



# St. Francis' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 22, 2024

*The Season of Advent takes its name from the Latin word adventus, meaning "coming" or "visits." Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve.*

*For Christians, Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year. We prepare for and anticipate the coming of Christ. We remember the longing of our Jewish ancestors for a Messiah and our own longing for forgiveness, salvation and a new beginning.*

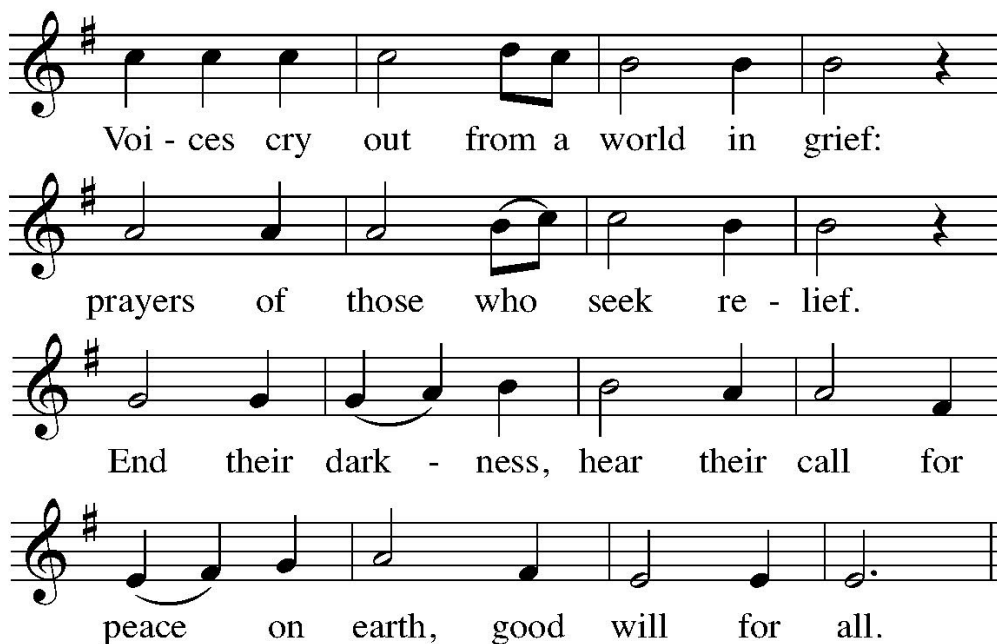
**PRELUDE** 10:30am only

**MARY, DID YOU KNOW?**

**CANTOR SOLO**

## THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

*At 10:30am, the lighting of the wreath begins with the congregation singing.*



Leader Advent is a time to let go of anger and fear.  
 People **God of love, fill our hearts with true compassion.**

Leader Advent is a time to look for the best in others.  
 People **God of love, help us speak truth with kindness.**

Leader Advent is a time to share with those in need.  
 People **God of love, remind us that in giving, we receive.**

Leader Advent is a time to notice and appreciate the good around us.  
 People **God of love, help us see the world through loving eyes.**

*The congregation listens as a prayer is offered and the candles are lit.*

Leader Today we light four candles—the candles of hope, peace, joy, and the candle representing love. This candle is a symbol of Christ’s eternal love for us, as well as a reminder that we have been instructed to love others as we love ourselves. Because God is love, and because we were created in God’s image, we ourselves are the embodiment of God’s love here on earth. Love is patient and kind and powerful, and we all share the calling to go into the world and spread that love to others.

*All join in singing the music of Light of Light on the previous page. Then, the Presider offers a closing prayer.*

Presider God of love, we open our hearts to you today and ask that you fill us with the power of your love. Take away our bitterness, greed and jealousy. Remind us that we are brothers and sisters, all sharing the wonderful gift of life. Help us treat others with respect and love, and help us care for the world you have given us with loving hearts and gentle hands..

