Service of Holy Communion
January 24, 2021 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

WELCOME

PRELUDE *"Let All Things Now Living"* **Piano**
Traditional Welsh melody/arr by Cindy Berry

LAMENTATION
Introduction:
2020 was a year of unexpected change. The pandemic brought social restrictions that separated us more than usual, and led to the loss - whether permanent or temporary – of beloved aspects of our lives. Great and sustained loss bids us to lament, to give voice to our hurts and griefs. During the season of Epiphany, worship will open with lamentation and response, rather than confession and forgiveness.

LAMENTS AND RESPONSE
Gracious God, by day and night we pour out our hearts to you. Look and see what we have suffered. When will this hardship come to an end? Hear us as we cry:
How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

Loving God, we cry to you in the depths of our despair,
in the chaos of our crisis, in the anguish of our agony.*
How long, O Lord, how long?

We are weary and worn, broken, beaten, and hungry
for justice, relief, healing, and love.*
How long, O Lord, how long?

Hear us, Lord, as we place our sorrows and griefs before you; respond to us with your mercy and tender care.
(silence for reflection)

We lament today the loss of traditions during this season. We grieve the loss of family and church traditions, routines in our daily lives, loss of time with friends and of activities we once enjoyed. Look upon your people with compassion, Holy God, and ease our suffering. Give us the promise of new life, the hope of better days to come. Protect and uphold all those who are working to sustain life, bring healing, and end this pandemic.
Hear us, O God, for the sake of Jesus, who was crucified and has risen from the dead. Amen.

**Adapted from Prayer by Jenna Perinne*

GATHERING SONG *"Arise, Your Light Has Come!"*

1 Arise, your light has come!
The Spirit's call obey;
show forth the glory of your God
which shines on you today.

2 Arise, your light has come!
Fling wide the prison door;
proclaim the captive's liberty,
good tidings to the poor.

3 Arise, your light has come!
All you in sorrow born,
bind up the brokenhearted ones
and comfort those who mourn.

4 Arise, your light has come!
The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing,
God's pow'r will make us strong.

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947
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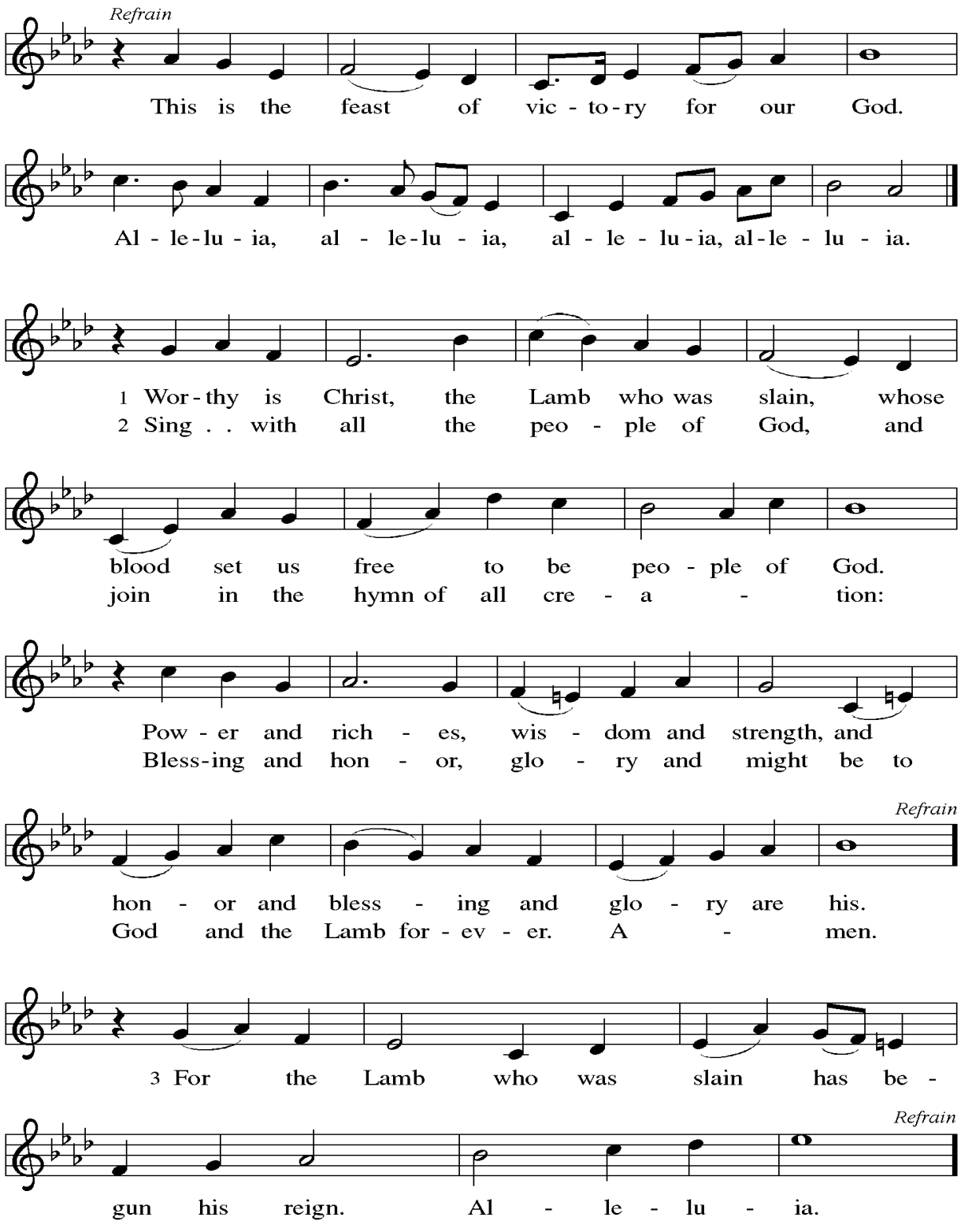
GREETING

