St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Gathering at St. John's Episcopal Church
1676 S. Belcher Rd., Clearwater, FL 33764

Sunday, November 15, 2026
Lectionary 33, Year A



Introduction

Our readings during November speak of the end times. Zephaniah proclaims that the coming day of the Lord will be filled with wrath and distress. Paul says it will come like a thief in the night and urges us to be awake and sober. Jesus tells the parable of the talents, calling us to use our gifts, while we still have time, for the greater and common good. In a world filled with violence and despair, we gather around signs of hope—word, water, bread, and wine—eager to welcome the good news of Christ's coming among us.

Welcome

Prelude: I Need Thee Every Hour - Lowry

Confession and Forgiveness

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,
our dwelling place for all generations,
whose compassion never slumbers.
Amen.
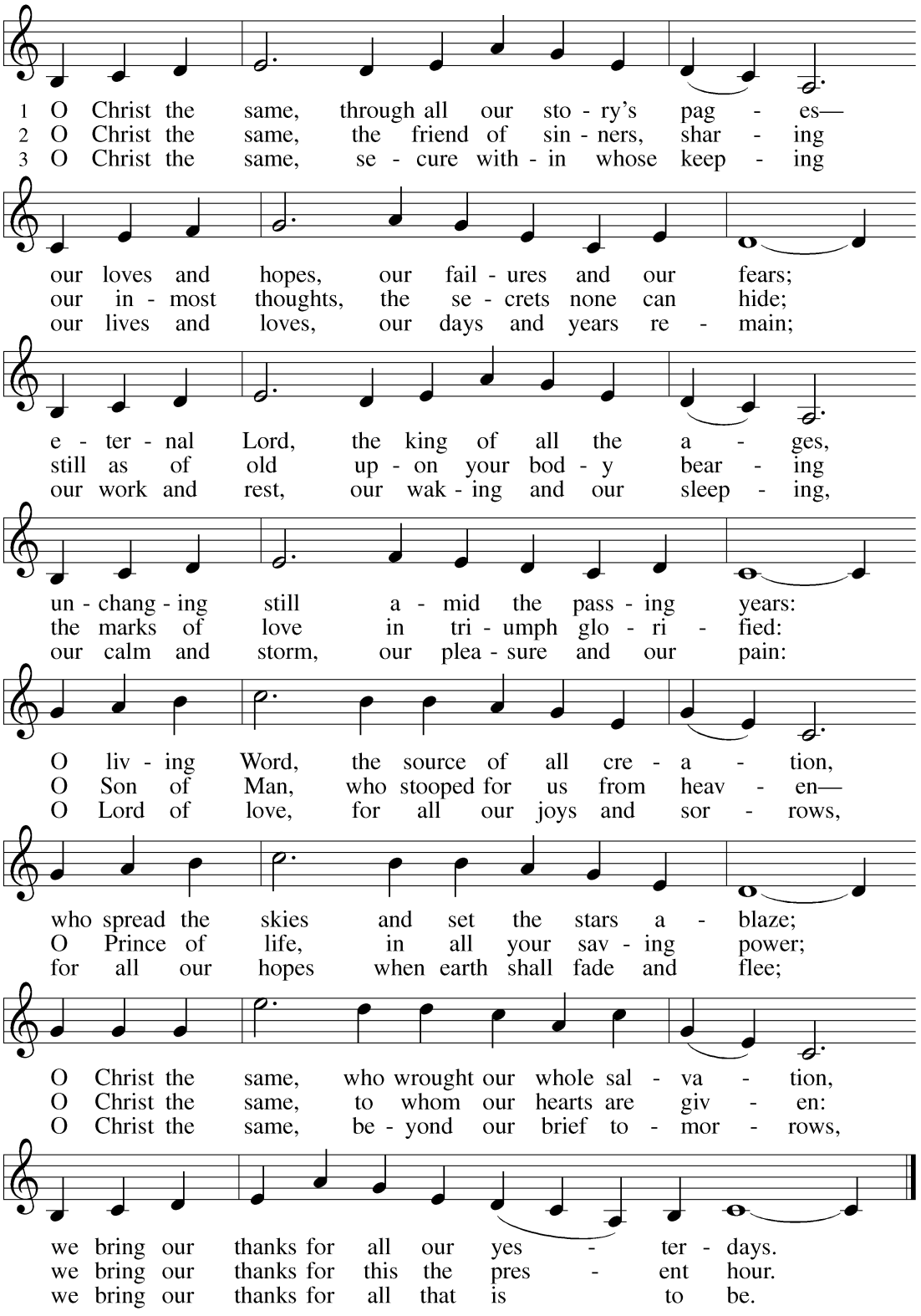
Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of one another.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.
Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.
Amen.

Hymn: O Christ the Same - WOV 778



Text: Timothy Dudley–Smith, b. 1926
Music: LONDONDERRY AIR, Irish tune

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Prayer of the Day
Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.
Amen.

First Reading: Judges 4:1-7

A reading from the book of Judges.

