRAYER OF THE DAY
The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Let us pray. *A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. **By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

WORD
God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

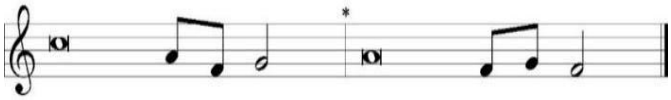
FIRST READING: Isaiah 64:1-9 A reading from Isaiah.
This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

1 O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
2 as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
3 When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence.
4 From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,

no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
5 You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
6 We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
7 There is no one who calls on your name
or attempts to take hold of you,
for you have hidden your face from us
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
8 Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
9 Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (The Psalm is sung responsively by verse.)



Refrain: Let your face | shine upon us, * and we | shall be saved. *(Ps. 80:7)*

Refrain: Let your face | shine upon us, * and we | shall be saved.

1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock; * shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.
2 **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh, * stir up your strength and | come to help us.**
3 Restore | us, O God; * let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
4 **O LORD | God of hosts, * how long will your anger fume when your | people pray?**
Refrain: Let your face | shine upon us, * and we | shall be saved.

5 You have fed them with the | bread of tears; * you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.
6 **You have made us the derision | of our neighbors, * and our enemies laugh | us to scorn.**
7 Restore us, O | God of hosts; * let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.
17 **Let your hand be upon the one at | your right hand, * the one you have made so strong | for yourself.**
Refrain: Let your face | shine upon us, * and we | shall be saved.

18 And so will we never turn a- | way from you; * give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.
19 **Restore us, O LORD | God of hosts; * let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.**
Refrain: Let your face | shine upon us, * and we | shall be saved.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 A reading from 1 Corinthians.
As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

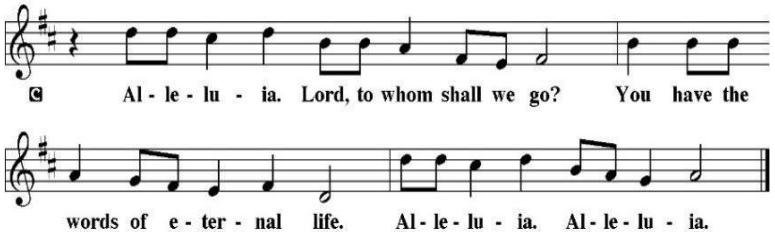
[3] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[4] I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, [5] for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—[6] just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—[7] so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. [8] He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9] God is faithful, by whom you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

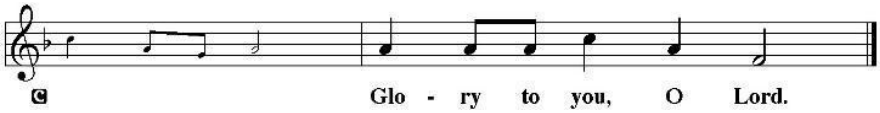
Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

WE RISE TO GREET THE GOSPEL

Alleluia. Show us your steadfast | love, O LORD,* and grant us | your salvation. *Alleluia. (Ps. 85:7)*



GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37 The holy gospel according to Mark.



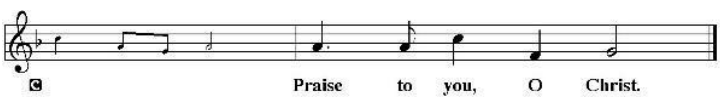
Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

[Jesus said:] [24] "In those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
[25] and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.
[26] "Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. [27] Then he will send out the angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