People **Amen.**

## THE GREETING

Presider Blessed be the Holy One whose coming we await,  
 People **And blessed be the One who comes to set all people free. Amen.**

## THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Deacon Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Silence is kept for a time.*

People **Most merciful God,  
 we confess that 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.  
 We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
have mercy on us and forgive us;  
that we may delight in your will,  
and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Presider Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

People **Amen.**

## **THE COLLECT OF THE DAY**

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

People **Amen.**

## **WE HEAR THE SACRED STORIES** *Seated*

### **THE FIRST LESSON**

Reader A reading from the Book of Micah. 5:2-5a

You, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,

from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,

whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labor has brought forth;

then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,  
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth;

and he shall be the one of peace.

The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

## MARY'S MAGNIFICAT



1. My soul is filled with joy  
 2. I am low - ly as a child,  
 3. I pro - claim your pow'r, O God!  
 4. To the hun - gry you give food,  
 5. In your love you now ful - fill



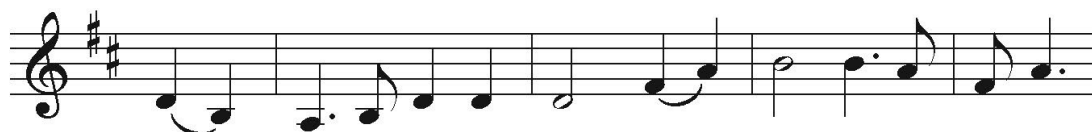
as I sing to God, my Sav - ior.  
 but I know from this day for - ward  
 You work won - ders for your ser - vants;  
 send the rich a - way with noth - ing.  
 all you prom - ised to your peo - ple.



You have looked up - on your ser - vant,  
 that my name will be re - mem - bered,  
 you have scat - tered the proud - heart - ed,  
 In your mer - cy you are mind - ful,  
 I will praise you, God, my Sav - ior,



you have vis - it - ed your peo - ple.  
 and the world will call me bless - ed.  
 you have lift - ed up the low - ly.  
 of the peo - ple you have cho - sen.  
 ev - er - last - ing is your mer - cy.

**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!

## THE SECOND LESSON

Reader                      A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.                      10:5-10

When Christ came into the world, he said,

"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body you have prepared for me;

in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.

Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God'  
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."

When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The Word of the Lord.

People                      **Thanks be to God.**

### **GOSPEL SEQUENCE** *Stand*                      **O COME, O COME EMMANUEL**

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

*Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel!*

## THE GOSPEL

Deacon                      The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.                      1:39-55

People                      **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."  
The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

## **GOSPEL SEQUENCE** *Stand*      **O COME, O COME EMMANUEL**

*Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel!*

## **SERMON**

**THE REV. LAURIE ANZILOTTI**

*After the sermon, silence is kept for a time.*

## **THE NICENE CREED**

Deacon      We affirm our faith in the One, Holy and Living God.  
People      **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 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.  
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.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Deacon           O God whose Messiah's coming we await, keep us awake and alert to watch for the signs of your coming. As the fig tree puts forth its leaves and the portents of the new day dawns, keep us awake and alert for the second advent of Christ our Savior. "May the Light of Christ; *shine in our hearts.*"

People's response **Shine in our hearts.**

Presider       Shine forth O God of Hosts, encourage, embolden and energize your people to keep awake and alert to the coming of Jesus the Christ, that he, at his second Advent, may find us ready to greet him and eager to serve those in need; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God for ever and ever. Amen.

## THE PEACE

Presider            The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People             **And also with you.**

Presider            Let us share with one another a sign of Christ's peace.

*We invite you to extend the peace of God to those in the congregation.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS *Seated*

## GATHERING AT CHRIST'S TABLE

*We return with thanksgiving the gifts God has given us. This includes bread and wine of the earth and financial offerings from our labor.*

## MEDITATION HYMN 8:00am

## COMFORT MY PEOPLE

IAN CALLAHAN

## OFFERTORY 10:30am

## COME, THOU LONG EXPECTED JESUS

1. Come, thou long ex - pect - ed Je - sus, Born to set Thy  
2. Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, Born a child, and  
peo - ple free! From our fears and sins re - lease us,  
yet a King: Born to reign in us for - ev - er,  
Let us find our rest in Thee. Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion,  
Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring. By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it  
Hope of all the earth Thou art; Dear de - sire of  
Rule in all our hearts a - lone; By Thine all - suf -  
ev - 'ry na - tion, Joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.  
fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

*As the gifts are brought forward, the congregation stands.*

Presider            Everything comes from you, O God,

1 Chronicles 29: 14

People             **and we have given you only what comes from your hand.**



## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING *Stand*

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Lift up your hearts.

