**December 25, 2023 Nativity of Our Lord III: Christmas Day – Email/At Home Missal**

**The ZOOM link for today’s service, which opens at 09.30 am on December 25, 2023, can be found here:**

**Christmas Day Worship December 25, 2023 09:30 am ZOOM room opens; service begins at 10:00 am.**

**Join Zoom Meeting click here:**

[**https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87146528441?pwd=M21NZFh6S3pjWm0vcnpEZlRVU1lwQT09**](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87146528441?pwd=M21NZFh6S3pjWm0vcnpEZlRVU1lwQT09)

**Meeting ID: 871 4652 8441 Passcode: 077461**

**You don’t have to have a computer or internet to connect to any of our church Zoom services; you can also just call in on one of these numbers (long distance charges may apply): (All Canadian numbers). You can also access the ZOOM from your telephone by using the “One tap mobile” option:**

**+12042727920,,87146528441#,,,,\*077461# Canada**

**+14388097799,,87146528441#,,,,\*077461# Canada**

**Dial by your location:**

**+1 778 907 2071 Canada**

**+1 780 666 0144 Canada**

**+1 204 272 7920 Canada
+1 438 809 7799 Canada**

**+1 587 328 1099 Canada**

**+1 647 374 4685 Canada
+1 647 558 0588 Canada**

**Meeting ID: 871 4652 8441Passcode: 077461**

**Find your local number:** [**https://us02web.zoom.us/u/ksJ4M38Xb**](https://us02web.zoom.us/u/ksJ4M38Xb) **…………………………………….**

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 24TH –DECEMBER 31ST, 2023:**

**Here is the YouTube link for the service from last Sunday, December 17th, 2023:** <https://youtu.be/FNpnuWb6PpE>

**……………………………………….**

**Coming Events** (save these dates) **bold print - events being held here at St. Peter’s**

**Feb. 14 Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 pm**

Apr. 5-7 Bishop’s spiritual Retreat for Lay Persons (Mount Carmel, Niagara Falls)

**The Life of St. Peter’s for the week of December 24 – December. 31, 2023**

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

**Sunday 10:00 am Worship Service**

**……………………………………….**

1. **Pastoral Visit:** Pastor Laura is available for visits by appointment by calling the church office, 519-653-4721. Whether you have a particular pastoral concern or would just like some one-to-one time to get to know Pastor Laura, she would love to meet with you.
2. **……………………………………….**
3. **Prayer List:**  Bill, Don, Tammy, Alice, Don, Lynn, Helen, Sharon, Donald, Shirley, Clara, Carol, Jeff, Aaron, MacKenzie, Rhett, Linda, Jan Ken, Lee, Maria, Deborah, Fred, Anne, Sherri, Panagiota.
4. **……………………………………….**

## We need you to help feed our neighbourhood! The freedom Centre has joined with Cambridge Community Table to offer a meal to our community twice a month on Tuesday night. We need volunteers: Food Preparation, set up, take down, meet and Greet. Every hour you can give once or twice a month. Call for information 519-591-6518 or email rosemary@freedomcentre.ca.

1. **……………………………………….**
2. **Weekly Bible Study**: Resumes again on Wednesday January 17th, 2023 at 10:30 am in the Art Room. Everyone is welcome!
3. **……………………………………….**
4. To our members and friends who supported **St. Peter's "Wrap up your shopping" Christmas Fundraiser**.
5. I am confident you will enjoy the Atwood Heritage Summer Sausage, Esta Chocolates, and Snyder's Organic Maple Syrup. Merry Christmas! Alex Black
6. **……………………………………….**
7. The red poinsettia in the chancel has been placed by Bill and Patricia Hewitt. The white poinsettia has been placed by Barbara Berg. Our sincere thanks for their thoughtfulness and generosity - they will be enjoyed by all!
8. **……………………………………….**

**Presiding Pastor: Rev. Laura Sauder**

**Organist & Director of Music: Bradley Moggach**

**Assisting Minister: Helga Morrison**

**Reader: Barb Jones**

**Land Acknowledgement:**

A: With good and grateful hearts we acknowledge that the land upon which we live, work, play, and worship, is the same land upon which the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and the Attawandaron (or Neutral) peoples first lived, worked, played, and prayed to Creator. Calling the earth upon which they stood, Mother Earth, they cared for the earth as they would care for their mother. Let us take an example from our Indigenous forbears and neighbours, and show gratitude to our Mother Earth. May we be ever mindful of what she has provided for us, even to the next seven generations.

