St James Lutheran Church

1741 State Street Greenfield, Indiana 46140 317.462.7340

Our mission is to bring people to Christ,
encouraging relationship with Him and others.

Christmas Eve December 24, 2021
4:30 P.M.

All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:
"Look! The virgin will conceive a child!
She will give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel,
which means 'God is with us.'" Matthew 1 22-23

Order of Service

PRELUDE

Please Stand

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

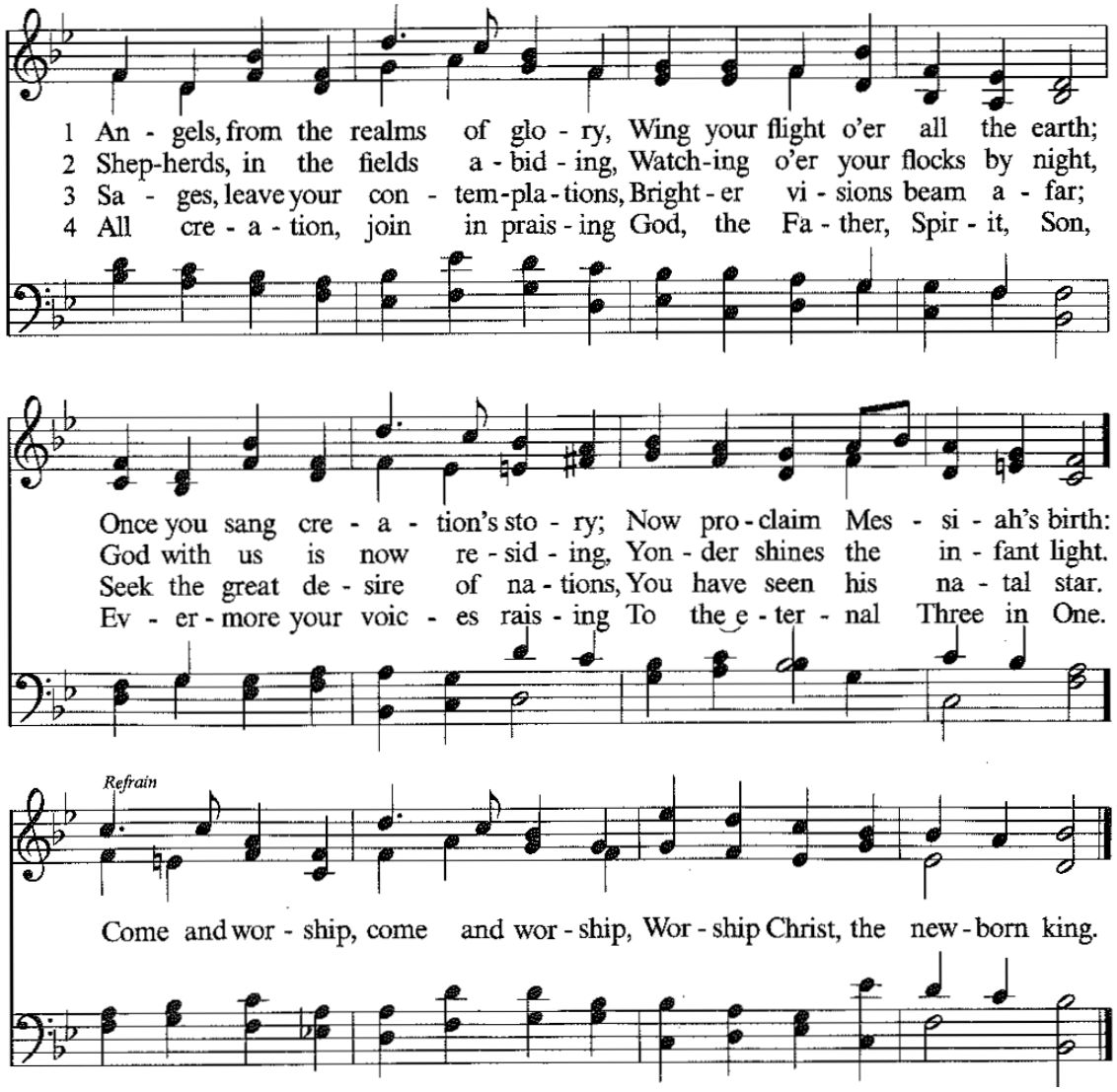
P: Welcome! We gather in the name of the newborn King, the Son of God sent by the Father to be the light of the world.
C: We gather in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
P: Come, let us celebrate.
C: For unto us is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.
P: He is born . . .
C: As the Word made flesh.
P: He is born . . .
C; To be our Savior.
P: He is born . . .
C: To be our King.
P: He is born . . .
C: Within the hearts of all those who will receive Him.
P: May our hearts be His manger!
C: Amen and Amen!
P: Merry Christmas!
C: Merry Christmas! (Worshippers greet one another)