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.

HYMN OF PRAISE



PRAYER OF THE DAY
Almighty God, **by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service. Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

THE WORD

FIRST READING: *Jonah 3:1-5, 10*
The book of Jonah is a comedy starring a reluctant prophet who is given a one-sentence message: Nineveh will be destroyed in forty days. Much to Jonah's dismay, the people of Nineveh repent. The point of the story is to get the reader to wrestle with the question "On whom should God have mercy?"

[1]The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, [2]"Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." [3]So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. [4]Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" [5]And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

[10]When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

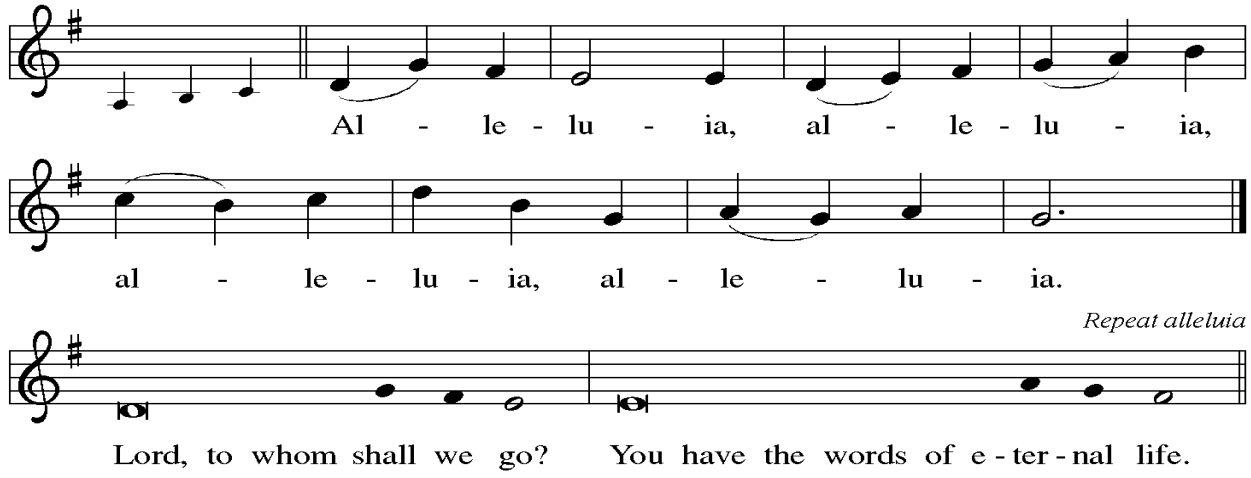
PSALM: *Psalm 62:5-12*

[5]For God alone I wait in silence; truly, my hope is in God.
[6]**God alone is my rock and my salvation,**
my stronghold, so that I shall never be shaken.
[7]In God is my deliverance and my honor; God is my strong rock and my refuge.
[8]**Put your trust in God always, O people,**
pour out your hearts before the one who is our refuge.
[9]Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath; those of low estate cannot be trusted. Placed on the scales together they weigh even less than a breath.
[10]**Put no trust in extortion; in robbery take no empty pride;**
though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.
[11]God has spoken once, twice have I heard it, that power belongs to God.
[12]**Steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord,**
for you repay all according to their deeds.

SECOND READING: *1 Corinthians 7:29-31*
Paul does not disapprove of marriage or other human social institutions. He does, however, want Christians to live in the present in fervent anticipation of God's future, which even now has dawned through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
29Brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those
who have wives be as though they had none, 30and those who mourn as though they
were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those
who buy as though they had no possessions, 31and those who deal with the world as
though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL READING: *Mark 1:14-20*
The Holy Gospel according to Mark, the first chapter
Glory to you, O Lord.

Before Jesus calls his first disciples, he proclaims a message that becomes known as "the gospel" or good news from God. God is ready to rule our lives. Those who realize this will respond with repentance and faith.
14Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of
God, 15and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near;
repent, and believe in the good news."
16As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew
casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. 17And Jesus said to them, "Follow
me and I will make you fish for people." 18And immediately they left their nets and
followed him. 19As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his
brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. 20Immediately he called them;