1 The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, after Ehud died. 2 So the
Lord sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the
commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goiim. 3 Then the
Israelites cried out to the Lord for help, for he had nine hundred chariots of iron and
had oppressed the Israelites cruelly twenty years.
4 At that time Deborah, a prophet, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. 5 She used
to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of
Ephraim, and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. 6 She sent and summoned
Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The Lord, the God of
Israel, commands you, 'Position yourself at Mount Tabor, taking ten thousand from the
tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. 7 I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's
army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops, and I will give
him into your hand.' "

Word of God, word of Life.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 123

Reader: To you I lift up my eyes, to you enthroned in the heavens.

ALL: As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters,
and the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes look to you, O Lord our God,
until you show us your mercy.

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy,
for we have had more than enough of contempt,
too much of the scorn of the indolent rich,
and of the derision of the proud.

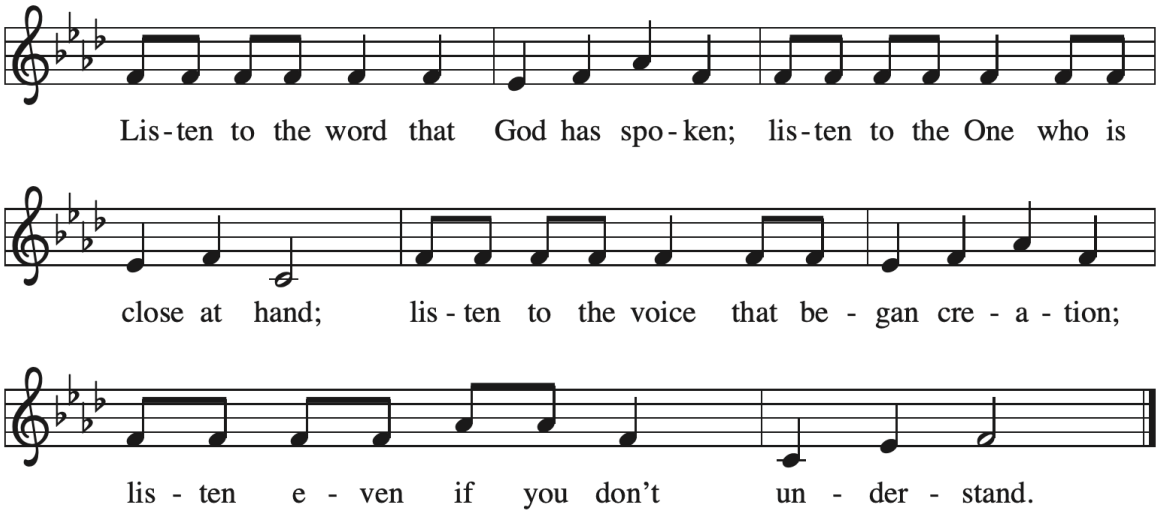
Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

A reading from Paul's letter to the Thessalonians.

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to
have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well that the day of the
Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, "There is peace and security,"
then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant
woman, and there will be no escape! 4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in
darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; 5 for you are all children of light and
children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. 6 So, then, let us not fall
asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober, 7 for those who sleep sleep
at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day,
let us be sober and put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet the hope
of salvation. 9 For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through
our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we
may live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as
indeed you are doing.

Word of God, word of Life.
Thanks be to God.

