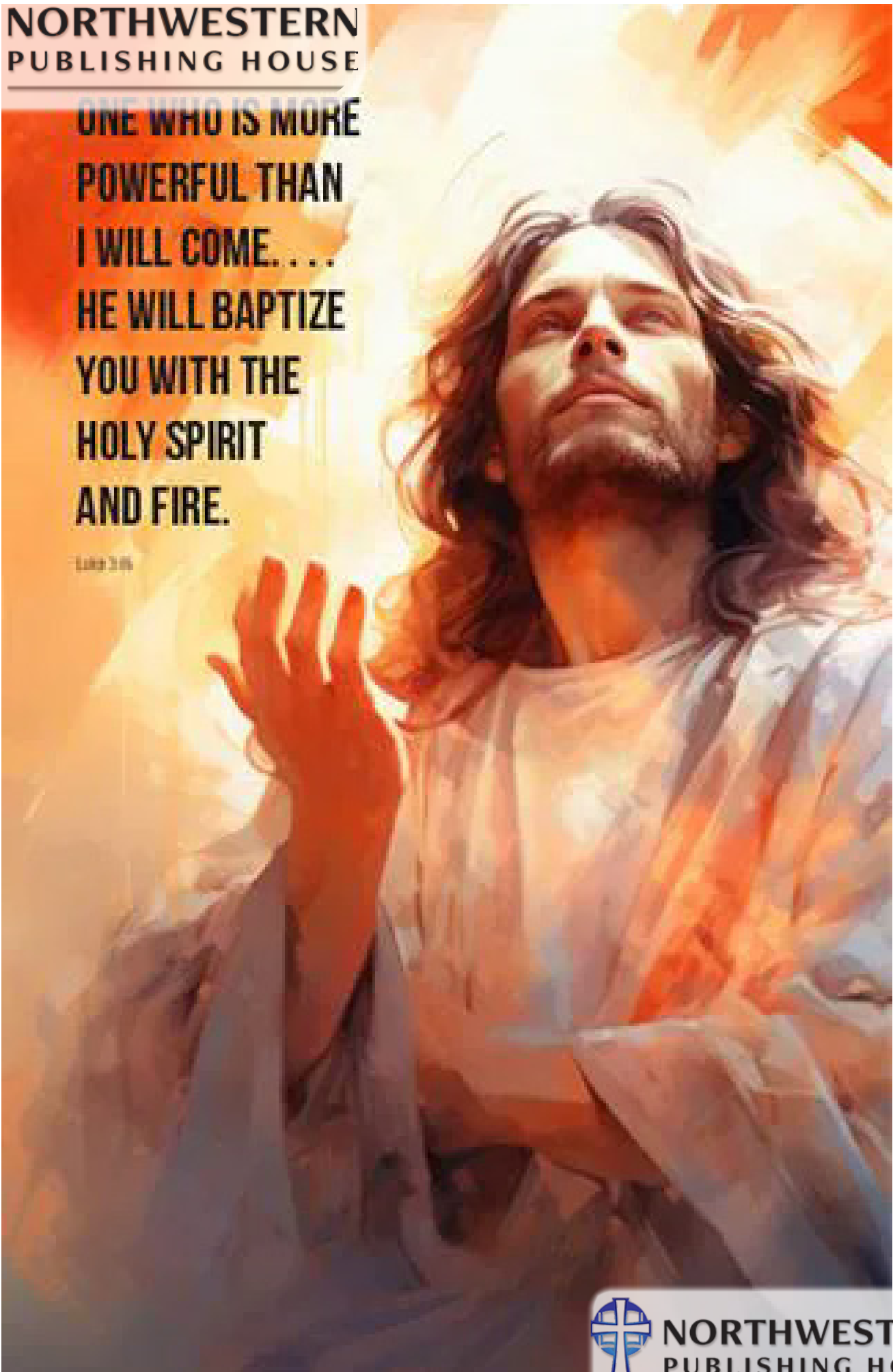




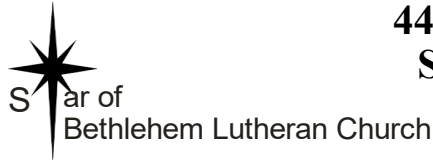
**NORTHWESTERN  
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**ONE WHO IS MORE  
POWERFUL THAN  
I WILL COME. . . .  
HE WILL BAPTIZE  
YOU WITH THE  
HOLY SPIRIT  
AND FIRE.**