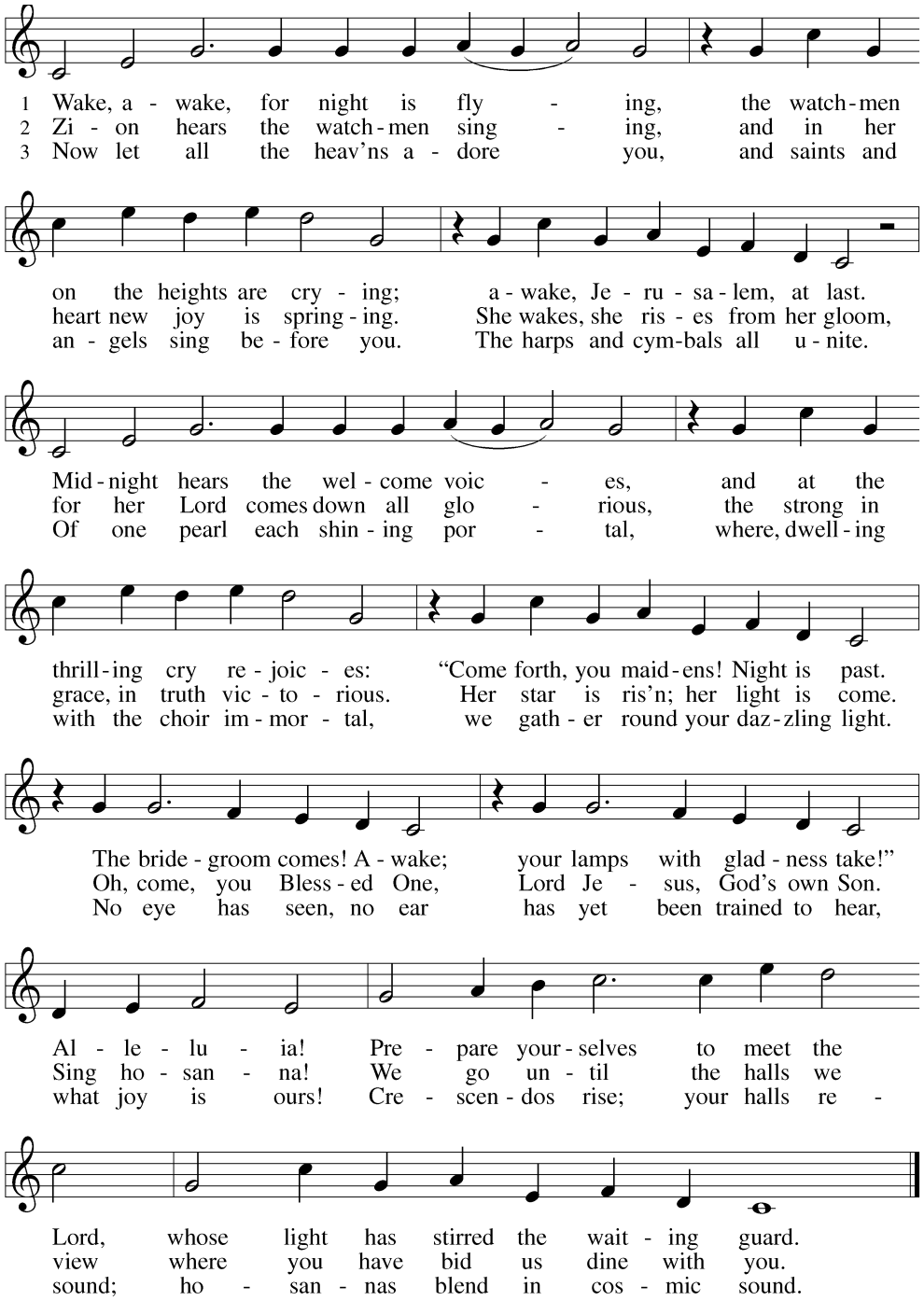
[28] "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. [29] So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. [30] Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. [31] Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

[32] "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. [33] Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. [34] It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. [35] Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, [36] or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. [37] And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

The gospel of the Lord.



HYMN OF THE DAY ***Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying*** **(LBW 31)**



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; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. 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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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

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*Or, "who proceeds from the Father." The phrase "and the Son" is a later addition to the creed.

