ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN
CHURCH & SCHOOL

ORDER OF DIVINE SERVICE



Christ The King
Last Sunday of Church Year

November 22, 2026

As We Gather

A sudden stroke leaves a widow with a table folded in half. A Nazi commandant points a gun at a Master Sergeant. A wartime tapestry miraculously reunites a long-lost husband and wife. Each of these stories points to the raw reality of a world fractured by our ultimate enemy: death. But Easter was God's D-Day, and Christ has broken the back of the grave. Join us this Sunday for the Last Sunday of the Church Year as we dive into 1 Corinthians 15 and discover how our King is going to take the folded tablecloths of our grief, unfold them across an eternal banquet hall, and fill the room with a joy that never ends.

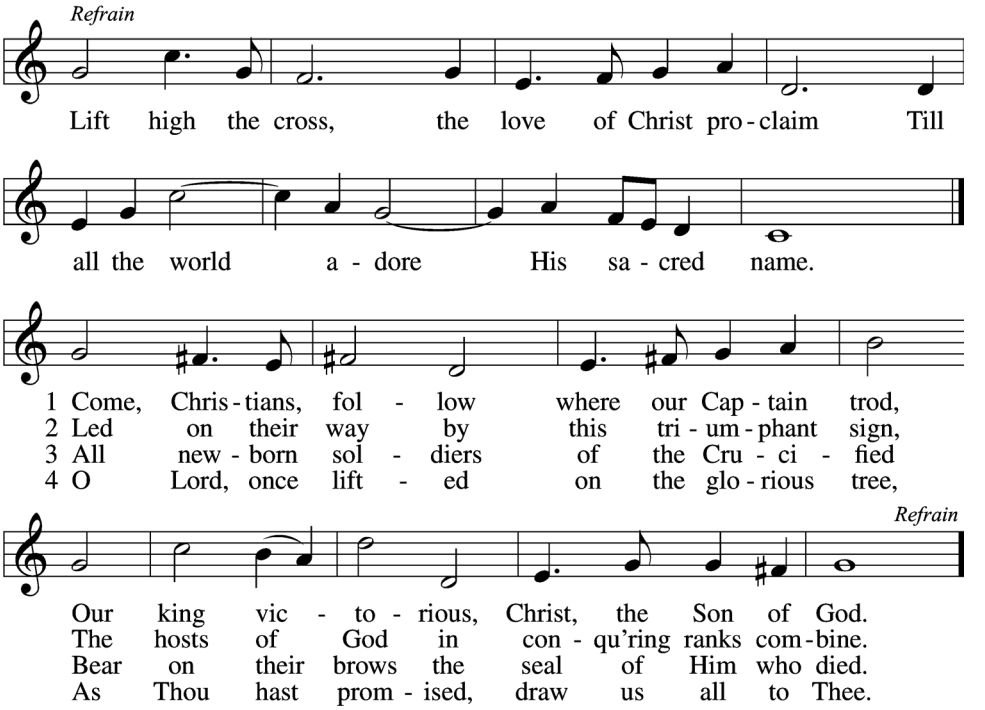
Prelude

Tolling of the Bell & Welcome

Please stand

Invocation Hymn

837 Lift High the Cross



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INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✢ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES

P I will go to the altar of God,
C **to God my exceeding joy.**
P Our help is in the name of the LORD,
C **who made heaven and earth.**
P Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, that He might save us.
C **This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation.**

EXHORTATION

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
C **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

CONFESSION OF SINS & ABSOLUTION

Please kneel or sit. Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P The Lord Himself will search for His sheep and will seek them out.
C **He will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered.**