(Please be seated)

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS CANDLES

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world, he that follow me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Everything about the Advent wreath has significance and meaning. The wreath itself is a circle, with no beginning or no end. It reminds us that like a circle, God's love for us has no end. The white color of this candle signifies the pure life of Christ. This candle is located in the center of the wreath as a reminder that Christ is in the center on not only of Christmas but of our lives. The flame is a symbol of Christ, the Light of the world. Our lives are to be a reflection of His light.
Let us pray. . . . We thank you, God for your gift of Jesus Christ to the whole world. We thank you that Christ's coming makes *(light a candle as each word is spoken)* **Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love** possible for every person in every nation. Encourage us to do our part to bring good will and peace to our families our churched, our neighborhoods, and the whole world. Now let your Spirit put us in touch with You, the living God, through the words spoken and the music we hear tonight. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.
We light the Christ candle to proclaim that, out of love for the world, God dispelled darkness forever through the birth of Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. ***(Light the Christ Candle)***. May the Lord Jesus Christ take all darkness out of our hearts, now and forever. Amen

THE OPENING HYMN "Angels from the Realms of Glory" **LBW 50**



WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

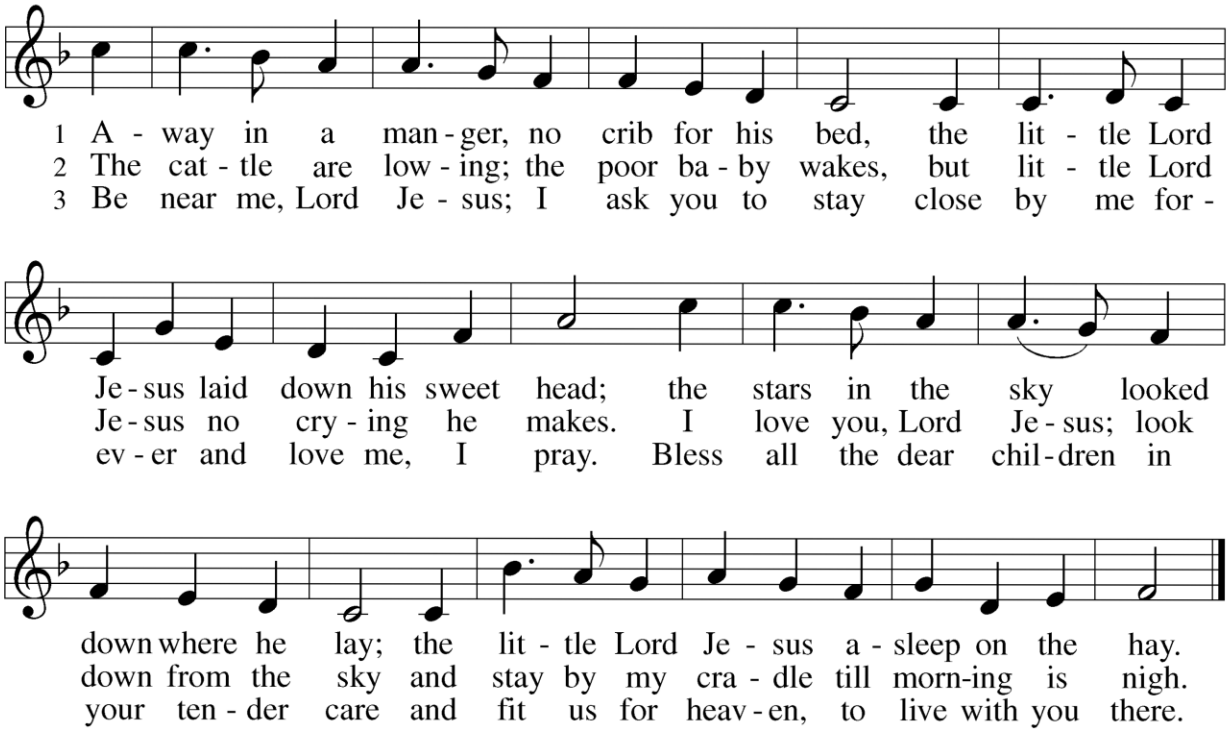
TIME OF CONFESSION *(Please stand)*

P: Even as we gather on this festival day, even in the midst of our celebration, we are reminded of our need to bring before our Father those things which lie heavily upon our hearts. Father, here and now we lay before You our sins and sinfulness. *(Brief Silence)*

C: Here are the things we confess – our attraction to those things which are ultimately meaningless; our insistence on going our own way; our failure to love You as we should; our failure to love those around us with love that comes from You; the busyness of our living, leaving no room for You; the poverty of our discipleship; our reluctance to tell others of Your love. We are silent before You.

P: There is good news this day! God sent forth His Son to be our Savior. The infant in the manger came as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus entered the world as flesh, full of grace and truth, and died and rose again that we might be redeemed. Christ is born and we rejoice. Christ died, and we are forgiven. Christ rose, and we are empowered.

SONG OF RESPONSE "Away in the Manger" LBW 67



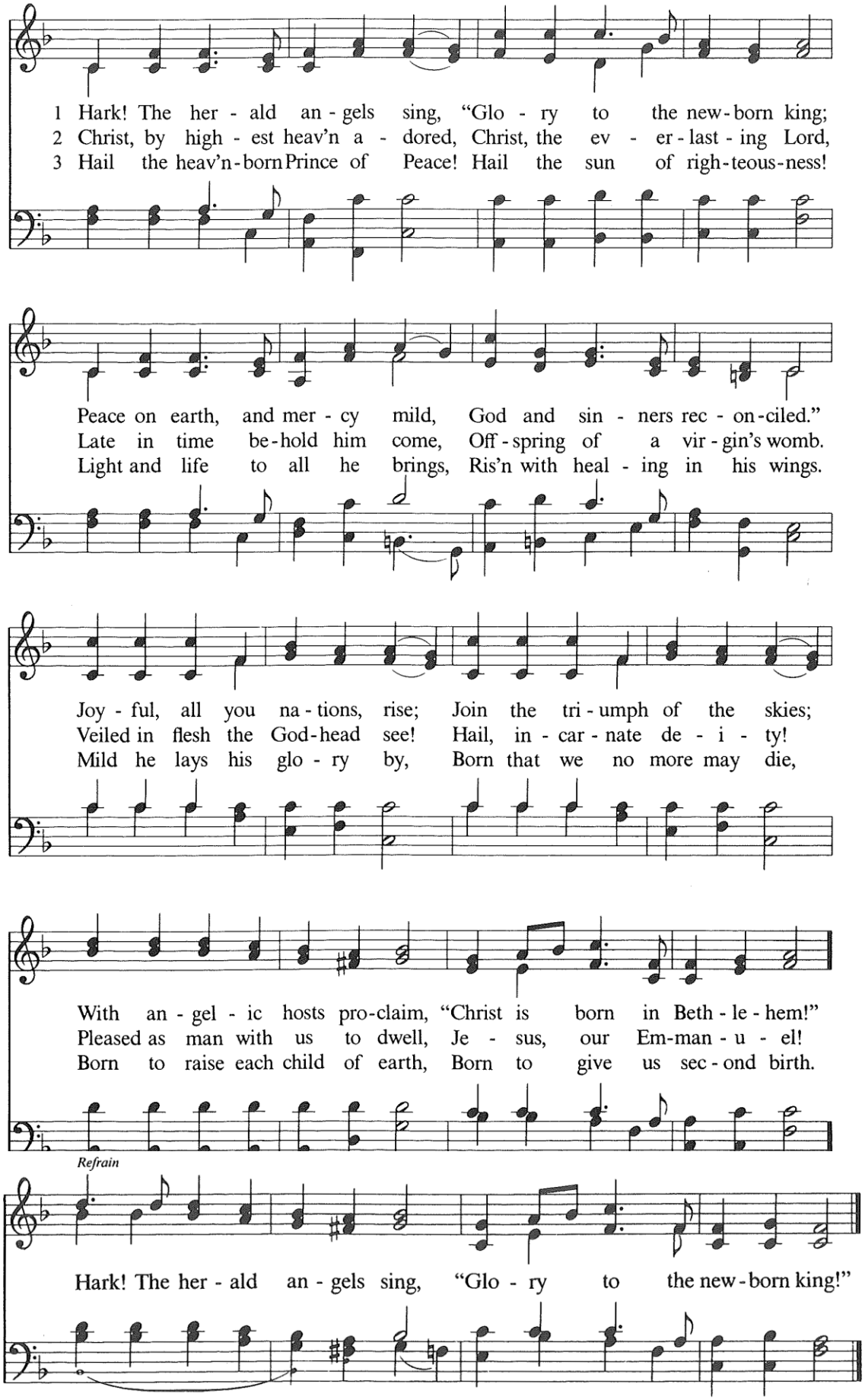
(Please be Seated)