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

Presider Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Presider It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.  
Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing.  
Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever proclaim the glory of your Name:

*Say at 8am:*

People **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed the One who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

## SANCTUS *10:30am*

**S 125**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Presider We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

People Therefore, according to his command,  
**We remember his death,**  
**We proclaim his resurrection,**  
**We await his coming in glory;**

Presider And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with St. Francis, St. Clare, and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and for ever.

**AMEN**



*A - men.*

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Presider And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People 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,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

## THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

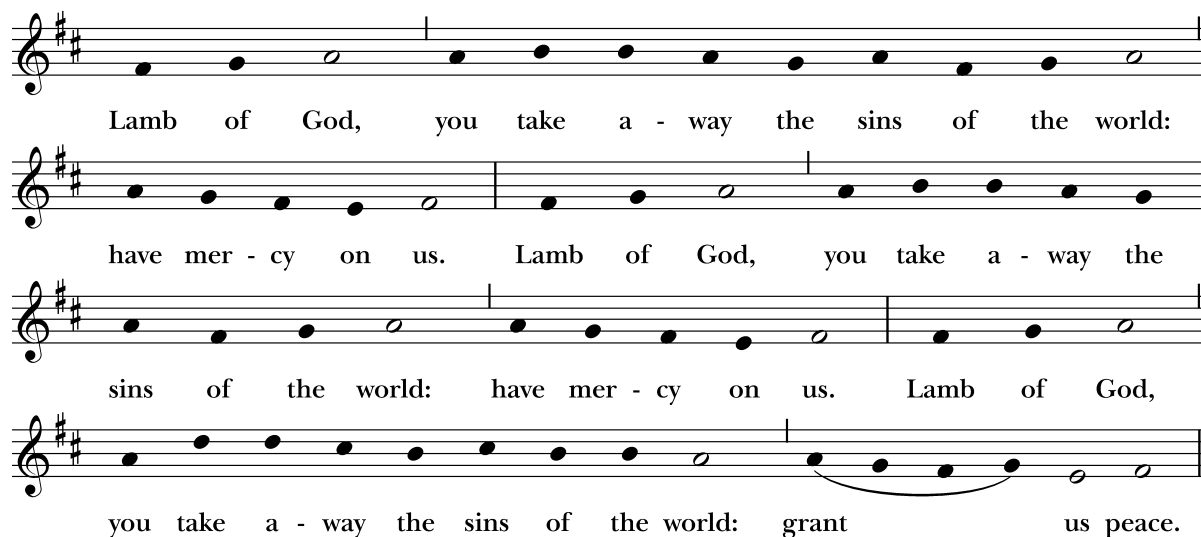
*The Presider breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.*

Presider Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People Therefore let us keep the feast.

## FRACTION ANTHEM *At 8am, spoken*

S 161



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world:  
have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sins of the world: have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,  
you take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Music: From *New Plainsong*; David Hurd (b. 1950). Copyright © 1981 GIA Publications, Inc.