Listen to the Word That God Has Spoken



Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

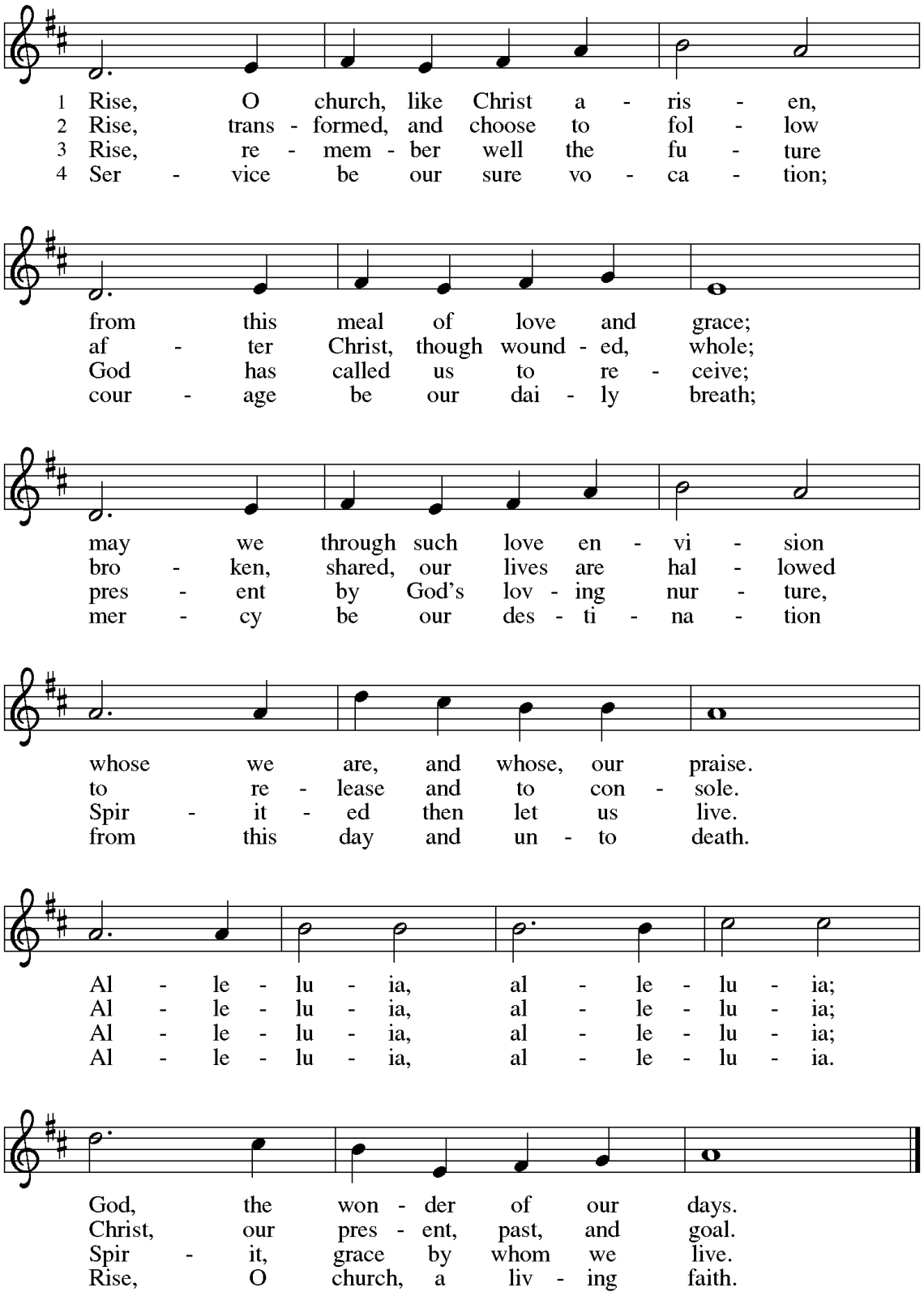
The holy gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 14 "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his
slaves and entrusted his property to them; 15 to one he gave five talents, to another
two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. At once 16 the
one who had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made five
more talents. 17 In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more
talents. 18 But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the
ground and hid his master's money. 19 After a long time the master of those slaves
came and settled accounts with them. 20 Then the one who had received the five
talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to
me five talents; see, I have made five more talents. '21 His master said to him, 'Well
done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put
you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master. '22 And the one with the
two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents;
see, I have made two more talents. '23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and
trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of
many things; enter into the joy of your master. '24 Then the one who had received the
one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man,
reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter, 25 so I was
afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours. '
26 But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap
where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter? 27 Then you ought to have
invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what
was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the
ten talents. 29 For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an
abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.
30 As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be
weeping and gnashing of teeth." '

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon: Pr. Pam Wellons

Hymn of the Day: Rise, O Church Like Christ Arisen - ELW 548



Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953
Music: SURGE ECCLESIA, Timothy J. Strand, b. 1958
Text © 1997 Susan Palo Cherwien, admin. Augsburg Fortress.
Music © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Please respond to each invocation: God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**.

A Sign of Peace and Reconciliation

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.
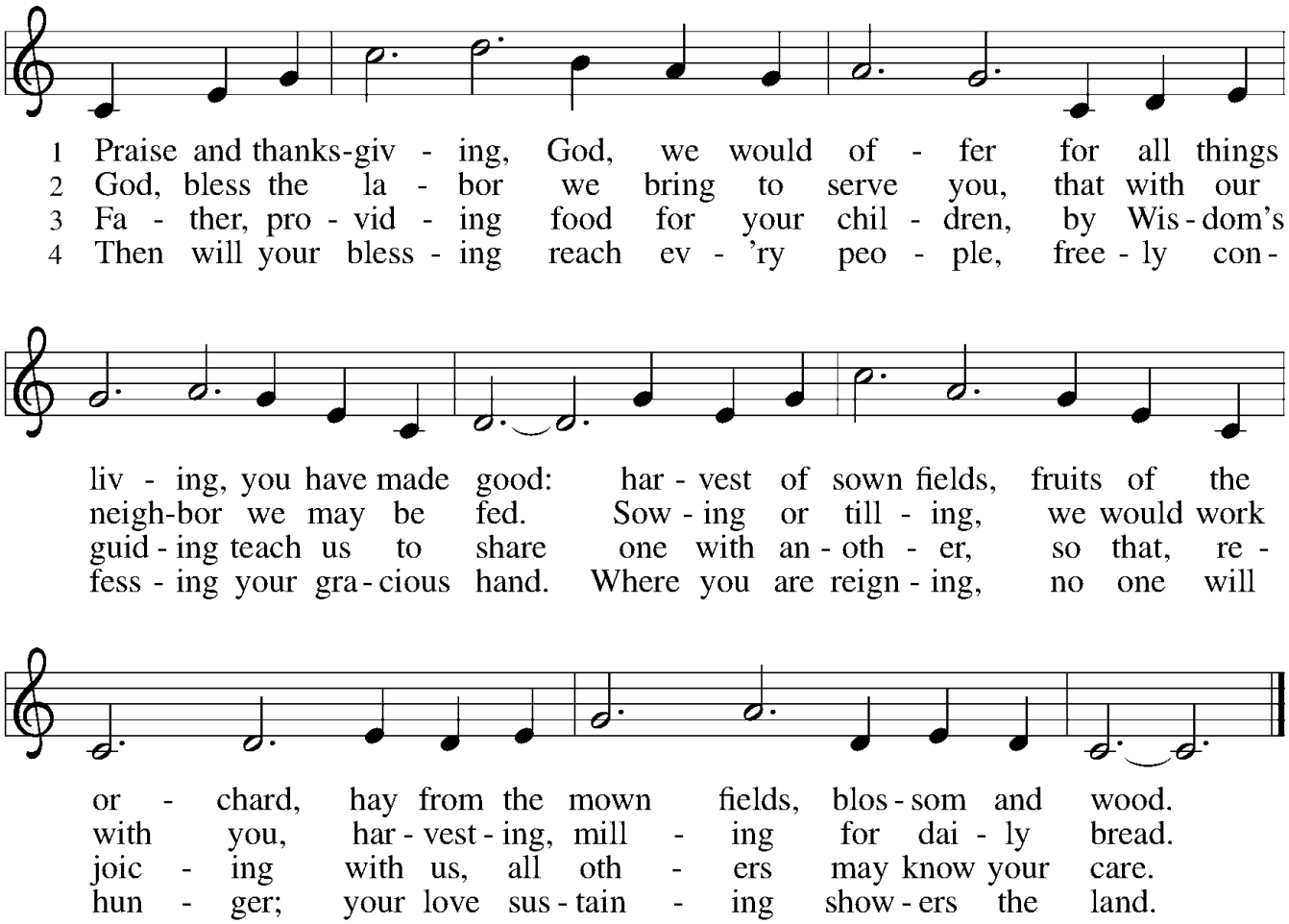
THE LORD'S SUPPER