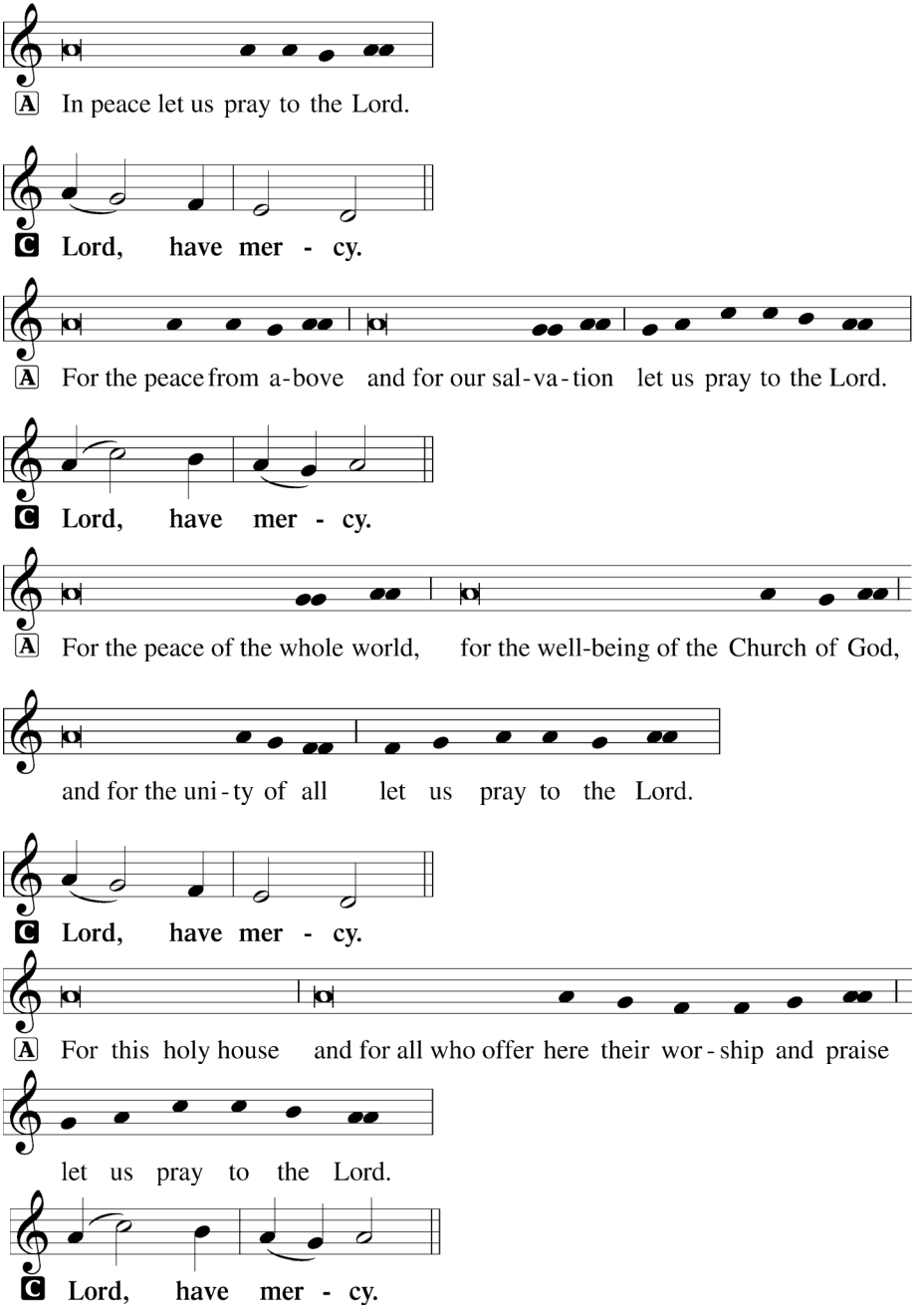
P Let us then confess our sins to God, who seeks us out.
C **Most merciful God, we cry out to You from the places that our sin has scattered us. We have sinned against You in ways that we know and in ways that only You know. There are strangers we have not welcomed, the hungry we have not fed, the naked we have not clothed, the sick and imprisoned we have not visited. Deliver us from all our transgressions. Forgive us, bind up our injuries, and strengthen our weaknesses, that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**
P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✢ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