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Andrew, Apostle Monday, November 30, 2026
The first of the disciples to be called by Jesus, Andrew quickly began to bring others to the Savior, including Simon Peter. The Bible also shows him leading some Greeks to meet Jesus, and he brought forward the boy with five loaves and two fish, with which Jesus fed thousands.

Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, died 1552 Thursday, December 3, 2026
A native of the Basque region of Spain, Xavier became a missionary to India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and the Philippines. He also helped to found the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

John of Damascus, theologian and hymnwriter, died around 749 Friday, December 4, 2026
A monk in an abbey near Jerusalem, John wrote many hymns as well as theological works. One of his works, The Fount of Wisdom, remained influential for centuries.

PRAYER LIST

Prayers for Pope Leo XIV as he recovers from surgery, Prayers for Bishop Christa Compton and her family with the passing of her mother Nancy, Prayers for St. Ambrose in Pennsville as they continue their pastoral search, Prayers for our service men and women serving in the current military actions, especially for those we have lost, Holly & Duane, The family of Norman Albinson as they mourn his passing, Dawn Allen, Anna-Beth Arnes, The family of Anthony Assante as they mourn his passing, Nicholas Baud, John Belko, Jessica Black, Ralph and Angel Branca as they mourn the loss of their grandson, Devon M. Bennett, Lorraine Brecht, Wanda Bryan, Madelene Budd, Mike Bundy, Sal Castelli, Jenn Causey and family, Tracey Causey, Lisa Clark, Josh Clarke, Maverick Cleavenger, Baby Landyn and Kristen Compagoni, Sherwood Cotton, Bob Counbs, Craig (diagnosed with cancer), Rocco Cristinzio, Leslie Criston, Milton Cuevas, Sr., Milton Cuevas, Jr., The family of John Cusack as they grieve his passing, The family of Nicholas Damiani as they mourn his passing, Lou Deaine, The family of Tony DelMonte as they mourn his passing, Dylan Dinh, Kathy Drew, Kristen Dymond, Barbara Esposito, Barbara Facchine, Bill Flynn, Francis, Jeannie Gapinski, Alma Garcia, Stephen and Juliet Genovese, The family of Walter Gifford as they mourn his passing, Gavin Gigliotti, Lauren Stott Gilbert, Dottie Gleb, Jay Goheen and family, Randi Gordon, The family of Joe Gorman as they mourn his passing, Collet Grasso, The family and friends of Gretchen Gravinese as they mourn her passing, The family of Steve Harris as they mourn his passing, the Hatcher family, The friends and family of Jim Hynes as they mourn his passing, Heather and Kim Hyson and family in their time of bereavement, the Hogan family, Ed Jeffers, The friends and family of Tom Jones as they mourn his passing, Marilyn Kaiser, Chaley Klotz, Prayers for the friends and family of Ralph Konschak as they mourn his passing, Martha Kryzwonas, Grace Laphan, Pat Larkin, Joe Lewandowski, Desmond Licata, Joseph Lonia, Bill Ludwig, Bill Mann, Joseph Mansfield, John Markovski, Janaa Minzy, Jim Montisano, The friends and family of Mary Alice Morrison as they mourn her passing, George Muth, Bob and Sue Nevins, Lisa Nobile, Nancy Oberle, Cat Oehlman, Janet Ostrowski, Lucas Otey, Loretta O'Neill, Otis, Donna Paone, Robert Rasmussen, Rita Paul, Danielle Peters, Lauren Rebstock, The family of Bill Reese as they mourn his passing, The family of Lewis Richards as they mourn his passing, Jen Rossi, The family of Scott Rust as they mourn his passing, Noreen Ruyuh, Dylan Sauer, Ken Sauer, Marc Sauer, Joseph Schiffer, Meleta Seher, Billy Shea, Helen Simkunas & Family, Ronnie Snyder, The family of Deb Solt as they mourn her passing, Julia Stanz, The family and friends of Rita Stein as they mourn her passing, Claudia Storhoff, Nathan Storhoff, Samantha Sumner, Donna Testa, The family of Jeff Thomas as they mourn his passing, Mark & Candy