Please be seated.

OFFERING

All that we have, physically and spiritually comes from God.
Our offering, of time, talent and treasure is a response to our awareness
that God is the creator of all things and that we are redeemed
through life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
Your support of this ministry and the faith life of this community is appreciated.

Hymn: Praise and Thanksgiving - ELW 689



Text: Albert F. Bayly, 1901–1984, alt.
Music: BUNESSAN, Gaelic tune
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Offering Prayer

Assisting Minister:
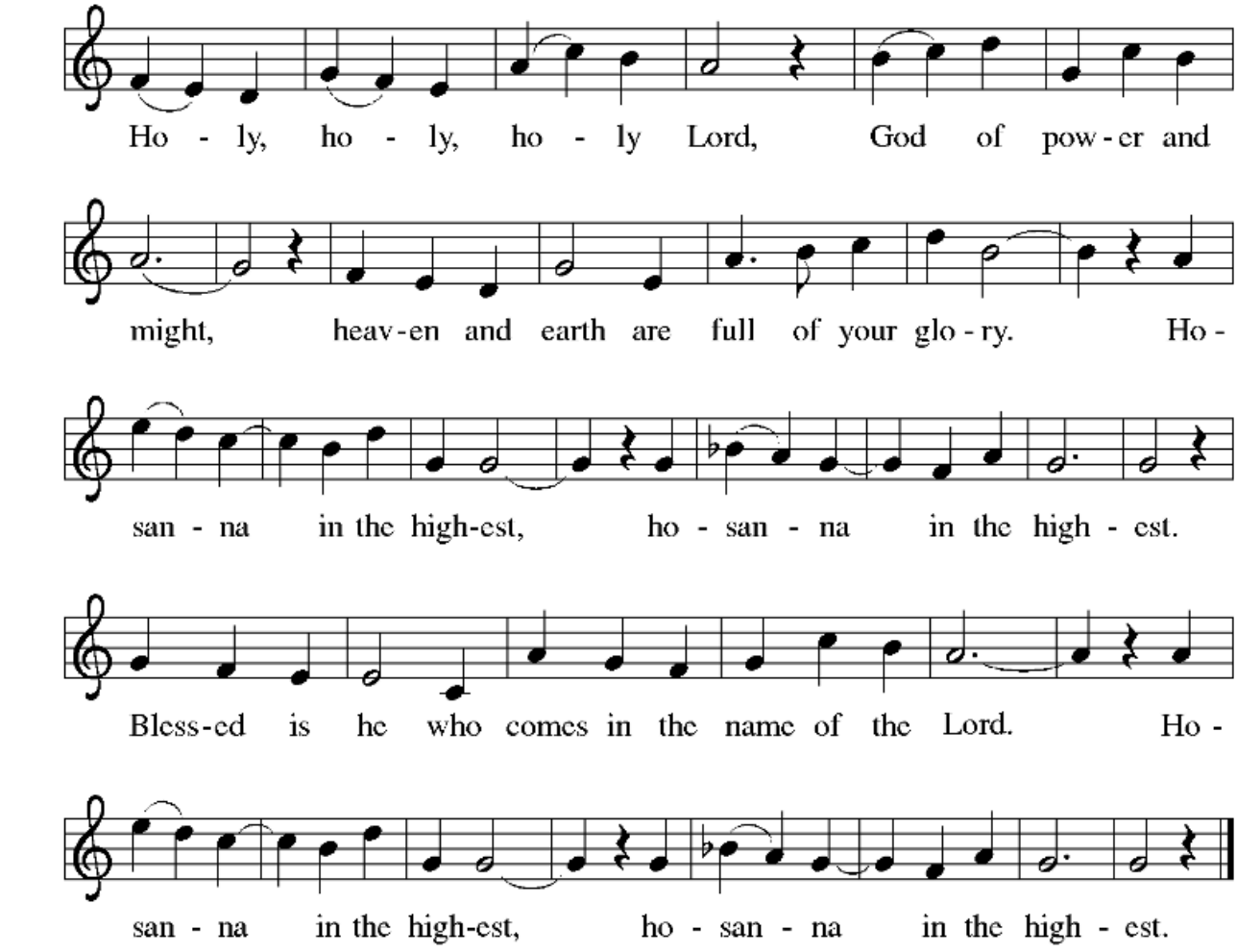
God of all creation,
all you have made is good, and your love endures forever.
You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. Nourish us with these gifts, that we might be for the world signs of your gracious presence
in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