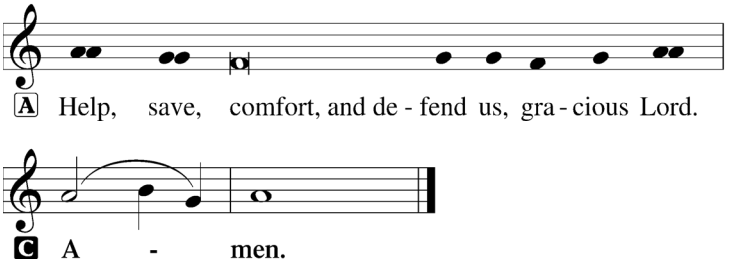
Please stand

SERVICE OF THE WORD

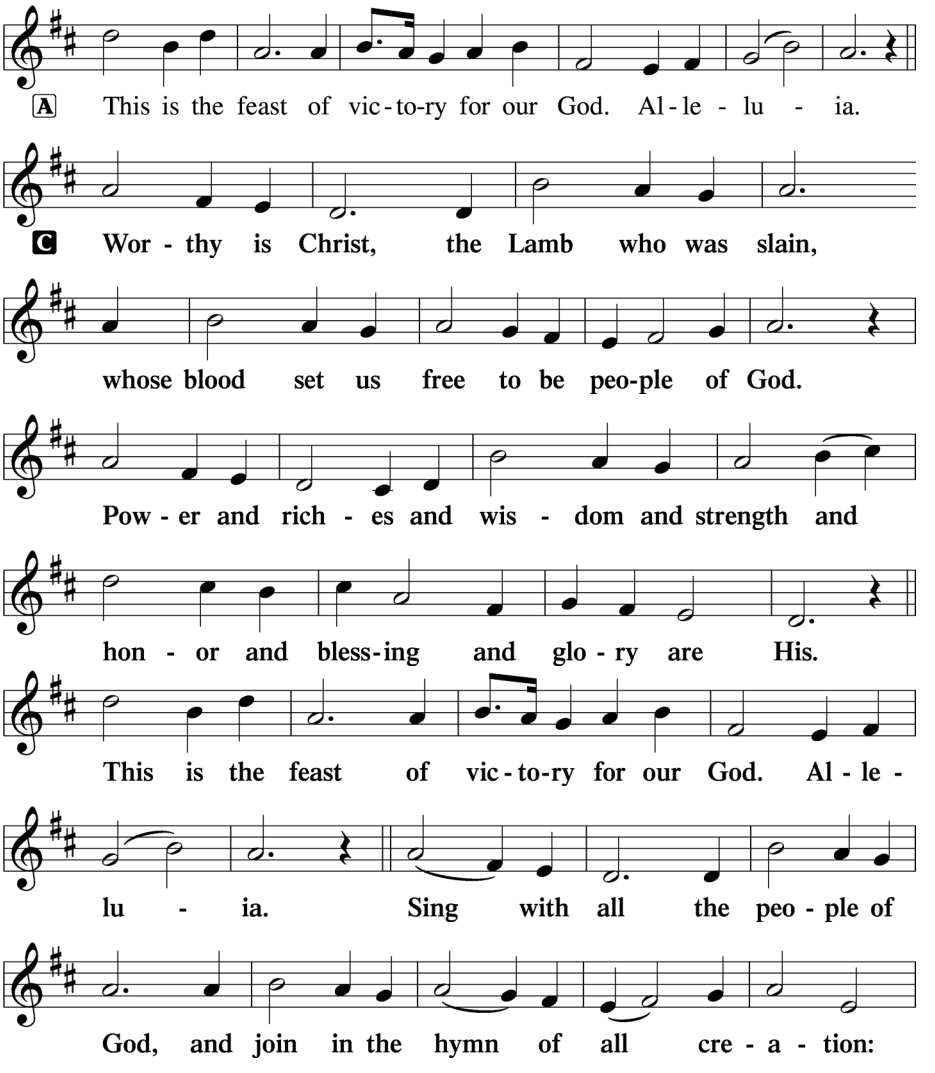
KYRIE

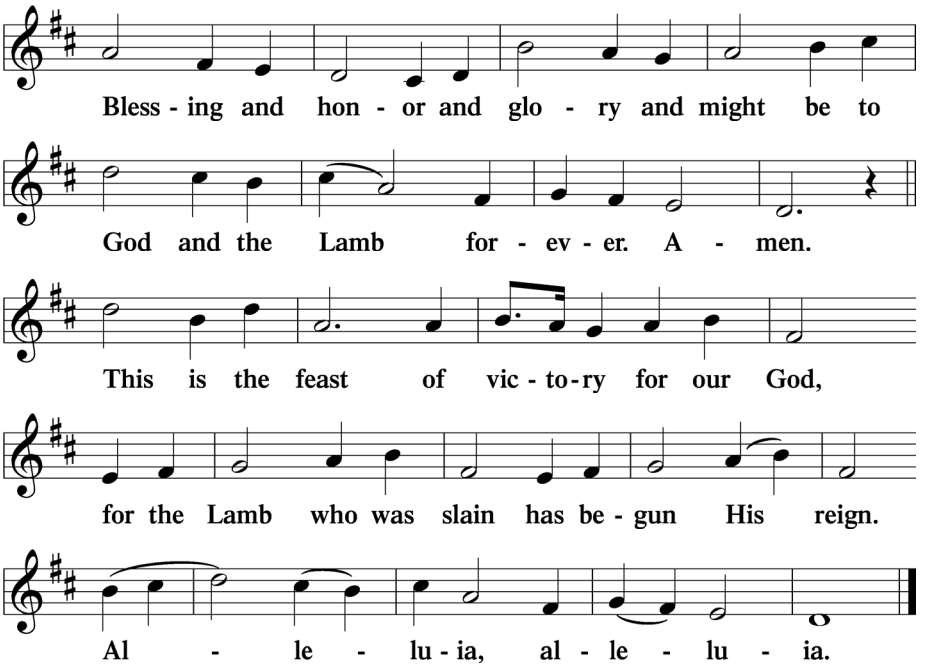
Mark 10:47





THE HYMN OF PRAISE: This Is the Feast





SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

Eternal God, merciful Father, You have appointed Your Son as judge of the living and the dead. Enable us to wait for the day of His return with our eyes fixed on the kingdom prepared for Your own from the foundation of the world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Please sit

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24

A The Old Testament Reading is from Ezekiel, chapter 34.

11 "For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and
will seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep
that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from
all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.

13And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries,
and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of
Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14I will feed them
with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land.
There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed
on the mountains of Israel. 15I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself
will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. 16I will seek the lost, and I will
bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak,
and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. . . .

20"Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge
between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21Because you push with side and
shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them
abroad, 22I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge