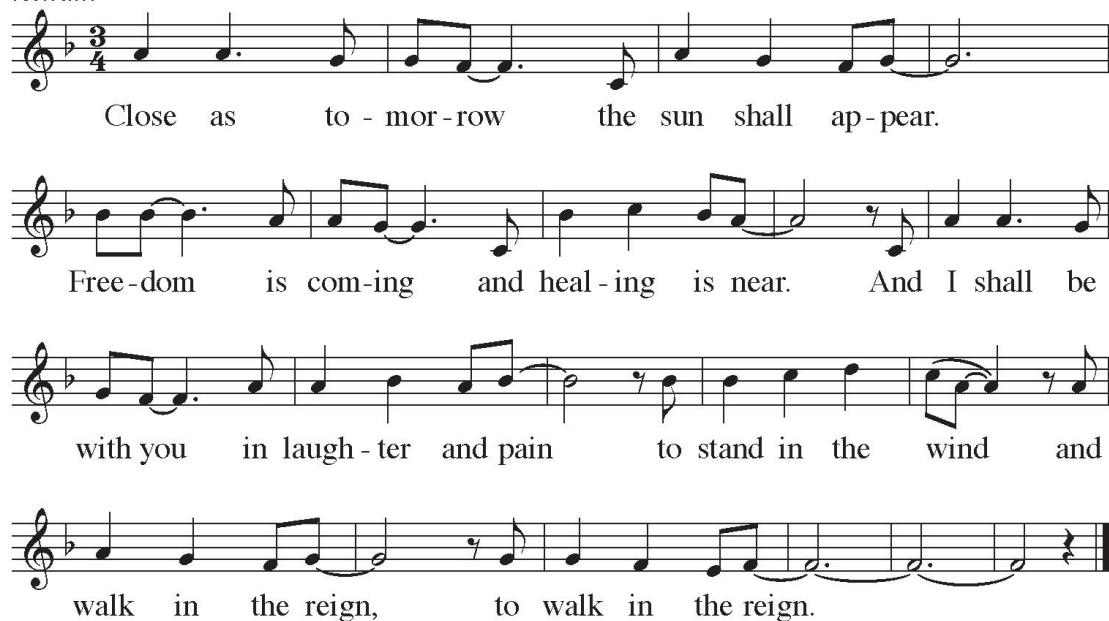
Presider The Gifts of God for the People of God.

*This is Christ's table and all are welcome and all are fed. For gluten free wafer, please indicate as you walk forward to receive. This Eucharistic table does not belong to the Episcopal Church or to St. Francis'. This is God's table, and all are welcome. In the Episcopal Church, we receive both the bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Jesus. If you choose not to receive communion, please come forward and cross your arms over your heart to receive a blessing.*

# COMMUNION HYMN

# WALK IN THE REIGN

## Refrain



Close as to - mor - row the sun shall ap - pear.  
 Free - dom is com - ing and heal - ing is near. And I shall be  
 with you in laugh - ter and pain to stand in the wind and  
 walk in the reign, to walk in the reign.

## Verses



1. In days to come the des - ert shall  
 2. Com - fort each oth - er, for pain soon must  
 3. A cur - tain of fear is be - ing torn  
 4. A Sow - er is plant - ing in a - cres un -  
 bloom. Riv - ers will run there, soon, ver - y  
 end. A day comes when li - on and lamb shall be  
 down. Pris - ons are o - pened; the lost have been  
 seen the seeds of the fu - ture, the field of God's  
 soon. So what shall we fear, though  
 friends. The sight - less shall see then, the  
 found. So go tell the seek - er what  
 dream. Those mead - ows are hum - ming though  
 death do its worst? The word of our God is the  
 speech - less sing songs. The name of our God is the  
 we've seen and heard: The name of our God is the  
 none sees them rise. The name of the Sow - er is  
 D.C.  
 last shall be first, the last shall be first.  
 right - er of wrongs, the right - er of wrongs.  
 keep - er of word, the keep - er of word.  
 God of sur - prise, the God of sur - prise.

## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

*After all have received communion the Presider says*

Presider God is with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

People **Eternal God, whom we await, you have fed us with the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation: keep us ever watchful, that we may be ready to stand before the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