FIRST READING Isaiah 9:2-7 (pg. 593 in Pew Bible)

2 The people walking in darkness
  have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
  a light has dawned.
3 You have enlarged the nation
  and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
  as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
  when dividing the plunder.
4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
  you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
  the bar across their shoulders,
  the rod of their oppressor.
5 Every warrior's boot used in battle
  and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
  will be fuel for the fire.
6 For to us a child is born,
  to us a son is given,
  and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

GOSPEL INTRODUCTION "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" vs1 & 3 LBW 60



THE CHRISTMAS STORY (Please stand for the reading, then be seated) **Luke 2:1-20**

R1: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

R2: While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

R1: And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them,

R2: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

R1: Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

R2: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

R1: When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,

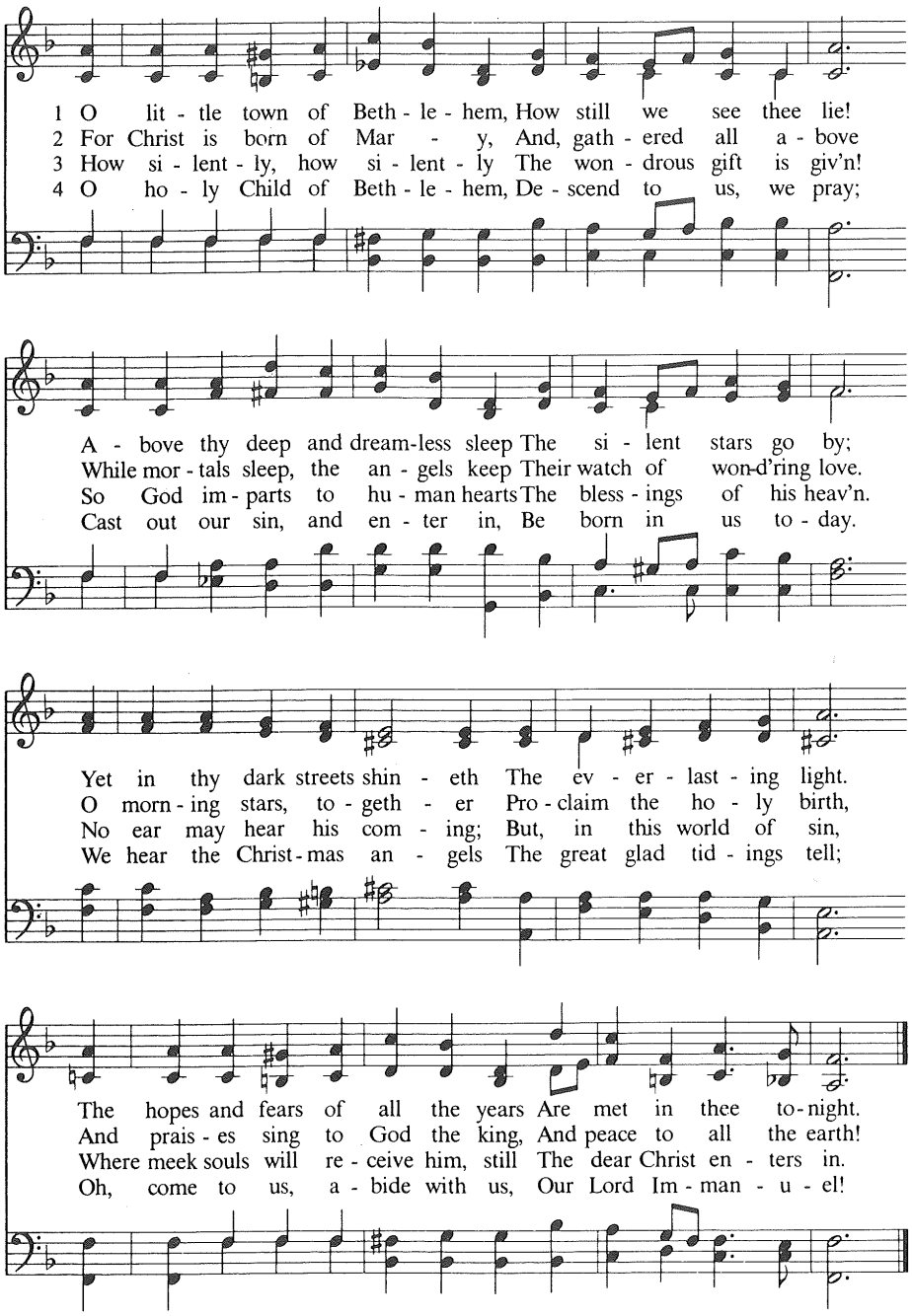
R 2: and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