and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

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

SERMON

It's just another day, as Jesus walks down Main Street, calling out "The time has come, the Kingdom of God is near; repent and believe the good news!" It's time. The time has arrived. It is here. Turn around and put your trust in the good news.

In our second reading Paul warns, "The appointed time has grown short…the present form of this world is passing away." A change is coming, with or without our permission. Best to turn away from what is, turn toward what is coming, and accept the new.

Jonah, trudging a day's walk into hated Ninevah, yells, "Forty days and Ninevah will be overthrown."

You people of Ninevah have lived as people-with-power do: taking what you want, excluding others, waging war with cruelty, forcing your will on the world. You Ninevites have lived this way as a matter of course. It's the life you were born into; it's how your world operates. But listen. Forty days and it will all be over. No longer will you get to take captives in warfare and make them your slaves. No longer will you be able to control the markets so they favor you and yours. No longer will you be allowed to consume far more of the world's resources than you need. Forty days and Ninevah will be overthrown.

It's happening now. Time to awaken, see the new reality, and change, turn, start living differently.

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near;" Jesus says, "repent, and believe in the good news." His words are full of hope and promise, full of urgency. They demand a response, because no one can go on as though everything is not changing. The present form of the world is passing away. Repent and get on board.

Repent means to change direction. It can also mean to confess a particular sin and vow not to do it again, but primarily it means turning to a new way of living. That sense of the word is evident in the reading from Jonah. Ninevah was a powerful city; they waged war on smaller nations, torturing their victims. They destroyed any obstacle preventing them from being the top super power of the region.

But when a foreigner came, saying "In forty days, Ninevah will be destroyed," the message got their attention. Maybe there'd already been signs their dominance was waning. Maybe an epidemic and protests and unrest had already suggested things were changing. Whatever it was, the people of Ninevah recognized the truth in Jonah's words and they all repented, everyone. The king repented, local officials repented, business people repented, peasants and school children and the oxen in the fields repented. Just like that, they left behind who they had been, and started anew.

The word "repent," this sudden and drastic change in living, makes me think of the word "pivot." When you repent, you pivot. And that word reminds me of high school marching band. Our line would be headed one way, with those stiff, precise steps,

when at a certain yardline we would pivot and march in the opposite direction. No warning, just a quick, complete turn.

"The time is here, the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the good news."

Sometimes you just know when the time has come to change. That's how it was for Jean Valjean, the main character in the story Les Miserable.