between sheep and sheep. 23And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant
David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24And I,
the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I
am the LORD; I have spoken."

A This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM *Psalm 95:1–7a*

A Oh come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
C **Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;**
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
A For the LORD is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
C **In his hand are the depths of the earth;**
the heights of the mountains are his also.
A The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.
C **Oh come, let us worship and bow down;**
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!
A For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

EPISTLE *1 Corinthians 15:20–28*

A The Epistle is from 1 Corinthians, chapter 15.

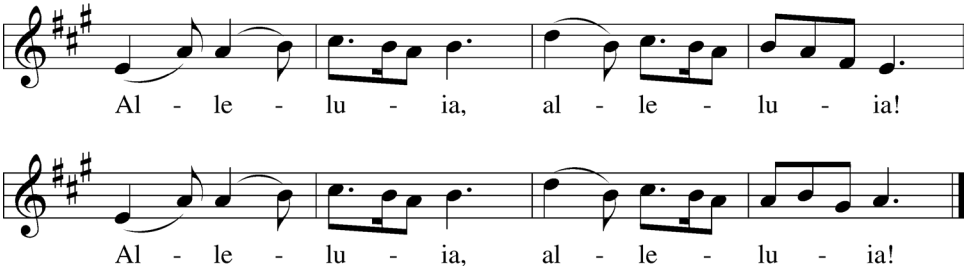
20But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have
fallen asleep. 21For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection
of the dead. 22For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. 23But
each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to
Christ. 24Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after
destroying every rule and every authority and power. 25For he must reign until he
has put all his enemies under his feet. 26The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

27For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all
things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in
subjection under him. 28When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself
will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God
may be all in all.