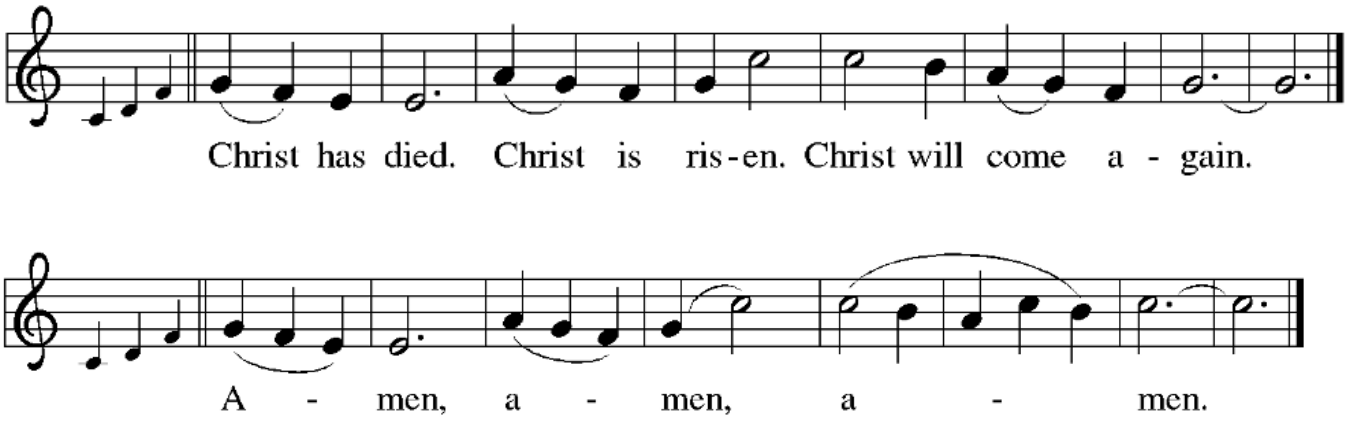
Dialogue:

The Lord be with you.
ALL: And also with you

Lift up your hearts.
ALL: We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
ALL: It is right to give our thanks and praise.





LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

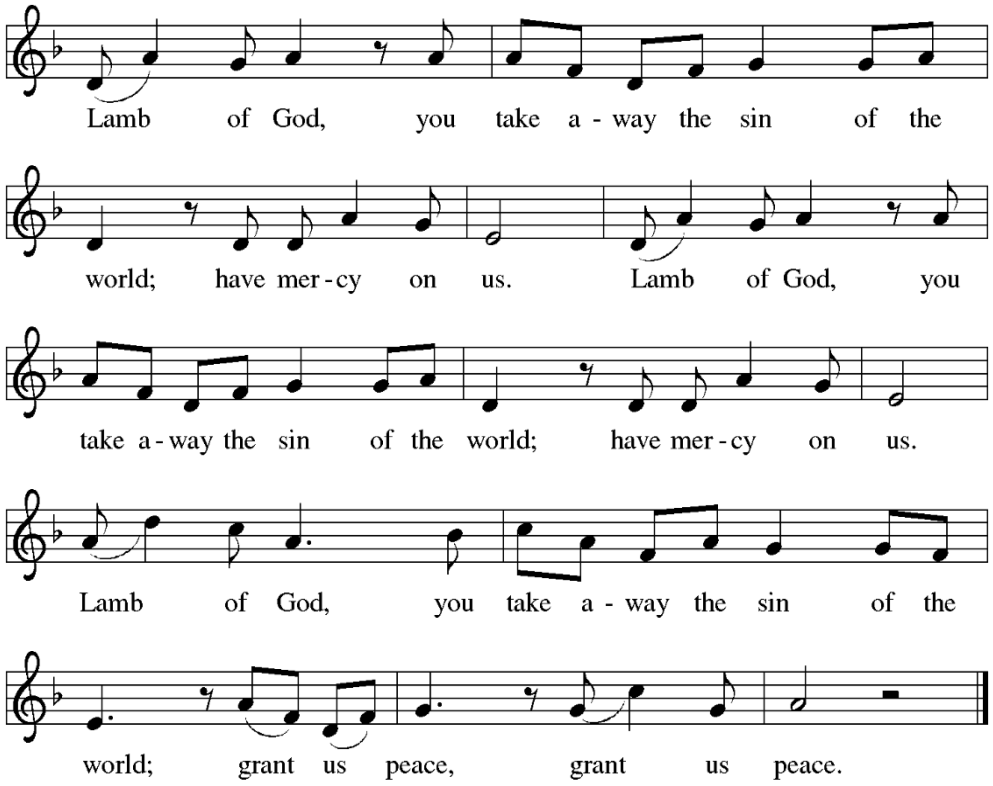
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.
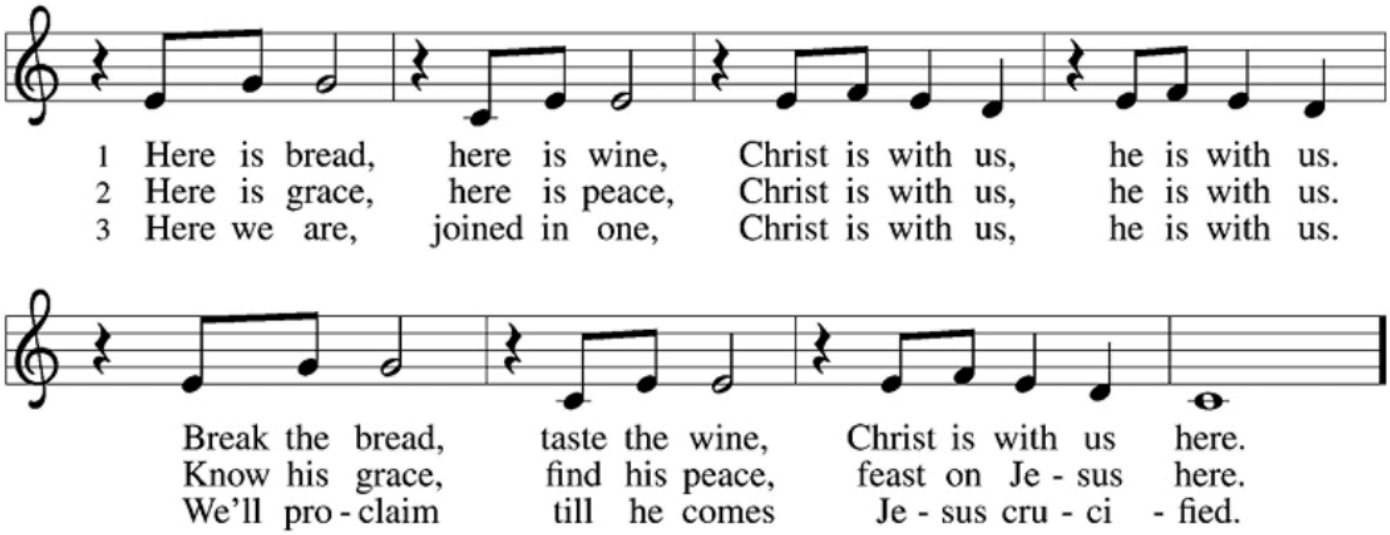
Invitation to Communion

We believe that Holy Communion is the body and blood of Jesus. In this sacrament we are invited to have a personal experience of Christ's presence. This is the Lord's table. All who desire to be in relationship with Christ are welcome to receive.

We receive communion using bread and wine. If you need to receive a gluten free host, please ask the communion minister. For those who prefer to receive grape juice rather than wine you will find white grape juice in the center of the trays as communion is given. If you have a question, please ask the minister as you receive. The bread and wine should be consumed here in the church before you return to your seat. If for some reason, you are unable to consume either the bread or wine please bring what was not consumed to the ushers or the pastor as soon as the service is completed.
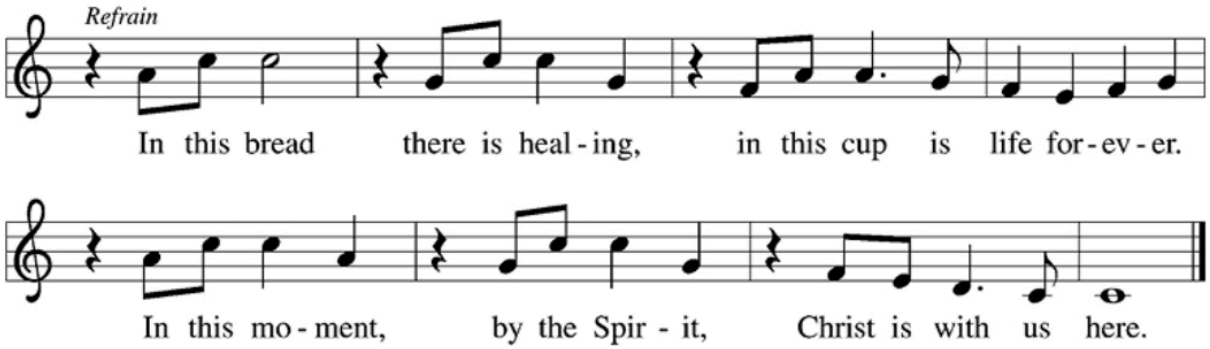