Valjean is a thief, just released from years of harsh treatment and unfairness in prison. It has embittered him, made him hard. As he walks the countryside with nowhere to go, he comes across the home of a priest and knocks on the door. The priest invites him in for supper and to stay the night.

The priest lives simply. He was once rich, but has used all of his wealth to build a hospital for the poor in his district. His only remaining valuables are a set of silver tableware and two silver candlesticks. In the night, while everyone is sleeping, Jean Valjean enters the priest's room and contemplates killing him. Instead, he steals the set of silverware and goes on the run.

The police capture him the next day, find the silver, and figure he's stolen it. They drag him to the priest's home, expecting the priest to identify his silver and confirm that Valjean took it. Then the authorities will lock him up for the rest of his life.

But the priest sees them coming and hurries out the door, greeting Valjean with joy. "There you are," he says. "You left so early I didn't get a chance to say goodbye." When the police accuse Valjean of having taken the silverware, the priest says, "Oh no. I gave it to him. I want him to have it." Then he asks them to wait.

The priest scurries back to the house, emerging a moment later with the two, precious silver candlesticks. He thrusts them into Valjean's hands and says, "You were in such a hurry to leave, you forgot these." He throws his arms around Valjean and, while embracing him, whispers, "Remember your promise to me, that you will turn your life around."

Valjean had made no such promise. The police release him. He goes on his way in a stupor, confounded by what's just happened. He sits on a rock until dark, in utter disbelief. And then he realizes it's time to pivot. From that day, Valjean devotes himself to making an honest living, treating his employees well, giving to the poor, and helping the needy whenever he can. He repented and believed the good news of grace and mercy – of love, even for a sinner like him.

The time for change has arrived for us. The appointed time – how we had been living – has grown short. The form of this world is passing away. God is doing a new thing.

The signs are all around us that the old is receding and something new is coming to the fore. A worldwide pandemic has changed our everyday lives and unsettled the world economy. Peaceful protests, rioting and armed conflict, bitter anger among those who feel cheated, threats of climate change, warnings of fake news – we live in chaos these days. Something different will come out of all this. And church – decades of dwindling attendance, congregations searching for ways to engage the world - the

neighborhood beyond their doors, and now worship virtually rather than in person for 10 months.

The time has come; everything is changing. Turn around toward God. Look for God's presence. See what God is up to, and trust in God's good news.

With all the free-floating anxiety in the air these days, it is easy to assume we're doomed. Change is tough, especially what we can't see what lies on the other side of it, and thus prepare ourselves. Trusting is hard, much harder than worrying and blaming and hating.

But what if the scriptures are right? What if all those people in Ninevah heeded God's warning and abruptly changed the course of their lives – so drastically that God changed his mind about destroying them? What if Paul was right, that the former world is passing away because God is doing something new?

What if Jesus is right, that the kingdom of God has drawn near – near to us, here in America, in San Antonio, across the world?

What are we willing to trust? What do we have eyes to see? Turn. Turn away from hatred and fear and bloodlust. Leave all that behind. Something so much better is at hand – God's purpose, God's way of life, God's new creation. Turn, position yourself so you see it – the presence of God's kingdom among us. Trust the good news.

HYMN OF THE DAY *"You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore"*

1 You have come down to the lakeshore
seeking neither the wise nor the wealthy,
but only asking for me to follow.

Refrain

Sweet Lord, you have looked into my eyes;
kindly smiling, you've called out my name.
On the sand I have abandoned my small boat;
now with you, I will seek other seas.

2 You know full well what I have, Lord:
neither treasure nor weapons for conquest,
just these my fish nets and will for working. *Refrain*

3 You need my hands, my exhaustion,
working love for the rest of the weary--
a love that's willing to go on loving. *Refrain*

Text: Cesáreo Gabaráin, 1936-1991; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946

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APOSTLES' CREED

With the whole Church let us confess our faith.

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 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 THE PEOPLE

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

A brief silence.