**Welcome remarks**

**Call to Worship**

P: Like eager children waiting for dawn,

tearing at the wrapping to get to the gift,

waking sleeping parents with shouts of joy,

let our celebrations begin!

May this Christmas morning

find us able to say “Alleluia”

even in the midst of pain and anxiety,

because You are our hope.

Jesus Christ, come to us,

fill our hearts with joy in knowing

this deeper truth that life contains,

that because You come, all will be well.

Let us witness not to successful lives,

not to perfect health, faultless families,

highly achieving work, or new possessions,

but to the quiet inner knowing of You.

And as we gather this joyful morning,

let our Alleluias rise from willing lips,

from lives opened to Your gift,

and from hearts filled with Your love.

***C: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,***

***and Amen!***

*Source: ~ written by Ann Siddall, and posted on the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre and Faith Community website.*[*http://stillpointsa.org.au/prayer/prayers-and-liturgies/*](http://stillpointsa.org.au/prayer/prayers-and-liturgies/)

**Gathering Hymn: ELW # 275 ‘Angels, from the Realms of Glory’**

1 Angels, from the realms of glory,

 wing your flight o'er all the earth;

 once you sang creation's story,

 now proclaim Messiah's birth:

 Come and worship, come and worship,

 worship Christ, the newborn king.

2 Shepherds, in the fields abiding,

 watching o'er your flocks by night,

 God with us is now residing,

 yonder shines the infant light.

 Come and worship, come and worship,

 worship Christ, the newborn king.

3 Sages, leave your contemplations,

 brighter visions beam afar;

 seek the great desire of nations,

 you have seen his natal star.

 Come and worship, come and worship,

 worship Christ, the newborn king.

4 All creation, join in praising

 God, the Father, Spirit, Son,

 evermore your voices raising

 to the eternal Three in One.

 Come and worship, come and worship,

 worship Christ, the newborn king.

*(Title: Angels, from the Realms of Glory); Text: James Montgomery, 1771-1854, alt., sts. 1-3; Salisbury Hymn Book, 1857, st. 4; Public Domain*

*Music: Henry T. Smart, 1813-1879; Public Domain; Reprinted and Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727610. All rights reserved.)*

**Greeting:**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

***C: And also with you.***

**Prayer of the Day:**

Almighty God, you gave us your only Son to take on our human nature and to illumine the world with your light. By your grace adopt us as your children and enlighten us with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.\*

**Lesson Introduction**

**Isaiah 52:7-10**

I will confess that I was tempted to skip our first reading this year. With the violence and warfare in the Holy Land, Isaiah’s promise of a restored and triumphant Jerusalem rings differently as we see a particular interpretation of these kinds of passages play out in a devastating way. I can’t imagine that God’s vision for a renewed Jerusalem mean suffering and loss for the Palestinians and other non-Jewish people who call the Holy Land home.

On Christmas morning, we hear Isaiah’s words through our lens as Christians. May our witness be that God’s promise of peace and good news and salvation is indeed for people of every tribe and nation. God, who is creator of heaven and earth, does not choose sides, and desires safety and wellbeing for everyone. Let us listen to the word…

**The First Reading: Isaiah 52:7-10**

How beautiful upon the mountains
    are the feet of a messenger
    who proclaims peace,
    who brings good news,
    who proclaims salvation,
    who says to Zion, “Your God rules!”
Listen! Your lookouts lift their voice;
    they sing out together!
    Right before their eyes they see the Lord returning to Zion.