Hymn: Here is Bread - ELW 483

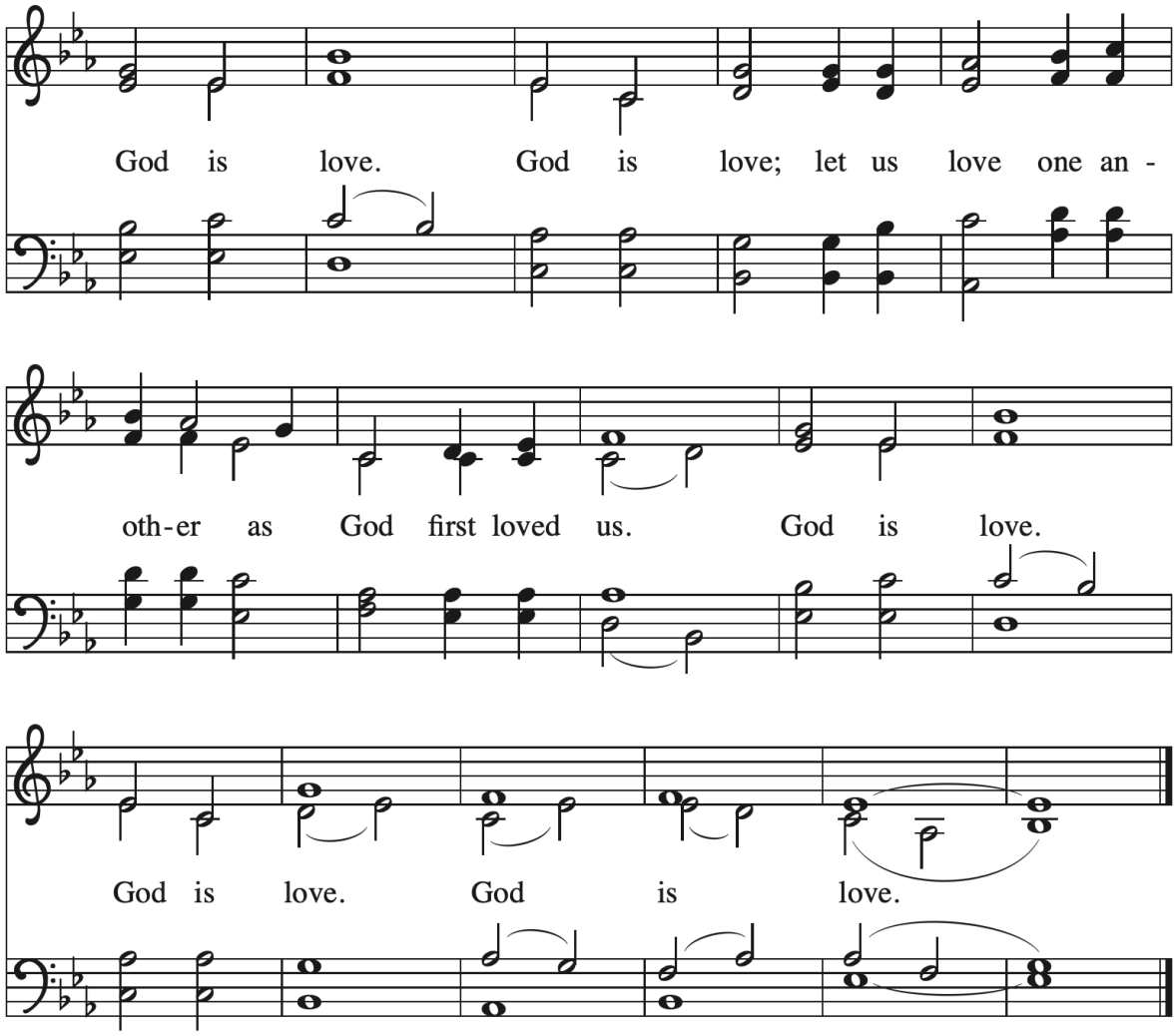


Text: Graham Kendrick, b. 1950
Music: Graham Kendrick
Text and music © 1991 Make Way Music, admin. by Music Services in the Western Hemisphere

HERE IS BREAD
3 3 4 4 3 3 5 and refrain



God is Love - ACS 1041



Text: Mark Mummert, b. 1965, based on 1 John 4:11, 16, 19
Music: GOD IS LOVE, Mark Mummert
Text and music © 2018 Augsburg Fortress

Prayer after Communion

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation, you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Announcements:

Blessing from 1 Thessalonians

For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, + who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