**Luke 3:16**



**NORTHWESTERN  
PUBLISHING HOUSE**



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Pastor Michael Foley

## Worship Service

*Sunday, December 15, 2024 10:00 a.m.*

## Third Sunday of ADVENT

**Theme of the day:** In this season of Advent (Coming) we focus on the three “comings” of Christ: his coming into this world as a baby to put himself in our place and to pay for our sins, his coming in glory at the last day to take us into the full enjoyment of our salvation, and his coming into our hearts through the power of his Word which gives us faith and makes that salvation our own. All three of these comings lead us to REJOICE....

## WELCOME

A warm welcome to our friends and visitors! Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church is eager to share with you the blessings of its Christ-centered ministry. If you are a new or long-time resident of the Central Coast looking for a church home, we invite you to meet with us at the close of this worship service or at your convenience. All are welcome to stay for refreshments in the fellowship hall.

**Families** are encouraged to worship together. If you need to step out with your children, the service can be seen and heard in the fellowship hall or narthex area. Feel free to enter and return at any time.

## OUR MISSION

Our congregation exists for the purpose of “HOLDING OUT THE WORD OF LIFE.” This is accomplished by faithfully preserving and proclaiming all of God’s inerrant word, and administering the Sacraments as they were instituted by Christ.

**OPENING HYMN: # 309 “The Advent of Our King”**

♪ **The advent of our King our prayers must now employ,  
and we must hymns of welcome sing in strains of holy joy.**

**The everlasting Son, in flesh content to be,  
himself a servant’s form puts on to set his servants free.**

**O Zion’s daughter, rise to meet your lowly King,  
nor let a faithless heart despise the peace he comes to bring.**

**As judge, on clouds of light, he soon will come again  
and his true members all unite with him in heav’n to reign.**

**Before the dawning day let sin’s dark deeds be gone,  
the old self all be put away, the new self now put on.**

*Please stand for last verse:*

**All glory to the Son, who comes to set us free,  
with Father, Spirit, ever one through all eternity.**

Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and  
the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Congregation: **And also with you.**

**The Call to Repentance**

M: A voice was saying, “Cry out!”

C: **And I said, “What shall I cry out?”**

M: All flesh is grass,

C: **and all its beauty is like a wildflower in the countryside.**

M: Grass withers, flowers fade, when the breath of the LORD blows  
on them.

C: **Yes, the people are grass.**

M: Grass withers, flowers fade,

C: **but the word of our God endures forever.**

C: **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful,  
and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and  
actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good.  
For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity.  
But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior  
Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

*Introduction is played (Melody of # 316)*

♪ **O Jesus, Lamb of God, you are  
My comfort and my guiding star;  
I come, a sinner, trustingly  
And bring my many sins with me.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 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 Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: *(Spoken)* **Amen**

*Please be seated.*

## **ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING INTROIT**

♪ **Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes,  
and see what in the manger lies.  
Who is this child, so young and fair?  
It is the Christ Child lying there.**

M: The darkness of sin and unbelief are shattered by the light of the Gospel. The **Prophecy Candle** gives us the first flicker of hope as we watch for the coming of the Lord.

C: **Watch! Be alert and pray, because you do not know when the time will come.** *(Mark 13:33)*

*The Prophecy Candle is lit.*

M: The **Bethlehem Candle** calls us to repent. See in Jesus the Light of the world. Change your hearts so that you may live as children of the light.

C: **“Prepare the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight.”**  
*(Matthew 3:3)*

*The Bethlehem Candle is lit.*

M: The **Shepherd Candle** points to our joy as God’s people. In Jesus we have all that matters. In joy and peace we ask God to keep us in the faith and faithful in our lives.