R 1: But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

R2: The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

THE CHILDREN'S MESSAGE *Terri Gast*

CHRISTMAS CAROL "O Little Town of Bethlehem" LBW 41



THE CHRISTMAS MEDITATION *Pastor Doug*

THE AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH "A Christmas Creed"

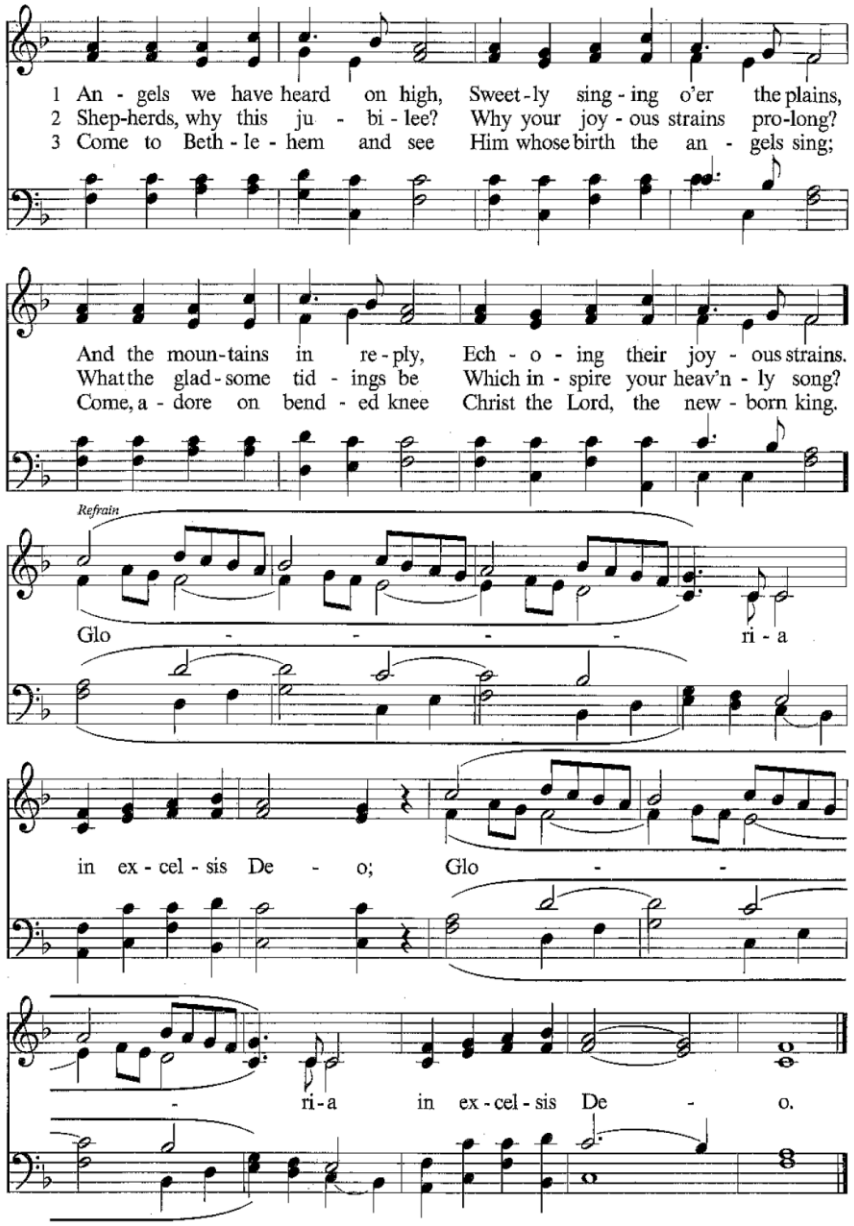
I believe in God the Father, Creator of all things, who sent his Son as my Savior.
I believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin Mary, announced by angels, Worshiped by the Wise Men, who lived to suffer, die and rise again, To free me from sin, death, and the power of the devil.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, who has brought me to faith in the Christ and by whose continuous work in my heart I am ever led to lay before the feet of Christ. My worship, my life, my love; To live under him as my King, both now and forever. Amen (B*e seated)*