A This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand

ALLELUIA *John 6:68*



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HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 25:31–46*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.
C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

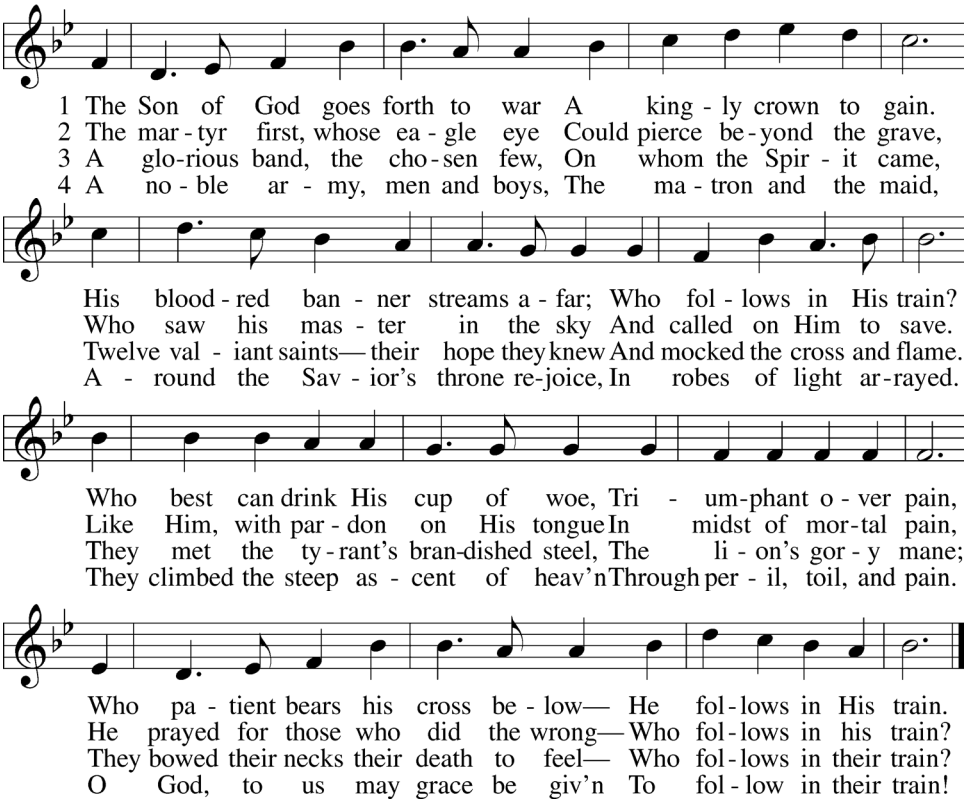
31[Jesus said:] "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with
him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32Before him will be gathered all the
nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the
sheep from the goats. 33And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the
left. 34Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by
my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
35For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I
was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick
and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' 37Then the righteous will
answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty
and give you drink? 38And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or
naked and clothe you? 39And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'
40And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the
least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

41"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the
eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42For I was hungry and you gave
me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43I was a stranger and you did
not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did
not visit me.' 44Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you
hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to
you?' 45Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it
to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46And these will go away into
eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.
C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Please sit

SERMON HYMN 661 The Son of God Goes Forth to War



SERMON **"The Unfolded Tablecloth: The King's Grand Reunion"**
Pastor Mark Stapleton

Please stand

APOSTLES' CREED

C **I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life ✢ everlasting. Amen.**

Please kneel

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P Dear heavenly Father, You promise to seek the lost. We pray for all those who have wandered away from Your Church. We pray that You would strengthen us to reach out to them, to receive them with open arms and open hearts when they return home. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