Break into song together, you ruins of Jerusalem!
The Lord has comforted his people and has redeemed Jerusalem.
The Lord has bared his holy arm in view of all the nations;
    all the ends of the earth have seen our God’s victory.  *(CEB)*

Word of God, Word of Life*.* ***C: Thanks be to God.\****

**Psalm: Psalm 98**

1Sing a new song to the Lord, who has done | marvelous things,

whose right hand and holy arm have | won the victory.

2O Lord, you have made | known your victory,

you have revealed your righteousness in the sight | of the nations.

3You remember your steadfast love and faithfulness to the | house of Israel;

all the ends of the earth have seen the victory | of our God.

4Shout with joy to the Lord, | all you lands;

lift up your voice, re- | joice, and sing.

5Sing to the Lord | with the harp,

with the harp and the | voice of song.

6With trumpets and the sound | of the horn

shout with joy before the | king, the Lord.

7Let the sea roar, and | all that fills it,

the world and those who | dwell therein.

8Let the rivers | clap their hands,

and let the hills ring out with joy before the Lord, who comes to | judge the earth.

9The Lord will judge the | world with righteousness

and the peo- | ples with equity.

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**Lesson Introduction**

**Hebrews 1:1-4**

In the introduction to the book of Hebrews, the author reminds us that Christ’s birth is part of a much longer story of God’s relationship with the world. In these few words, we are reminded that Jesus came into this world so that God could speak directly to us – to teach us what ultimate love, peace, grace, and truth really are. Let us listen to the word…

**The Second Reading: Hebrews 1:1-4**

In the past, God spoke through the prophets to our ancestors in many times and many ways. In these final days, though, he spoke to us through a Son. God made his Son the heir of everything and created the world through him. The Son is the light of God’s glory and the imprint of God’s being. He maintains everything with his powerful message. After he carried out the cleansing of people from their sins, he sat down at the right side of the highest majesty. And the Son became so much greater than the other messengers, such as angels, that he received a more important title than theirs. *(CEB)*

Word of God, Word of Life*.*  ***C: Thanks be to God.\****

**Gospel Acclamation: ACS Setting 12: *(page 33) (sung)***

**Alleluia *(repeat)***

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**The Holy Gospel according to John 1:1-14**

***C: Glory to you, O Lord.***

In the beginning was the Word
    and the Word was with God
    and the Word was God.

The Word was with God in the beginning.

Everything came into being through the Word,
    and without the Word
    nothing came into being.

What came into being
    through the Word was life,
    and the life was the light for all people.

The light shines in the darkness,
    and the darkness doesn’t extinguish the light.

A man named John was sent from God. He came as a witness to testify concerning the light, so that through him everyone would believe in the light. He himself wasn’t the light, but his mission was to testify concerning the light.

The true light that shines on all people
    was coming into the world.

The light was in the world,
    and the world came into being through the light,
        but the world didn’t recognize the light.

The light came to his own people,
    and his own people didn’t welcome him.

But those who did welcome him,
        those who believed in his name,
    he authorized to become God’s children,
        born not from blood
        nor from human desire or passion,
        but born from God.

The Word became flesh
    and made his home among us.
We have seen his glory,
    glory like that of a father’s only son,
        full of grace and truth. *(CEB)*

The Gospel of the Lord.***C: Praise to you, O Christ.\****

1. **Engaging with the Story**

**John 1:1-14 – Sermon**

The tradition of giving gifts at Christmas has deep roots in the Christian tradition. As far back as the 4th century, when December 25th was set as the day to celebrate Jesus’ birth, Christians have been giving gifts in the spirit of the wise men who brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh for the Christ child.

In John’s Christmas story, there are no wise men with gifts – or shepherds or angels for that matter. But what John does so beautifully is draw our attention to the gift that is Jesus. John’s Christmas story gets right to the heart of what Christmas is all about. Why this child is such so important and special.

John promises us that Jesus is God’s love and grace and truth born into our weary world. That Jesus was born into our world so that we might know God and so that God might know us intimately and deeply. This is the greatest gift we could ever receive.