**C: The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. (1 Thessalonians 5:24)**

*The Shepherd Candle is lit.*



♪ **Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,  
through whom the sinful world is blest!  
You came to share my misery  
that you might share your joy with me.**

M: May the light of these candles call to mind the glorious light of the Gospel, shining in the birth of our Savior. May his grace enlighten our lives, both now and forever.

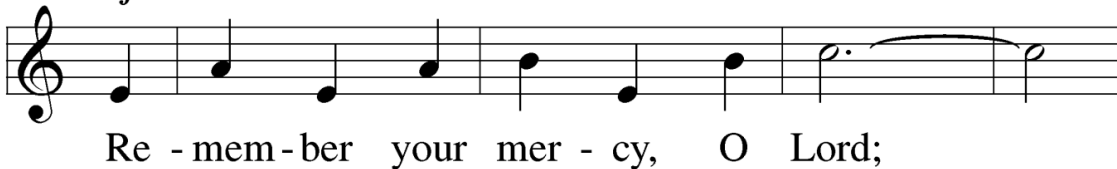
♪ **Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,  
prepare a bed, soft, undefiled  
within my heart, made clean and new,  
a quiet chamber kept for you.**

**FIRST LESSON: Zephaniah 3:14-17**

**<sup>14</sup>Sing out, daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, you daughter of Jerusalem. <sup>15</sup>The LORD has removed the judgment against you. He has turned back your enemy. Israel's king, the LORD, is in your midst! You no longer need to fear disaster. <sup>16</sup>In that day Jerusalem will be told, "Do not be afraid, O Zion. Do not give up. <sup>17</sup>The LORD your God is with you as a hero who will save you. He takes great delight in you. He will quiet you with his love. He will rejoice over you with singing."**

**PSALM OF THE DAY: Psalm 130**

*Refrain*





Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;\*  
O Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive\*  
to my cry for mercy.

If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins,\*  
O Lord, who could stand?

But with you there is forgiveness;\*  
therefore you are feared.

*Refrain*

I wait for the LORD and in his Word I put my hope.\*  
My soul waits for the Lord more than  
watchmen wait for the morning.

O Israel, put your hope in the LORD,\*  
for with the LORD is unfailing love  
and with him is full redemption.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son\*  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning,\*  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.

*Refrain*

**VERSE OF THE DAY:**

M: Alleluia. Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will  
prepare your way before you. Alleluia. (*Matthew 11:10*)

**C: ♪ Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**  
**These words are written that we may believe  
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 3:7-18**

<sup>7</sup>So John kept saying to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, “You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup>Therefore produce fruits in keeping with repentance! Do not even think of saying to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ because I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. <sup>9</sup>Even now the ax is ready to strike the root of the trees. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is going to be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

<sup>10</sup>The crowds began to ask him, “What should we do then?”

<sup>11</sup>He answered them, “Whoever has two shirts should share with the person who has none, and whoever has food should do the same.”

<sup>12</sup>Tax collectors also came to be baptized. They said, “Teacher, what should we do?”

<sup>13</sup>To them he said, “Collect no more than what you were authorized to.”

<sup>14</sup>Soldiers were also asking him, “And what should we do?”

He told them, “Do not extort money from anyone by force or false accusation. Be satisfied with your wages.”

<sup>15</sup>The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might be the Christ. <sup>16</sup>John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But someone mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing shovel is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clean out his threshing floor. He will gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>18</sup>Then with many other words, he appealed to them and was preaching good news to the people.

**HYMN: # 363 “Now Sing We, Now Rejoice”**

♪ Now sing we, now rejoice, now raise to heav'n our voice;  
he from whom joy streameth poor in a manger lies;  
not so brightly beameth the sun in yonder skies.  
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!

Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to thee.  
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;  
thro' thy grace and merit, blest Jesus, Lord most mild,  
draw me unto thee! Draw me unto thee!

Now through his Son doth shine the Father's grace divine.  
Death was reigning o'er us through sin and vanity  
till he opened for us a bright eternity.  
May we praise him there! May we praise him there!

Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'nly ground,  
where the angels singing with all his saints unite,  
sweetest praises bringing in heav'nly joy and light.  
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

#### **MESSAGE: Philippians 4:4-7**

<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always! I will say it again: Rejoice! <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

#### **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 fully 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.**

## **OFFERING**

### **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

#### **LORD'S PRAYER**

**C: 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.**

#### **THE HOLY SACRAMENT**

**M: The Lord be with you.**

**C: ♪ And also with you.**

**M: Lift up your hearts.**

**C: ♪ We lift them up to the Lord.**

**M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.**

**C: ♪ It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

**M: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Through his holy prophets, he promised a King to bring light to those living in darkness and in the shadow of death.**

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory forever and ever.

♪ **Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.  
The whole earth is full of your glory.  
You are my God, and I will exalt you.  
I will give you thanks, for you have become my salvation.  
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.  
The whole earth is full of your glory.**

Holy Communion, will be celebrated in today's service. The Bible teaches us that Jesus offers us his body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins in the Lord's Supper. The Bible also instructs us that receiving the Lord's Supper together is a public expression of our complete "oneness," or unity of faith.

Because the Lord's Supper is an expression of our unity in faith, we invite to the Lord's Supper only those who have expressed that unity with us through membership in our congregation or one of our sister congregations in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), or our sister church body, the ELS.

If you are a guest from another Christian church, we kindly ask that you simply refrain from participation in our celebration of the Lord's Supper today. We don't want to be presumptuous and put you in the position of declaring your agreement with our beliefs before you have had a chance to learn more.

## **The Words of Institution**

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: ♪ **Amen.**

♪ **O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.  
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.  
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world  
grant us your peace. Amen.**

**HYMN: # 305 “Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates”**

**♪ Lift up your heads, you mighty gates!  
Behold, the King of glory waits.  
The King of kings is drawing near;  
the Savior of the world is here.  
Life and salvation he will bring;  
therefore rejoice and gladly sing.  
To God the Father raise your joyful songs of praise.**

**The King is born in poverty, his chariot is humility,  
his kingly crown is holiness, his scepter, pity in distress.  
The end of all our woe he brings;  
therefore the earth is glad and sings.  
To Christ the Savior raise your grateful hymns of praise.**

**How blest the land, the city blest,  
where Christ the ruler is confessed!  
O peaceful hearts and happy homes  
to whom this King in triumph comes!  
The cloudless sun of joy is he who comes to set his people free.  
To God the Spirit raise your happy shouts of praise.**

**Fling wide the gates; prepare your heart;  
to be a temple set apart from earthly use for heav'n's employ,  
adorned with prayer and love and joy.  
So shall your Sov'reign enter in and new and nobler life begin.  
To God alone be praise for word and deed and grace!**

**Redeemer, come! I open wide  
my heart to you; here, Lord, abide!  
O, enter with your saving grace;  
show me your kind and friendly face.  
Your Holy Spirit guide us on until our glorious goal is won.  
Eternal praise and fame we offer to your name.**

**Thanksgiving**

*Please stand.*

**♪ Thank the Lord and sing his praise.  
Tell ev'ryone what he has done.**

**Let all who seek the Lord rejoice  
and proudly bear his name.  
He renews his promises and leads  
his people forth in joy  
With shouts of thanksgiving.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!**

M: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: ♪ Amen**

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

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 give you peace.

**C: ♪ Amen. Amen. Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN: # 332:1-3 “Let Us All with Gladsome Voice”**

♪ **Let us all with gladsome voice  
praise the God of heaven,  
who, to bid our hearts rejoice,  
his own Son has given.**

**To this vale of tears he comes,  
here to serve in sadness,  
that with him in heav’n’s fair homes  
we may reign in gladness.**

**We are rich, for he was poor;  
is not this a wonder?  
Therefore praise God evermore  
here on earth and yonder.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**ALTAR FLOWERS** are given to the glory of God by Paula and Derek in celebration of their anniversary.