C **Give ear to our cry.**

P Lord, You promise to strengthen the weak. Send Your strength and courage to all those who need it, to the aging, the lonely, the tired, and the vulnerable. Protect and defend them from the wolves of this world. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

C **Give ear to our cry.**

P Lord, You promise to feed Your sheep with good pasture. Raise up faithful servants and shepherds to share the nourishment of Your Word and Sacraments with all Your sheep. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

C **Give ear to our cry.**

P Lord, You promise to bind up the injured. Bring Your healing to all those who suffer now through injury, illness, and oppression, [*especially* . . .]. Heal them according to Your good and gracious will. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

C **Give ear to our cry.**

P Lord, by Your Word You have told us that the last enemy to be destroyed is death. As we await the return of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead, we still grieve and mourn when the enemy of death strikes our friends and family. Be near all those who are mourning the death of loved ones. Comfort them with the hope of the resurrection to eternal life. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

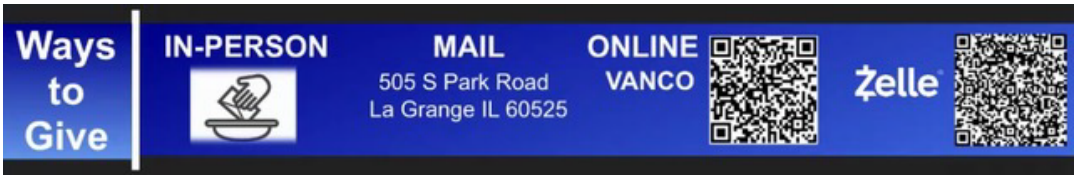
C **Give ear to our cry.**

P Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

Please sit

OFFERING



ANTHEM | 8:00am

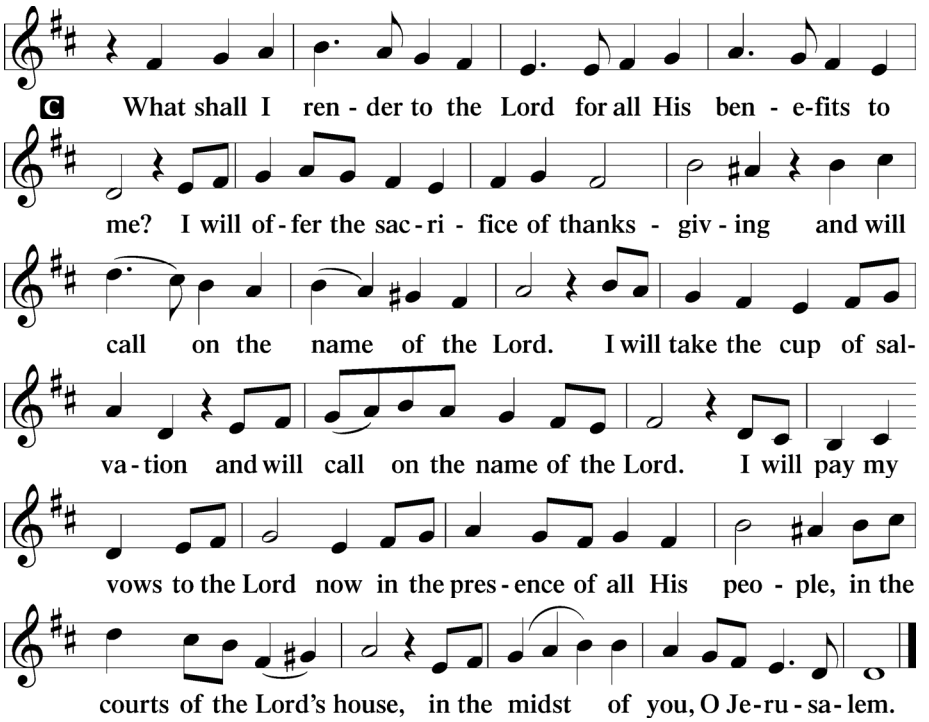
LO, A VOICE TO HEAVEN SOUNDING

Dimitri Bortniansky (1751-1825)

Lo, a voice to heaven sounding, praising everlastingly. As the voice of many waters, God, the Father, praising ever joyfully. We too sing, we sing exultingly; we, too, sing now who love Thee; we sing to Thee this holy day. Amen.