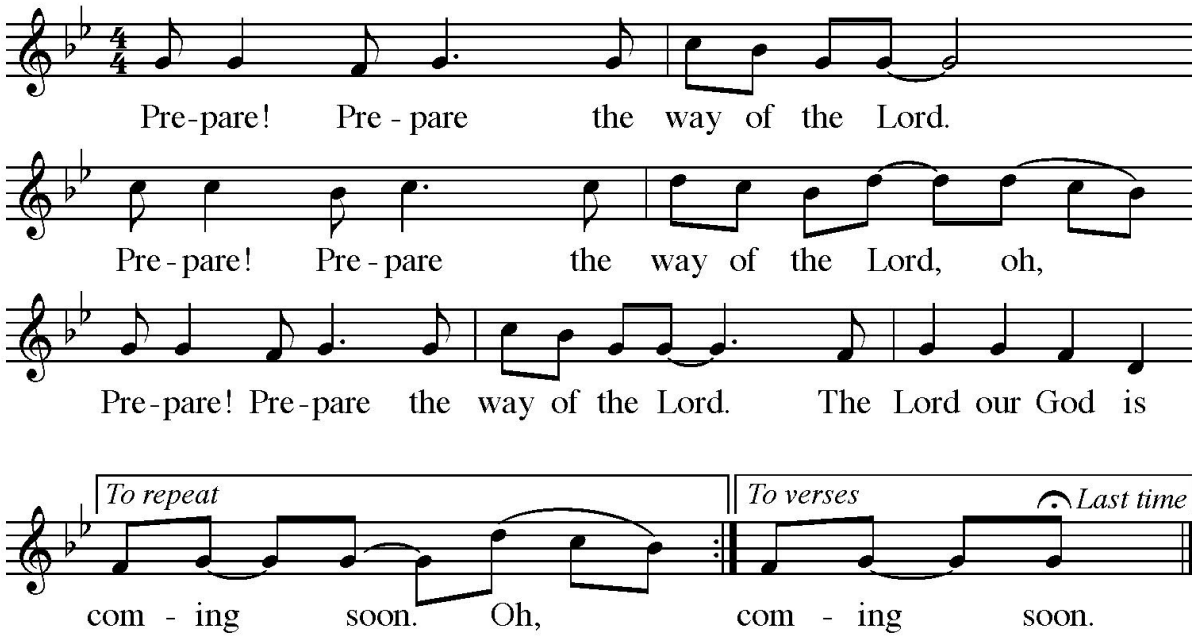
## BLESSING

Presider Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,  
scatter the darkness from before your path,  
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;  
and the blessing ...

People **Amen.**

# SENDING HYMN

# PREPARE, PREPARE



Pre-prepare! Pre - pare the way of the Lord.

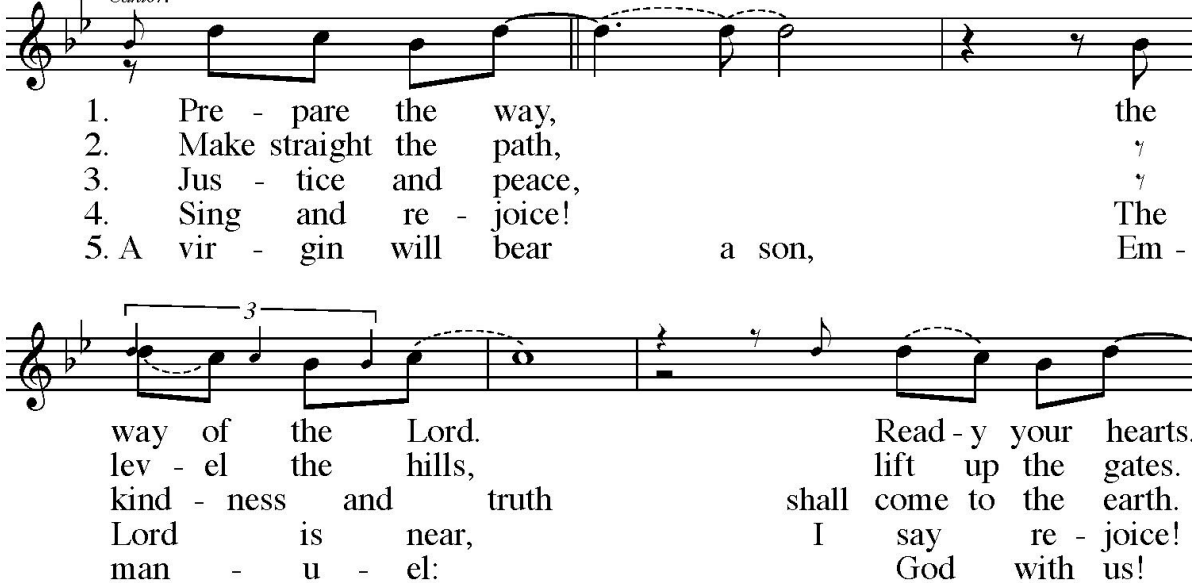
Pre - prepare! Pre - pare the way of the Lord, oh,