Tryson, Ed Tutka, The family of Kelley Vukicevich as they mourn her passing, Sharon Walker, Wayne Weaver, The Wilke family including Tim & Catherine, Jill Wilt.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION
In hope and expectation, we bring to God our prayers for the church, the world, and all in need. *A brief silence.*

Strengthen your church in this season of anticipation. Nourish all people who gather around word and water, bread and cup. Reassure any whose faith feels dry that you are always near. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Come and restore the earth. Give rest to weary lands and renewed life to species at risk. Make us wise stewards of the places we call home. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Bring peace among all nations and communities. Embolden leaders to seek creative and sustainable resolutions to war and conflict. Show us new possibilities in places where peace has been elusive (*especially*). God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Sustain all who are heavy with weariness, grief, illness, or worry (*especially*). Comfort families who are estranged from one another and any who are separated from loved ones. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Inspire liturgists, preachers, musicians, and all who lead our worship and prayer. May we be prepared as we await Christ's coming this Advent season. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

You embrace all the saints from the far reaches of the earth. We remember with care all who have died and now abide in their eternal home. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

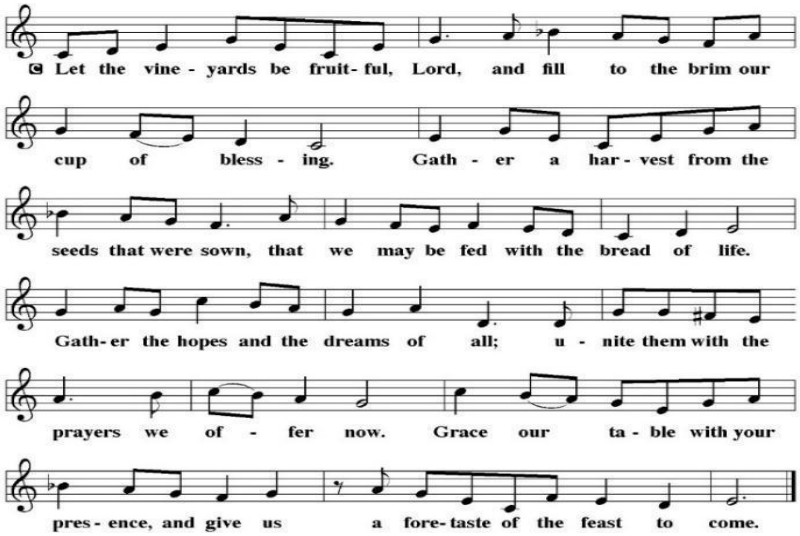
We entrust these and the prayers of our hearts to you, most holy God, in the name of Christ Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

PEACE
The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**
The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.

MEAL God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERTORY SOLO *Immanuel* M. Card
Soloist—Laurie Brown

OFFERTORY VERSE



OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God of abundance, **we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE, PREFACE AND SANCTUS

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

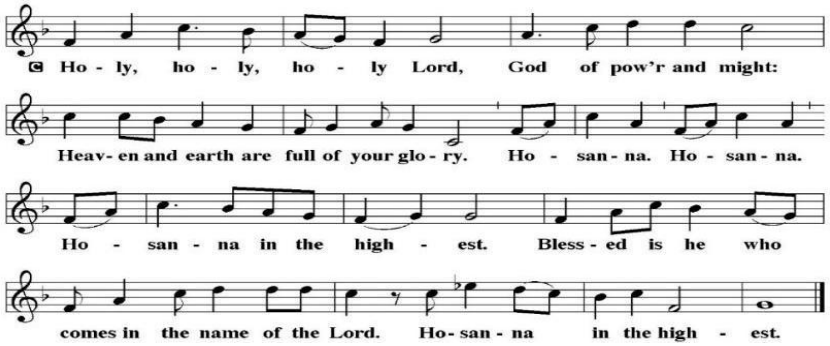
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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:



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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.