Please stand

OFFERTORY *Psalm 116:12–13, 17–19*



LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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.

BENEDICTION

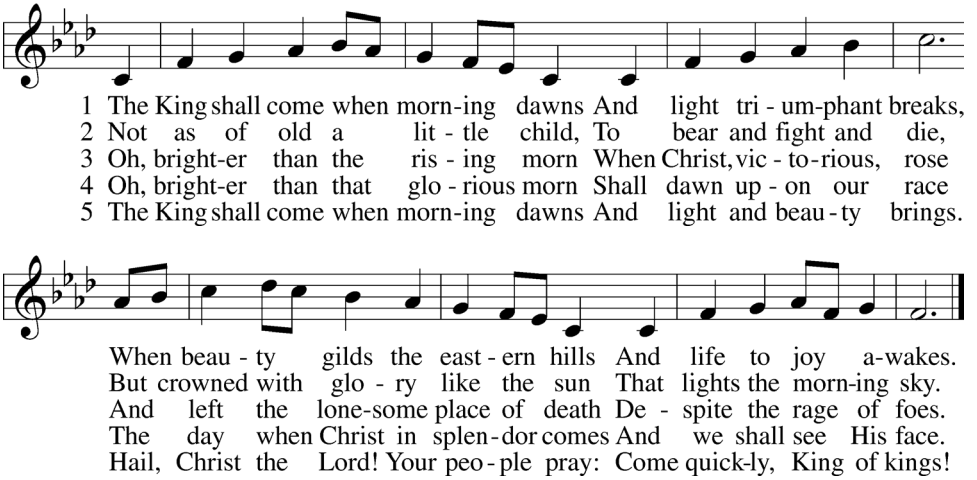
Numbers 6:24–26

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✢ give you peace.

C **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

348 The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns



ANNOUNCEMENTS

POSTLUDE

✠

SERVING IN WORSHIP
Rev. Mark Stapleton, Homilist & Liturgist
Dr. Marc Brunelle, Director of Music/Organist
The Cantata Choir of St. John's | 8:00am
Lynne Braun, Lector | 8:00am
Kirk Farney, Lector | 10:45am

ALTAR FLOWERS
Today's flowers are given by Ron and Ruth Gallman, Glory to God in honor of our father Karl Stodden.

THE MUSIC FUND OF ST. JOHN'S

The Music Ministry at St. John's is sustained entirely through the generosity of our congregation and the faithful contributions made to the Music Fund. Through your support, we are able to offer uplifting and inspirational sacred vocal and instrumental music that enriches our worship, strengthens our faith, and glorifies God.

The three pillars of Christian stewardship—**time, talent, and treasure**—are essential to the vitality and continued growth of our Music Ministry. In that spirit, the Board of Worship prayerfully invites you to consider making a contribution to the Music Fund. Your generosity enables us to continue offering music of excellence and beauty in praise of God and in service to His Church.

White Music Fund contribution envelopes are available in the pews, and gifts may also be made conveniently through our online giving options.

We are deeply grateful for your continued generosity and for the important role you play in sustaining the Music Ministry of St. John's.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
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Mark your calendar for **"A Visit from St. Nikolaus!"** This fun, family friendly program by Elmhurst Harmonie, a German-language chorus in the western suburbs, which will include carols in German and English, cookies and hot chocolate – and St. Nikolaus and his mischievous sidekick Knecht Ruprecht will tell the real story of Santa Claus. It will be held here at **2:00pm** on **Saturday, Dec. 5**. Not available on December 5? Go to www.elmhurstharmonie.com for another performance on Dec. 6.





ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH
MUSIC MINISTRY

SAVE THE DATE

A Festival of NINE LESSONS and CAROLS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20
AT 4:00 PM

THE CANTATA CHOIR

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL
505 S. Park Road, LaGrange, Illinois, 60525