THE CHRISTMAS PRAYER

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Now we join with Christians all over the world in worshipping God through our giving of our financial resources. If you're a guest, please do not feel obligated to participate in the offering. Instead, we hope that we are able to give something to you on this Holy Night. We welcome you to give only as your heart desires. We thank you one and all in advance for your generosity. This time of offering is a significant act of worship, and we now worship God with our tithes and offerings.

OFFERING RESPONSE "Angels we Have Heard on High" vs 3 LBW 71



THE CHRISTMAS LITANY

P: God declares that we are Christmas people, and as Jesus is born in a stable we are born again to everlasting life.

C: We come to worship and bow down. We come to kneel and give thanks. We come to worship Jesus.

P: In this family meal we celebrate the gift of God in Christ Jesus.

C: In sharing of the bread and wine we find forgiveness of sin and God's resurrection presence.

P: God gives us this gift to share.

C: We come to eat and drink and be changed.

P: In the night in which he was betrayed . . . .

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER (sung to the tune of Away in the Manger")

Our Father in Heaven, all praise to your name,
Your kingdom among us, your will done the same;
By mortals and angels, come, Lord reign alone;
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.
The bread that we yearn for provide us each day,
As we forgive other, our sins take away;
In time of temptation, to lead us be near;
From evil deliver your children most dear.
For yours is the kingdom, o'er all things you reign,
And your is the power all things you maintain;
To you be the glory resounding again;
From all the creation, forever! Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

During communion we invite you to sing: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear LBW 54
What Child Is This LBW 40