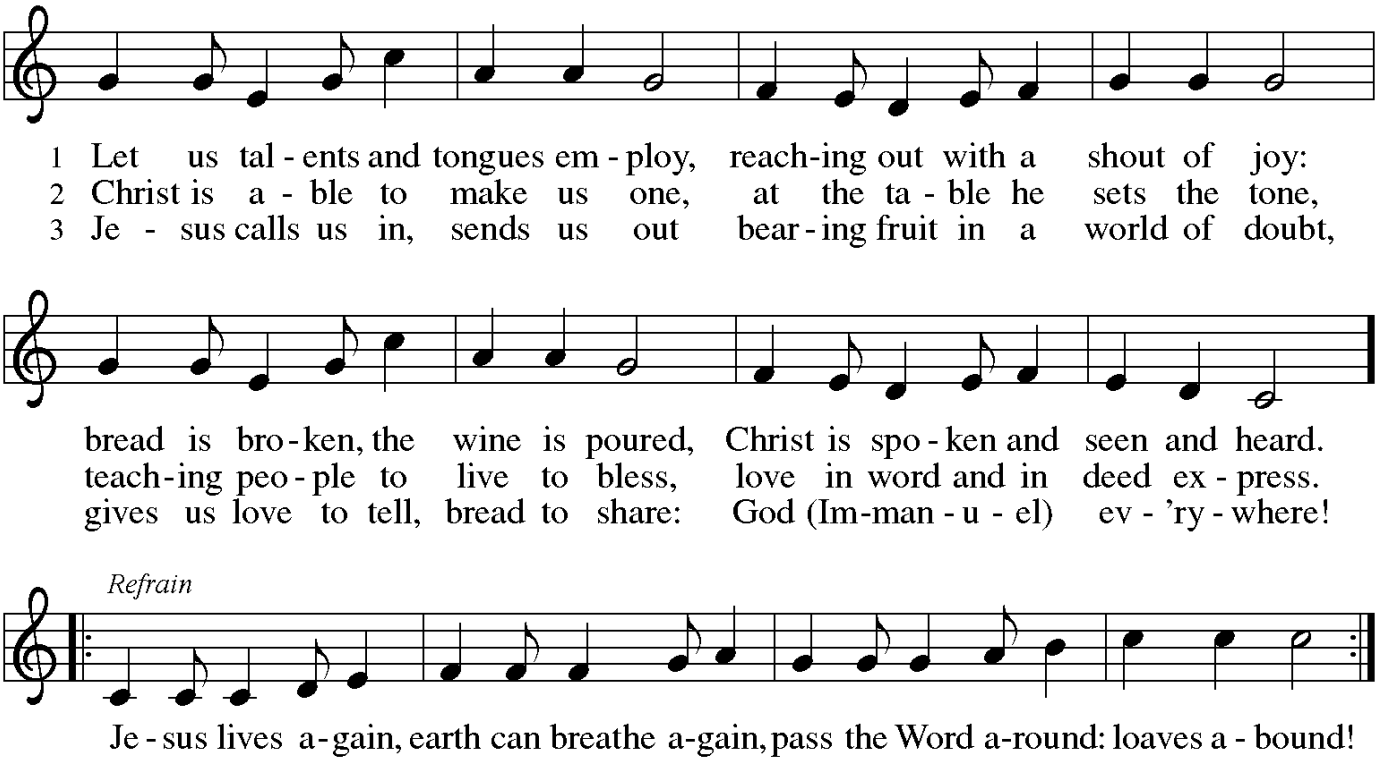
Amen.

Dismissal

Assisting Minister

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Hymn: Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ - ELW 674



Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929
Music: LINSTEAD, Jamaican folk tune; adapt. Doreen Potter, 1925–1980
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November

Tuesday, November 17 - Interfaith Thanksgiving Service
7:00 PM Congregation Beth Shalom -
please let Dave M know you will be attending
Wednesday, November 18 - WELCA Bible Study & Silver Foxes
Thursday, November 19 - Quilt Ministry
Sunday, November 22 - Town Hall Meeting after worship (In person and ZOOM)
Wednesday, November 25 - Book Club
Thursday, November 26 - Thanksgiving Day
Sunday, November 29 - Advent 1

December

Wednesday , December 2 - Holden Evening Prayer - 7:15 PM
Thursday, December 3 - Quilt Ministry - 9:00 AM
Friday, December 4 - Church Women United - Farmworkers Ingathering
Saturday, December 5 - St. Paul's & St. John's Christmas Party - 3:00 - 5:00
Sunday, December 6 - Advent 2 & Congregation Meeting
Wednesday, December 9 - Taizé Prayer - 7:15 PM
Friday, December 11 - Council Meeting - 10:30
Saturday, December 12 - Advent Retreat - 9:30 - 3:00
Sunday, December 13 - Advent 3
Tuesday, December 15 - Drum Circle - 10:30
Wednesday, December 16 - Grace Notes - 7:15 PM
Thursday, December 17 - Quilt Ministry - 9:00 AM
Sunday, December 20 - Advent 4
Sunday, December 20 - Interfaith Light Labyrinth - 5:30 PM - Clearwater UUC
Thursday, December 24 - Christmas Eve Dinner (5:30 PM) & Worship (7:00 PM)

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Gathering at St. John's Episcopal 1676 S. Belcher Rd., Clearwater, FL
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A Reconciling in Christ Congregation

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St. Paul's Spirituality Center
an outreach ministry of St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Florida-Bahamas Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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