I’m curious – have you ever re-gifted something?

If the very mention of that question offends you, chances are you’re among those who consider re-gifting tacky or inconsiderate.

I wonder if part of the reason re-gifting gets a bad rap is that we usually only re-gift a present if it’s something we don’t want or like. We keep the really good gifts for ourselves and pass along the things we don’t want – our leftovers.

But is re-gifting all bad? Sometimes it can become a fun game. I know there are some families who pass around the same bad gift year after year.

A quick google search on re-gifting brings up page after page of re-gifting etiquette. Clearly, according to many experts, there are right ways and wrong ways to re-gift a present.

Keep track of where the gift came from – don’t re-gift in the same circle, and certainly not to the person who gave it to you.

Only re-gift new and unused presents – and make sure they’re in the original packaging.

Don’t re-gift homemade or personalized items. And definitely make sure to check for any discreetly hidden notes with the gift you re-home. This one happened to me a few years ago – I opened a gift that was exactly my taste, only to open the enclosed card to find it addressed to the person who gave the gift to me. Totally ruined the present for me and it sat in the closet until we moved when it went to goodwill.

Re-gifting can be complicated. But no matter where you fall on re-gifting, there’s no denying that when it comes to God’s gift for us – re-gifting is where it’s at. And when it comes to re-gifting this gift, we don’t need to worry about rules or etiquette. This is a gift that we can re-gift with abandon.

Because re-gifting God’s love and grace is our job as followers of Jesus. But it’s not always so easy to do, especially if we’re feeling weary or worn out; if we don’t feel that we ourselves are worthy to receive this great gift.

A few years ago, a friend of mine shared this on Facebook in the lead-up to Christmas that had been especially stressful that year. She said:

“I *believe* God loves and redeems the messy/crabby/tries-too-hard me – and yet – I still think I should come to God with all my metaphorical wrinkles ironed out, wrapped up in pretty paper and a bow as if I were the gift. Maybe I should let God wrap me in love and just enjoy the next few days.”

We all know the saying “it’s better to give than to receive.” Often it was drilled into us as children to teach us empathy and compassion – to be less selfish.

But we ought to pay attention that we don’t turn this mantra into a badge of honour. Do we value giving over receiving because there is a sense of shame or stigma or weakness in needing someone’s help?

Do we think that we should come to God wrapped up in pretty paper and a bow as if we were the gift?

I think if we’re honest, a lot of us do. We don’t want to show up with all our problems and messiness and mistakes – certainly not before others, and likely not before God either.

And yet, the Christmas story is a promise that God again and again chooses those who are the least “worthy – by the world’s standards” to bring this great gift of love and grace into the world.

This greatest gift of all is for us, not in spite of our weary hearts, but because of our weary hearts. God knows just how much we need that great gift of unconditional and undying love.

This Christmas, may the Spirit open your heart to receive God’s great gift of love and grace born into the world. May your soul feel it’s worth basking in the glory of this great love. And may this greatest gift of all fill you, renew you, and lead you to re-gift this great love to the whole weary world.

For this day, Christ is born. Love is born. For us. For everyone. Amen.

**Hymn of the Day: ELW # 269 ‘Once in Royal David’s City’**

1 Once in royal David's city

 stood a lowly cattle shed,

 where a mother laid her baby

 in a manger for his bed:

 Mary was that mother mild,

 Jesus Christ, her little child.

2 He came down to earth from heaven

 who is God and Lord of all,

 and his shelter was a stable,

 and his cradle was a stall;

 with the poor and meek and lowly,

 lived on earth our Savior holy.

3 And our eyes at last shall see him,

 through his own redeeming love;

 for that child so dear and gentle

 is our Lord in heav'n above;

 and he leads his children on

 to the place where he is gone.

4 Not in that poor lowly stable,

 with the oxen standing by,

 we shall see him; but in heaven,

 set at God's right hand on high;

 there his children gather round,

 bright like stars, with glory crowned.