For the church throughout the world, for pastors and teachers, for deacons and deaconesses, and for musicians and servers, that all proclaim the good news of God's reconciling love, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For skies and seas, for birds and fish, for favorable weather and clean water, and for the well-being of creation, that God raise up advocates and scientists to guide our care for all the earth, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For those who provide leadership in our cities and around the world, for nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations, for planning commissions and homeless advocates, that God inspire all people in the just use of wealth, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For those who are sick, distressed, or grieving; for the outcast and all who await relief, that in the midst of suffering, God's peace and mercy surround them, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For our congregation and community, for families big and small, and for the organizations that meet here during the week, that God's steadfast love serve as a model for all relationships, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For those concerns and thanks we raise to you now…

Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

In thanksgiving for our ancestors in the faith whose lives serve as an example of gospel living, that they point us to salvation through Christ, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

THE PEACE
The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

OFFERING
Thank you for your faithful giving to the ministry of Jesus at Shepherd King. Your generosity not only sustains this congregation's work, but also supports the larger Lutheran Church in efforts like colleges and universities, including Texas Lutheran University. If you wish to give to Shepherd King, please see how at our website: www.sklcsa.org

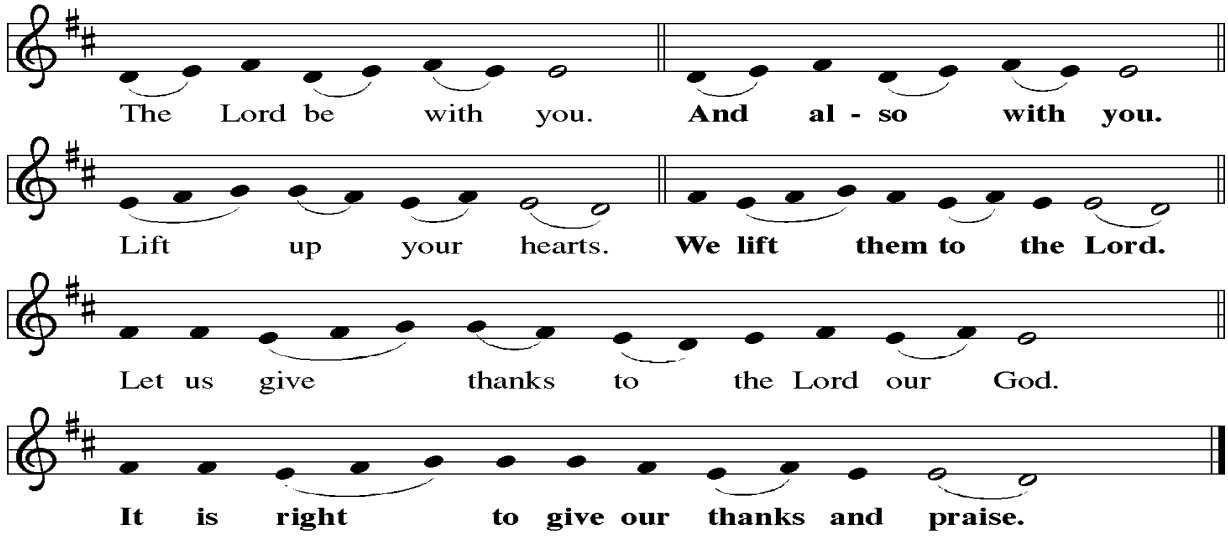
THE DOXOLOGY
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637-1711