LORD'S PRAYER

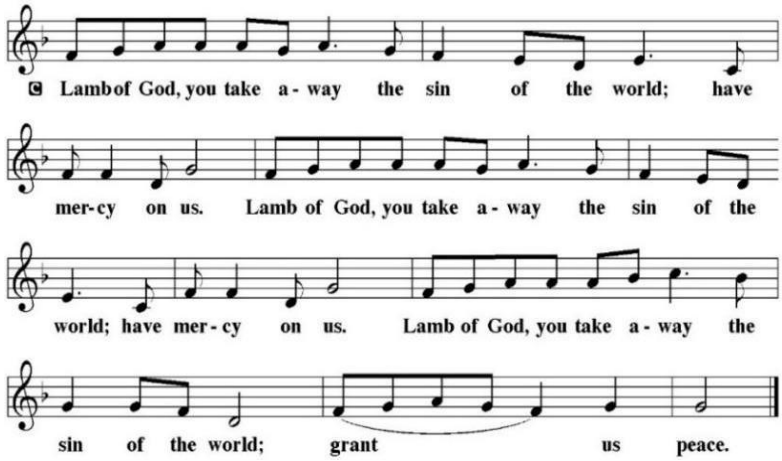
Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

ADVENT INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The glory of the Lord is revealed! Come and taste God's presence.

COMMUNION SONG



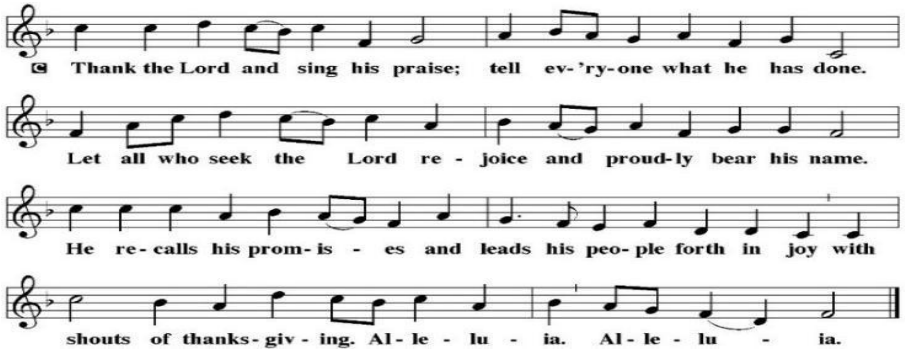
COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.** The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

ADVENT BLESSING

God our provider, God our feast, God our companion, (+) bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION CANTICLE



ADVENT PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Providing God, **you feed your flock like a shepherd and gather your people in your arms. We praise you for the care and sustenance you give at this meal and always. As we leave your table, carry us near your heart, and send us with confidence in the way of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

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

SENDING OF COMMUNION
Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are *sick, homebound, and imprisoned*. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* (WOV 633 v. 4)

4 Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless.
Love be our song and love our prayer
and love our endless story;
may God fill ev'ry day we share
and bring us at last into glory.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Offering received November 21st and 22nd -$1796.00. (This amount does not include funds given for Thrivent and the purchase of shopping cards.) Weekly amount needed to meet the spending plan--$2614.00. Total received to date—$115566.12. Amount needed to date--$122858.00. (**Please don't forget the church if you will be away!**)
- The weekly bulletin is emailed to members each Thursday or Friday prior to the weekend. If for some reason you did not receive the email or have trouble opening the file, you can also access the bulletin on the church's website.
- Reminder! If you sign up to sponsor altar flowers ($35) or sanctuary candle ($10), please remember your payment. Also, please let the church office know how you would like your dedication to read in the bulletin.
- GIFT CARDS FOR CHRISTMAS-- Holy Nativity will once again offer the opportunity to purchase gift cards for Christmas. There is no additional cost to you. The church earns a percentage of the gift card value from the supplier. Order forms are in the narthex. Orders are due by December 6. Cards will be distributed at the December 12-13 services. If you have any questions, please contact Diane Yandach at 856-498-1964.
- A special THANK-YOU to our anonymous furnace "angel" who fixed our heater, avoiding a costly service call!
- BREAKFAST MINISTRY—Christ Episcopal Church in Woodbury has launched a new breakfast ministry. It offers free cold breakfast to the Woodbury community on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 8 am to 10 am in the Parish Hall at 62 Delaware Avenue. Please keep this ministry in your prayers. The next date is December 26, 2026.
- Donations through Venmo and PayPal--Please note that, per council policy, if you make an electronic donation through Venmo or PayPal, it will not be recorded on your annual giving statement. It is the member's responsibility to track these donations for tax purposes.