*(Title: Once in Royal David's City; Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818-1895; Public Domain; Music: Henry J. Gauntlett, 1805-1876; Public Domain; Reprinted and Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727610. All rights reserved.)*

**Prayers of Intercession:**

A: Trusting in God’s good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

*A brief silence.*

Christ is born and your Spirit is poured out upon us. Renew your church through the gift of baptism. Unite your faithful people across both distance and denomination. Teach us to live by your grace. Hear us, O God.

***C:* *Your mercy is great.***

You reveal your presence over the heights of the mountains, through the cloud and lightning, and beyond the trembling of the earth. Still the storms that threaten the lands and send relief to all places and peoples experiencing natural disasters, extreme temperatures, or famine. Hear us, O God.***C:* *Your mercy is great.***

Let all the ends of the earth know the promise of your reconciliation and renewal. Make beautiful the work of peacemakers, community organizers, and advocates who work to ensure that all people flourish in safety and dignity. Hear us, O God.***C:* *Your mercy is great.***

God, be our comfort and our redemption. Seek out all who feel forsaken or forlorn, especially those who are marginalized because of their race, sexuality, gender expression, or immigration status. Heal all who struggle in any way (*especially we pray for Linda, Jeff, Sherri, Panagiota, each one of the beloved children on our prayer list, and those we name before you now aloud or silently in our hearts…*). Hear us, O God.***C:* *Your mercy is great.***

Following the example of Mary and Joseph, let all our families, whatever their shape or size, reflect your holy and life-giving love. Bless adoptive families, foster families, and guardians. Hold in mercy all who are childless, by choice or by life circumstance. Hear us, O God.***C:* *Your mercy is great.***

As you have guarded the lives of the saints, so shield us from evil and danger. Teach us by their example to serve you with joy and honesty of heart, that we live as heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Hear us, O God.***C:* *Your mercy is great.***

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.

Amen.\*

**Share the peace of Christ:**

Angels said it to startled shepherds,

Jesus said it to frightened followers,

And now these words which come from heaven

are shared to make us whole and make us one.

Peace be with you.

***C: And also with you. \*\*\*\****

*(A Wee Worship Book – Liturgy for Holy Communion A #30810; Type: Words; First Line: Call to worship – Gather us in; Language: English (pages 80-92); Contributors: Iona community; Text: © 1999, WGRG, Iona community, GIA Publications, Inc; exclusive North American agent. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Reprinted and Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727610. All rights reserved.)*

**Offering**

**Offering Hymn: ELW #279 ‘O Little Town of Bethlehem’ *(ST. LOUIS) (verses 3 & 4)***

3 How silently, how silently

 the wondrous gift is giv'n!

 So God imparts to human hearts

 the blessings of his heav'n.

 No ear may hear his coming;

 but, in this world of sin,

 where meek souls will receive him, still

 the dear Christ enters in.

4 O holy child of Bethlehem,

 descend to us, we pray;

 cast out our sin, and enter in,

 be born in us today.

 We hear the Christmas angels

 the great glad tidings tell;

 oh, come to us, abide with us,

 our Lord Immanuel!

*(Title: O Little Town of Bethlehem (ST. LOUIS); Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893; Public Domain; Music: Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908; Public Domain; Reprinted and Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727610. All rights reserved.)*

**Offering Prayer:**

A: God of abundance,

receive and bless these gifts we have offered.

Join our hearts with the song of the angels,

and gather us at your table of celebration.

Strengthen us to share with all the world

the abundance of your grace upon grace,

poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

Amen.\*

You are invited to prepare your table with bread and wine, or crackers and juice, whatever is available to you, so that you may participate in the meal.