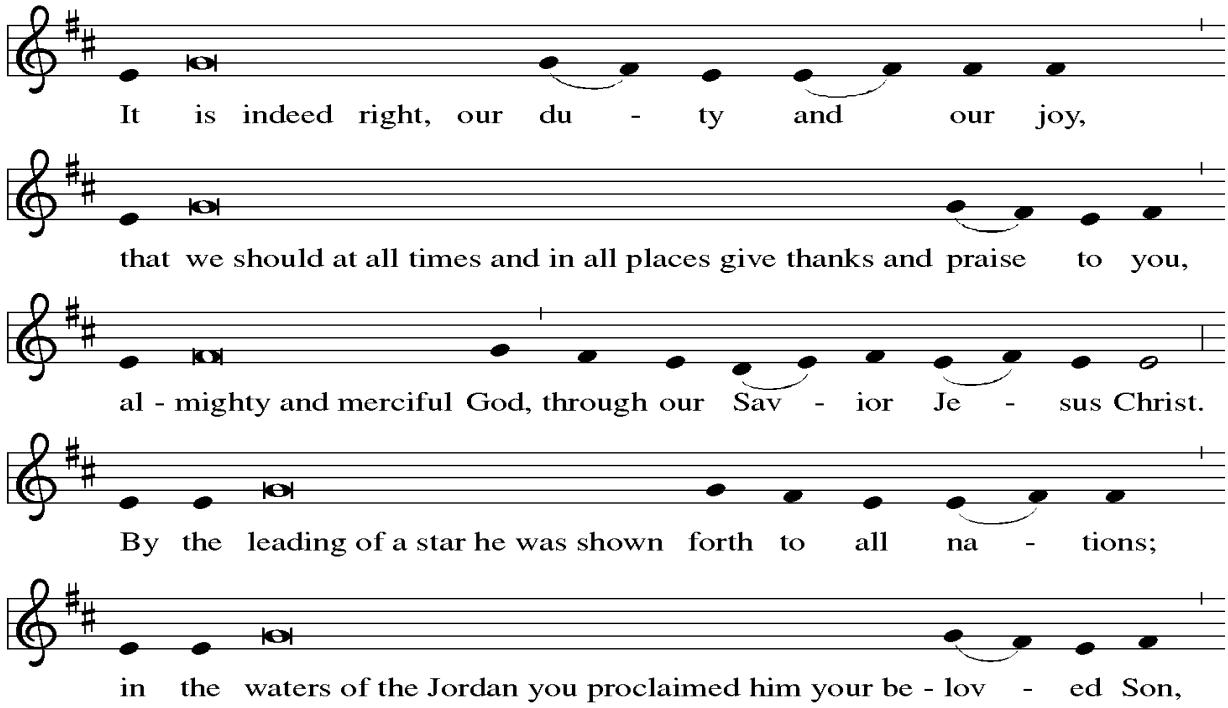
OFFERING PRAYER
O God, receive these gifts as you receive us: like a mother receives her child, with arms open wide. Nourish us anew in your tender care, and empower us in faithful service to tend to others with this same love, through Jesus Christ, our saving grace.
Amen.

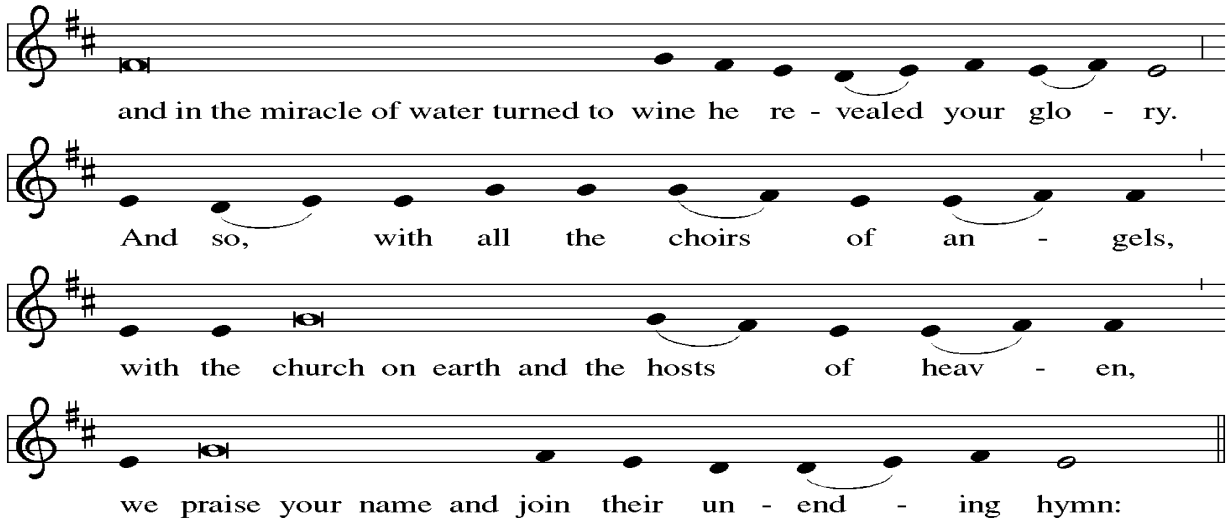
(Please have the bread and wine/juice ready for Holy Communion)