THE COMMUNION BLESSING

THE CELEBRATION OF LIGHT

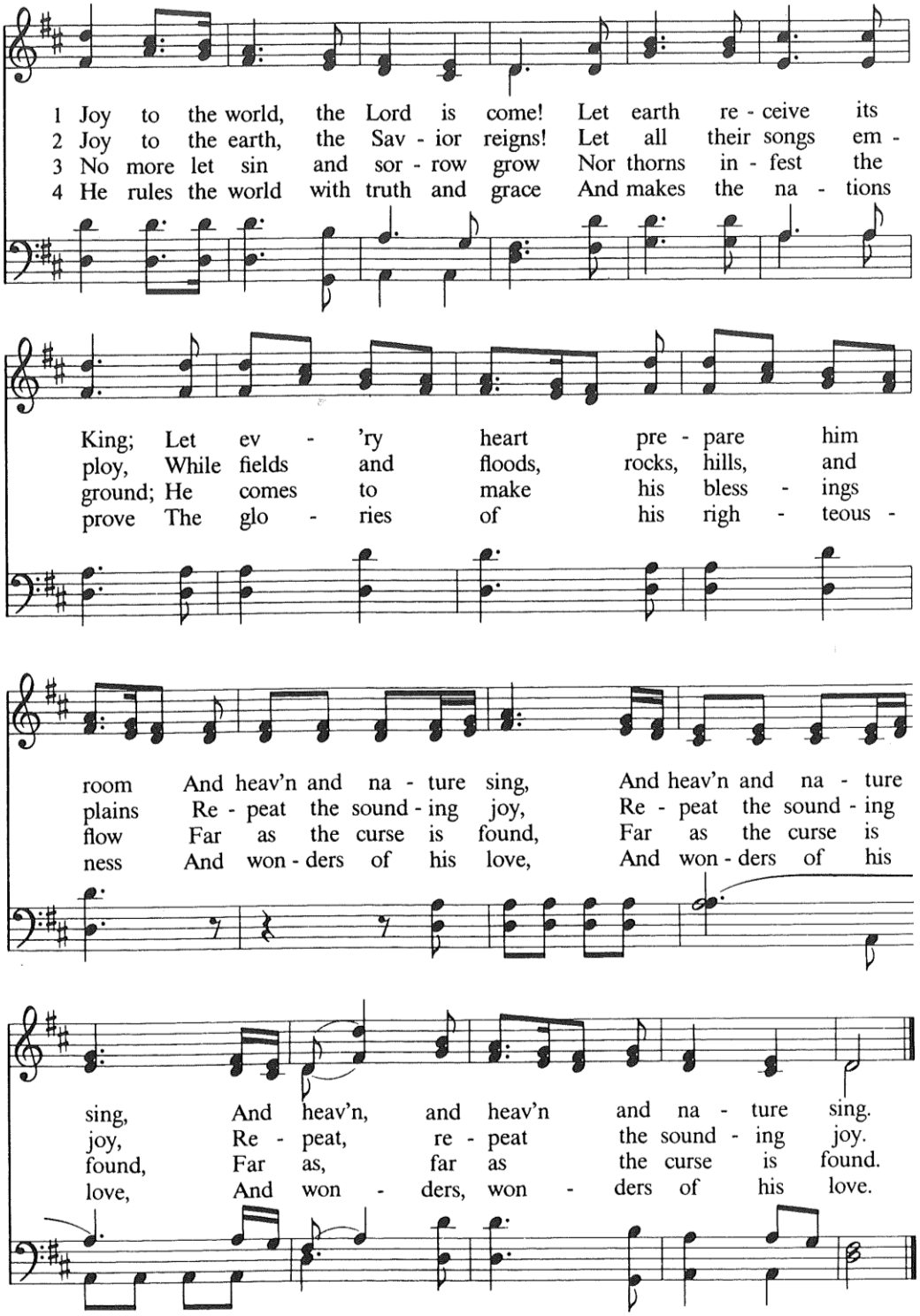
The Pastor will light the large candle which symbolizes Christ, the light of the world. The Pastor will pass the light to the ushers who in turn will light the candle of the worshipper at the end of each pew. As you receive the light, please pass it on to the person next, or close to you, until all the candles are lighted. Remember not to tilt your candle, as the hot wax will spill. During the lighting, we softly sing: "Silent Night, Holy Night"

P: Jesus is the Light of the world.
C: His light scatters the darkness.
P: Come Lord Jesus, illumine our hearts.
C: That we may carry your light to a fallen world.
P: As we now receive His light from the Christ candle, we share it passing from one to another His life giving light. We join together singing Silent Night as we experience the light of Christ filling this room and more importantly our hearts.

During the lighting, we softly sing: "Silent Night, Holy Night" LBW 65

CHRISTMAS BENEDICTION *(Please Stand)*

P: May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child. Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **AMEN**

(Individual candles are extinguished,
please deposit your candles in the boxes at the doors when you leave.)

THE CLOSING HYMN "Joy to the World" LBW 39