Pre-prepare! Pre-prepare the way of the Lord. The Lord our God is

*To repeat* com - ing soon. Oh, *To verses* com - ing soon. *Last time*

## Verses

*Cantor:*



1. Pre - pare the way, the

2. Make straight the path, γ

3. Jus - tice and peace, γ

4. Sing and re - joice! The

5. A vir - gin will bear a son, Em -

way of the Lord. Read - y your hearts.

lev - el the hills, lift up the gates.

kind - ness and truth shall come to the earth.

Lord is near, I say re - joice!

man - u - el: God with us!



Oh, the Lord our God is com-ing soon! D.C.

## DISMISSAL

Presider Our worship is ended, our service in the world begins. As we await our coming Savior, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God!**

## POSTLUDE 10:30am only

## THINGS TO NOTICE IN ADVENT

*There are several significant shifts to notice in the four liturgies of Advent.*

### COLOR

Because the Episcopal Church's roots are in the Church of England, we follow the old English tradition of using blue as the color of Advent. Blue is the color of Blessed Mary, and Advent is all about Mary as we await with her the arrival of the Incarnate God. Blue is the color of hope, expectation, confidence, and anticipation. These are all adjectives which describe the season of Advent.

### SEATING

Advent is a penitential season, a time of expressing sorrow and regret for having done wrong. Therefore, in our seating, we face one another to confess our need for God and the ways in which we have not loved God and our neighbors with our whole hearts.

### LITURGY

The liturgy also highlights that Advent is a penitential season. We confess that we have "sinned against God in thought, word and deed" at the beginning of our liturgy. We do not sing the Gloria. We open our liturgy singing of our expectant waiting for God.

### LECTIONARY READINGS

*The Advent readings, and what they say to us, are well explained in this excerpt from "Naming Where We Are" by Debie Thomas.*

"Like some of you, I didn't grow up observing Advent. Since my childhood church didn't follow the liturgical calendar, my family went straight from Thanksgiving turkeys and pumpkin pies to Christmas trees and 'Jingle Bells' — one consumer feeding frenzy pressing hard into the next. It's only in the past few years that I have come to value what Nora Gallagher calls the "counterweight" of liturgical time. "One time set against another." It's only recently that I have embraced the stark, hard-edged gifts Advent provides. As ever, I believe we need these gifts desperately.

According to the week's readings, we enter this first season of the Christian New Year — if we dare enter it at all — in lamentation. Eschewing all forms of denial, polite piety, and cheap cheer, we allow the radical honesty of Scripture to make us honest, too. "How long will you be angry with your people's prayers?" asks the Psalmist in desperation. "Because you hid yourself, we transgressed," cries Isaiah. During Advent, we stop posturing and pretending. We quit trying to make God's hiddenness okay. We shed our greeting card assumptions about the Divine. We get real.

## **LECTIONARY READINGS, CONTINUED**

"Our world is not okay," is what these Advent readings declare in stark, unflinching terms. God's apparent absence is not fine — it hurts. It hurts so much we can barely breathe from the agony of it. We are surrounded by evil and suffering, we're not sure our faith can endure what our eyes reluctantly witness each day, and though we long for a Savior to rend the heavens and come down, the very ferocity of that longing is wearying our souls. Hope itself has become a grind.

The first gift of Advent is the permission to tell the truth, even if that truth is laced with sorrow. We are invited to describe life "on earth as it is," and not as we mistakenly assume our religion requires us to render it. Into our surrounding cultures of denial and spin, apathy and hedonism, we are called to speak the whole truth: we need God. We need God to show up. We need God to stay. We need God to love, hold, deliver, and restore us. We were created for intimacy with a just, gracious, and profoundly compassionate Savior, and when that intimacy is missing, we suffer.