Donate

- Shop Rite shopping cards are available for purchase after the services.

- FEED THE NORTHEAST CAMPAIGN—We have reached our goal. Thank you for your generosity!
- ST. PETER'S COMMUNITY PANTRY is here to help serve those facing food insecurity in Gloucester County. If you are having a difficult time buying food for yourself, or your family, please let us try to make a small difference for you. The Pantry is located behind St. Peter's Episcopal Church at 304 Kings Highway in Clarksboro. We are open every 3rd Saturday of the Month from 9 AM to 1 PM. Next distribution date: Saturday, December 26, 2026.
- GREATER WOODBURY COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES is a joint effort by 13 Faith Communities to serve people within our area. A major part of the services offered by the GWCM is through our Food Pantries and Clothing Distribution Center. Clients in need of assistance are given a standard assortment of grocery items according to the size of their family, plus fresh fruits and vegetables and special treats.
  THANKSGIVING "FIXINS" – BRING NOW
  Gravy, Instant Mashed Potatoes, Canned Sweet Potatoes, Stuffing Mix, Cranberry Sauce, Cake Mix, Icing. Bring whatever items you collect. They will do the bagging so that all bags are the same. You may drop off your church collections any Tuesday or Thursday morning. We are there from 8:00AM until 11:00AM. (Clients come from 9:00-11:00). They will be distributing Turkeys and Fixins on Nov. 17 and 19. **Please do NOT wait until then to bring us your collections.**
  HYGIENE BAGS for CHRISTMAS BRING DEC. 8, 2026 (If you are doing this on your own.) Start with a Gallon size Zip-Loc Plastic Bag. Fill with these basic items: Shampoo, Deodorant, Soap, Toothpaste, Toothbrush, Disposable Razors, Shaving Cream
  Suggestions: Buy your items from the Dollar Stores. When choosing the size of an item, keep in mind that it has to fit in the Gallon sized Zip-Loc bag. Because most of the shampoo containers are large, turn the bottle sideways and put it in the bag first, then add the other items. Keep in mind that the bags need to be CLOSED after you fill them.

  They will be distributing the Hygiene Bags on Dec. 15 and 17. All Hygiene Bags should already be assembled before **dropping them off on Dec 8**. If you have donations that were too big for the bags, you may give those for our general distributions at a later time. They appreciate all that each of the churches do to help us serve those in need. We couldn't do any of these things without your help.

  The Food Pantry Christmas meal this year will be frozen Lasagna and salad "fixins". We have a grant for the Lasagna, but **we will need salad dressing. The food pantry plans on offering as many as 1000 meals. We hope HNLC and our other ministry partners can each contribute 80 bottles of salad dressing.**
- Coffee hour between services is scheduled for the first Sunday of each month, hosted by the 8:30 service. Please come and join us for coffee and fellowship Sunday, December 6th. We will also be filling the hygiene bags, so we will need your help!
- HOLIDAY CHEER CONCERT—John Rutter's Magnificat and Songs of the Season—Sunday December 6 @ 7 pm at Trinity United Methodist Church in Clayton AND Tuesday December 8 @ 7:30 pm at First Presbyterian Church in Woodbury Heights.
- DATES TO REMEMBER—
  - Saturday, December 12—Annual Christmas Dinner @ 5:30 following the service. All are welcome. A sign-up sheet is in the Narthex.
  - Sunday, December 20—A Very Merry Band Concert by the Golden Eagle Community Band—3 pm at the Burlington County Masonic Home Fellowship Center, 1114 Oxmead Road, Burlington, NJ 08016.
  - Saturday, January 23 and Sunday, January 24—Annual Congregational meeting (after each service).
  - Tuesday, March 30—Red Cross Blood Drive (1:00-6:00)