**Meal: Click here for the communion liturgy from worship on YouTube:**

[**https://youtu.be/ViXmTzRsfU4**](https://youtu.be/ViXmTzRsfU4)

**Great Thanksgiving: ACS Setting 12: ‘Dialogue…’ (page 36) (sung)**

The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

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

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

**ACS Setting 12: ‘Preface…’ *(Christmas)***

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,

that we should at all times and in all places

give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

through our Savior Jesus Christ.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh

you have opened the eyes of faith

to a new and radiant vision of your glory,

that, beholding the God made visible,

we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,

with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**ACS Setting 12: ‘Holy, Holy, Holy…’ *(page 36 )***

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of pow’r and God of might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

**Hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**\*

**Thanksgiving at the Table:**

On the night before he showed us the full extent of his love,

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 for the remembrance of me.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**The Lord’s Prayer:**

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. **Amen.**

**Invitation to Communion:**

This is Christ’s table. All are welcome here to receive God’s abundant gifts of love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

I invite those at home, and those in the building communing by fellowship cup, to take your bread or cracker as we say together, “The body of Christ, given for us.”

And, as we take our cup we say, “The blood of Christ, shed for us.”

**Communion Music: ACS Setting 12: ‘Be known to us….’ *(page 40 ) &***

 **ELW # 282 ‘It Came upon the Midnight Clear’**

**ACS Setting 12: ‘Be known to us….’ *(page 40 )***

**Be known to us, Lord Jesus, in the breaking of the bread.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Be known to us, Lord Jesus, in the breaking of the bread.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.\***

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**ELW # 282 ‘It Came upon the Midnight Clear’**

1 It came upon the midnight clear,

 that glorious song of old,

 from angels bending near the earth

 to touch their harps of gold:

 "Peace on the earth, good will to all,

 from heav'n's all-gracious king."

 The world in solemn stillness lay

 to hear the angels sing.

2 Still through the cloven skies they come

 with peaceful wings unfurled,

 and still their heav'nly music floats

 o'er all the weary world.

 Above its sad and lowly plains

 they bend on hov'ring wing,

 and ever o'er its babel sounds

 the blessed angels sing.

3 And you, beneath life's crushing load,

 whose forms are bending low,

 who toil along the climbing way

 with painful steps and slow:

 look now, for glad and golden hours

 come swiftly on the wing;

 oh, rest beside the weary road

 and hear the angels sing!

4 For lo! The days are hast'ning on,

 by prophets seen of old,

 when with the ever-circling years

 shall come the time foretold,

 when peace shall over all the earth

 its ancient splendors fling,

 and all the world give back the song

 which now the angels sing.

*(Title: It Came upon the Midnight Clear; Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876; Public Domain Music: Richard S. Willis, 1819-1900; Public Domain
Reprinted and Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727610. All rights reserved.)*

P: May the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ strengthen you, and keep you, in his grace.

***C: Amen.***

**Prayer after Communion:**

A: God our redeemer,

you have fed us at this table

with gifts of grace, truth, and life.

As you have gathered us in joy,

send us forth as messengers of your peace.

Make us shine with the good news of your glory,

born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.\***

**Blessing:**

When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.

*Source: written by Howard Thurman. https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/now-the-work-of-christmas-begins/*

May God bless you and keep you,

☩ Jesus grant you grace and truth,

and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts,

now and forever.

Amen.\*

**Sending Hymn: ELW # 290 ‘Go Tell It on the Mountain’**

***Refrain***

 ***Go tell it on the mountain,***

 ***over the hills and ev'rywhere;***

 ***go tell it on the mountain***

 ***that Jesus Christ is born!***

1 While shepherds kept their watching

 o'er silent flocks by night,

 behold, throughout the heavens

 there shone a holy light. ***Refrain***

2 The shepherds feared and trembled

 when, lo, above the earth

 rang out the angel chorus

 that hailed our Savior's birth. ***Refrain***

3 Down in a lonely manger

 the humble Christ was born;

 and God sent us salvation

 that blessed Christmas morn. ***Refrain***

*(Go Tell It on the Mountain; Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872-1925, stanzas, alt.; Public Domain; Music: African American spiritual; Public Domain; Reprinted and Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727610. All rights reserved.)*

**Dismissal:**

A: Christ the Savior is born!

Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

***C: Thanks be to God.\****

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