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING



PREFACE SUNDAYS IN EPIPHANY





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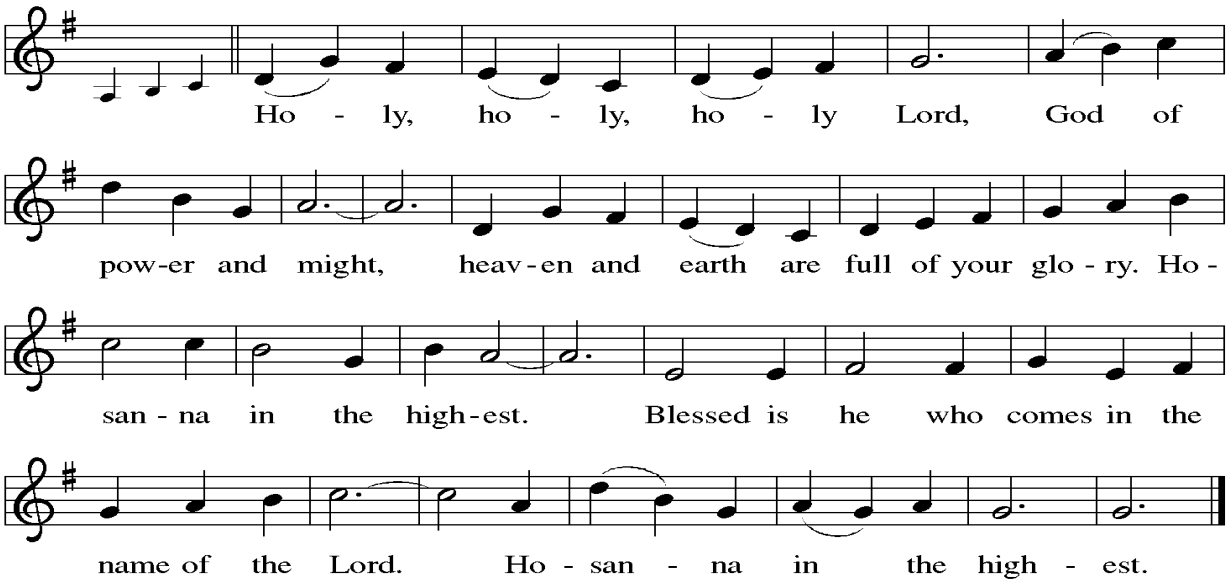
"Holy, Holy, Holy"



EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

God who created the heaven and the earth, who promised to bless all nations through Abraham and Sarah, and brought Israel safely through the sea, we gather at the table with our Lord, Jesus, with thankful hearts, remembering…

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 in remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER
Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.
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
Beloved: here is bread; here is wine. Here is Jesus. Come and be fed.

Take the bread and eat, this is the body of Christ, given for you. *(please consume the bread)*

Take the cup and drink, this is the blood of Christ, shed for you. *(please drink from the cup)*

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION
The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION
Christ Jesus, at this table we have feasted on your very life and are strengthened for our journey. Send us forth from this banquet nourished in body and in spirit to proclaim your good news and serve others in your name.
Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Council Retreat this afternoon, 3 to 5 pm, via Zoom

We appreciate that so many of you tune in to worship with Shepherd King. Many of our Sunday visitors are unknown to us, which is fine, but I want you to know – if there is something we can do for you: if you would like prayer, or a conversation, or have a question about Scripture or faith – please contact us. Our contact information is on our webpage – www.sklcsa.org

BLESSING
God the creator strengthen you; Jesus the beloved fill you; and the Holy Spirit the comforter ☩ keep you in peace.
Amen.

CLOSING HYMN *"Alleluia, Song of Gladness"*

1 Alleluia, song of gladness,
voice of joy that cannot die;
alleluia is the anthem
ever dear to choirs on high;
in the house of God abiding
thus they sing eternally.

4 In our hymns we pray with longing:
Grant us, blessed Trinity,
at the last to keep glad Easter
with the faithful saints on high;
there to you forever singing
alleluia joyfully.

Text: Latin hymn, 11th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.

DISMISSAL
Go in peace. Be the light of Christ.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

CHIMES

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