- GROWING IN FAITH: THE DIAKONIA PROGRAM Growing in Faith is a ministry within the ELCA committed to fostering learning environments for followers of Jesus to grow in faith. Lay members of congregations are integral to healthy discipleship in the church and community. If you would be interested in this program, check out the website www.njdiakonia.com for more information.
- There are two Planet Aid clothing bins in the parking lot. Clean items may be placed in the yellow bins: including clothing, shoes, bedding, towels, curtains, sleeping bags, socks, underwear, bras. They do not accept items that are tattered beyond repair, dirty, wet or moldy.
- If you have someone that you would like on the prayer list, please fill out a form in the narthex and place it in the offering plate or contact the church office email: hnlc.secretary@hotmail.com.
- Choir rehearsals are on Sunday mornings @ 9:40. All are welcome to join us.
- Live Sunday School sessions are held between services on Sunday mornings. Church school resources are also available on our website on a weekly basis.

ADVENT DISMISSAL Go in peace. Bring good news the brokenhearted. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE *Savior of the Nations, Come* J.S. Bach

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GOSPEL MESSAGE (Keeping Alert)

Our Advent season begins this year with the Gospel of Mark and the warning words of Jesus: "Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come" (Mark 13:33). This may seem confusing. Isn't Advent meant to prepare us for Christmas? Isn't the anticipation we are to feel related to the celebration of Christ's birth? Yes—and also to his second coming.

In today's reading, Jesus urges his disciples, and us, to keep alert for the coming of the Son of Man, by which we understand that he means his own return. But Jesus shares that even he and the angels do not know the time of this event; only God the Father knows. Still, the promise is there: Jesus will come again. And when Jesus comes, we are to be awake and ready.

As the body of Christ, before we receive holy communion, we declare, "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." Christ was born, died, rose from the grave, and promised to return. We do not pretend to know the "when" of his return, but we trust that it will happen. We just don't talk about it much. Very few of us would say we are ready.

In our busy world, with so many distractions and too few hours in the day, we often go to bed in exhaustion and wake up again fatigued. Parents of children, caregivers of others, teachers, pastors, laborers of all kinds—our daily tasks and lists are never-ending, and each day rolls into another, especially the busy days before Christmas. These are the days when Mark's words ring true. As exhausted as we may be at times by simply living, we are always called to "keep awake" (Mark 13:35, 37), seeking Jesus. Even in chaos or mundane tasks or work, we are to keep alert and ready. Mark proclaims the real joy of Christmas: Jesus will come again. In Advent, we can dwell in this space and appreciate the season more deeply.

HOLY NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
3 Lenape Trail
Wenonah, NJ 08090
856-468-5760
hnlc.secretary@hotmail.com
Pastor: Andy Gordon Music Director: Chris Robinson
5:00—Harriet Vico; 8:30—Lori Kershaw; 10:30—Fay Stafford-Rambo

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

April Montana—Christian Education
Vince Montana—Property
Joyce Bradbury—Council Member
Donna DeFrank—Secretary/Stewardship
Lori Kershaw—President/Social Ministry and Outreach
Kim Theriault—Vice President/Social Ministry and Outreach
Juliet Genovese—Council Member
Stephen Genovese—Council Member
Karen Cusack—Finance
Brett Montana—Youth Representative
Caryl Carthew—Financial Secretary/Worship and Music
Diane Yandach—Treasurer