**PRAYERS:** Remember to pray for: Shawn Lozano, little Elias, Dennis Douglas, Bob Ward, George Caravana, Molly Webb & brother Jim, Helen Marten, Doug Ward, Kathy Jones, Art Amarillas, Melinda Brown, Alice Taubman, Monica, Louise Perry, Rylan Downs, Jeff Brown, Aaron Taubman, Judy Washburn, Marlene Washburn, Terry Oberg's siblings Linda and Carp, Kathryn Pereira, Helen Cummings, Phil Schaaf, Joe Wilkinson, and Phil Swan.

**MEDITATIONS** are on the shelf in the narthex. Treat yourself (and maybe someone you know) to this very beneficial devotional resource. There are also *Advent Devotion* booklets to help us get ready for *real* CHRISTmas.

### THIS WEEK

<b>Today</b>	<b>Living Nativity and Las Posadas, 5:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>ESL (English as a Second Language), 6:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Bible Class, 10:00 a.m.</b> <b>ESL, 6:00-7:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Bible Class &amp; Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.</b> <b>Worship, 10:00 a.m.</b>

### COMING UP

**Christmas Eve** - Candlelight Service, 7:00 p.m.  
**Christmas Day** - Festival Worship, 10:00 a.m.



## **Christian Questions**

prepared by Dr. Martin Luther for those who intend to go to the Sacrament

- 1. Do you believe that you are a sinner?** Yes, I believe it. I am a sinner.
- 2. How do you know this?**  
From the Ten Commandments, which I have not kept.
- 3. Are you sorry for your sins?**  
Yes, I am sorry that I have sinned against God.
- 4. What have you deserved from God because of your sins?**  
His wrath and displeasure, temporal death, and eternal damnation.  
See Romans 6:21, 23.
- 5. Do you hope to be saved?** Yes, that is my hope.
- 6. In whom then do you trust?** In my dear Lord Jesus Christ.
- 7. Who is Christ?** The Son of God, true God and man.
- 8. How many Gods are there?**  
Only one, but there are three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- 9. What has Christ done for you that you trust in Him?**  
He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins.
- 10. Did the Father also die for you?**  
He did not. The Father is God only, as is the Holy Spirit; but the Son is both true God and true man. He died for me and shed His blood for me.
- 11. How do you know this?**  
From the holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given me as a pledge in the Sacrament.
- 12. What are the words of institution?**  
Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."  
In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."
- 13. Do you believe, then, that the true body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament?** Yes, I believe it.
- 14. What convinces you to believe this?**  
The word of Christ: Take, eat, this is My body; drink of it, all of you, this is My blood.

**15. What should we do when we eat His body and drink His blood, and in this way receive His pledge?**

We should remember and proclaim His death and the shedding of His blood, as He taught us: This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.

**16. Why should we remember and proclaim His death?**

First, so that we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins. Only Christ, true God and man, could do that.

Second, so we may learn to be horrified by our sins, and to regard them as very serious.

Third, so we may find joy and comfort in Christ alone, and through faith in Him be saved.

**17. What motivated Christ to die and make full payment for your sins?**

His great love for His Father and for me and other sinners, as it is written in John 14; Romans 5; Galatians 2; and Ephesians 5.

**18. Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?**

That I may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for my sin, and also learn from Him to love God and my neighbor.

**19. What should admonish and encourage a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently?**

First, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord. Second, his own pressing need, because of which the command, encouragement, and promise are given.

**20. But what should you do if you are not aware of this need and have no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament?**

To such a person no better advice can be given than this: first, he should touch his body to see if he still has flesh and blood. Then he should believe what the Scriptures say of it in Galatians 5 and Romans 7.

Second, he should look around to see whether he is still in the world, and remember that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say in John 15–16 and in 1 John 2 and 5.

Third, he will certainly have the devil also around him, who with his lying and murdering day and night will let him have no peace, within or without, as the Scriptures picture him in John 8 and 16; 1 Peter 5; Ephesians 6; and 2 Timothy 2.

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