



# December 2023

Saint James Lutheran Church – Johnston, Iowa  
*We're glad you're here and hope you will come again!*

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## GATHERING

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

### ENTRANCE HYMN

*Please stand as you are able. Instrumentalist will play through the hymn once and congregation will then join in singing.*

### Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.  
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.  
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.  
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

### Confession and Forgiveness

*All may make the sign of the cross.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation. **Amen.**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance.  
Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Everlasting God, **you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.**

Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all. **Amen.**

### **Gathering Song**

December 2/3 #259 – Fling Wide the Door

December 9/10 #254 – Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

December 16 #248 – People, Look East

December 23 #251 – My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness

**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.**

**Kyrie** *The leader sings the verses. The assembly responds:*



Lord, have mer - cy.



Christ, have mer - cy.



Lord, have mer - cy.

## Prayer of the Day

Please be seated.

## Children's Sermon

### WORD

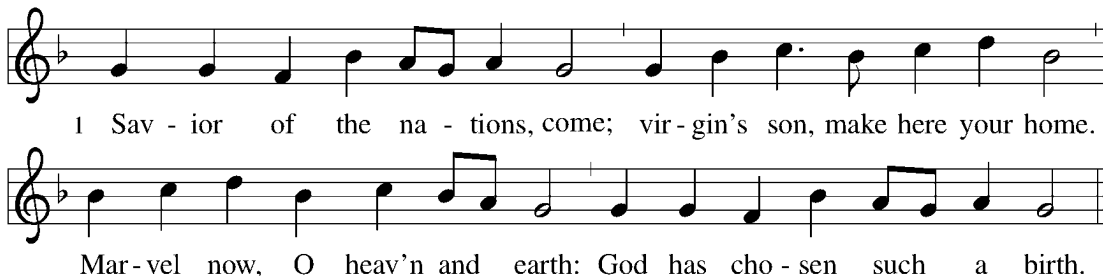
*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

## Lesson(s)

### Gospel Acclamation

*Please remain seated.*

### Savior of the Nations, Come



The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major, 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the acclamation, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

I Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; vir - gin's son, make here your home.  
Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth: God has cho - sen such a birth.

## Gospel

Before reading: The Holy Gospel according to Saint... **Glory to You, O Lord.**

After reading: The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to You, O Christ.**

## Sermon

### Hymn of the Day

December 2/3 #244 – Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

December 9/10 #266 – All Earth is Hopeful

December 16 #815 – I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

December 23 #257 – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

## **PROFESSION OF FAITH**

Let us confess our faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

**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 was 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.**

## **Prayers of Intercession**

### **MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

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

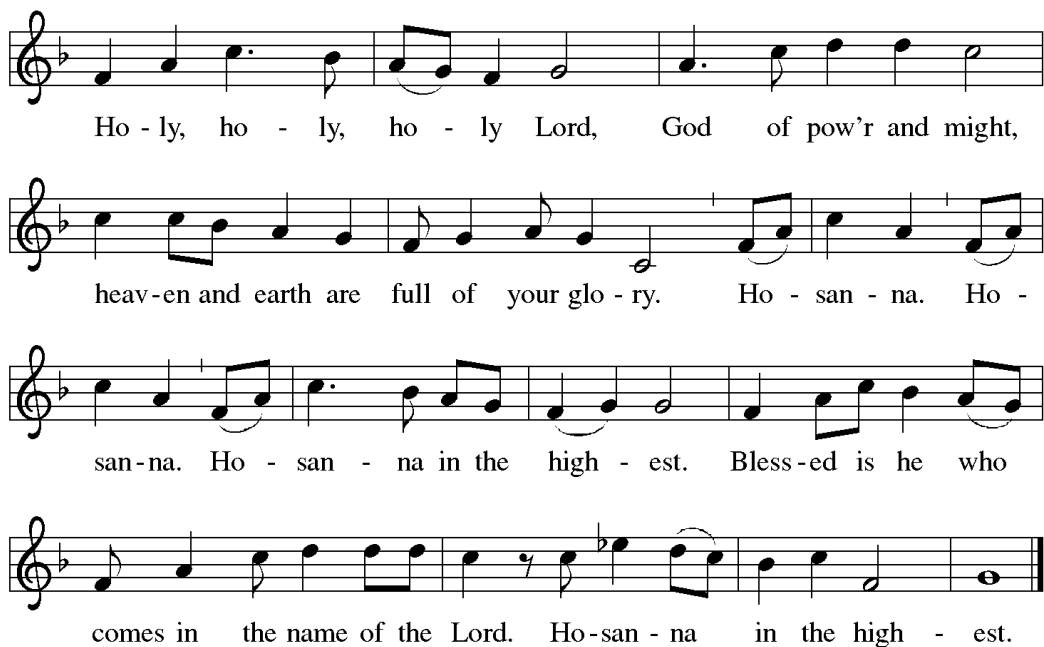
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

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. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

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:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
 san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who  
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:  
 Blessed are you for the birth of creation.  
 Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.  
 Blessed are you for your promise to your people.  
 Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
 Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.  
 Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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 for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

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

**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,**

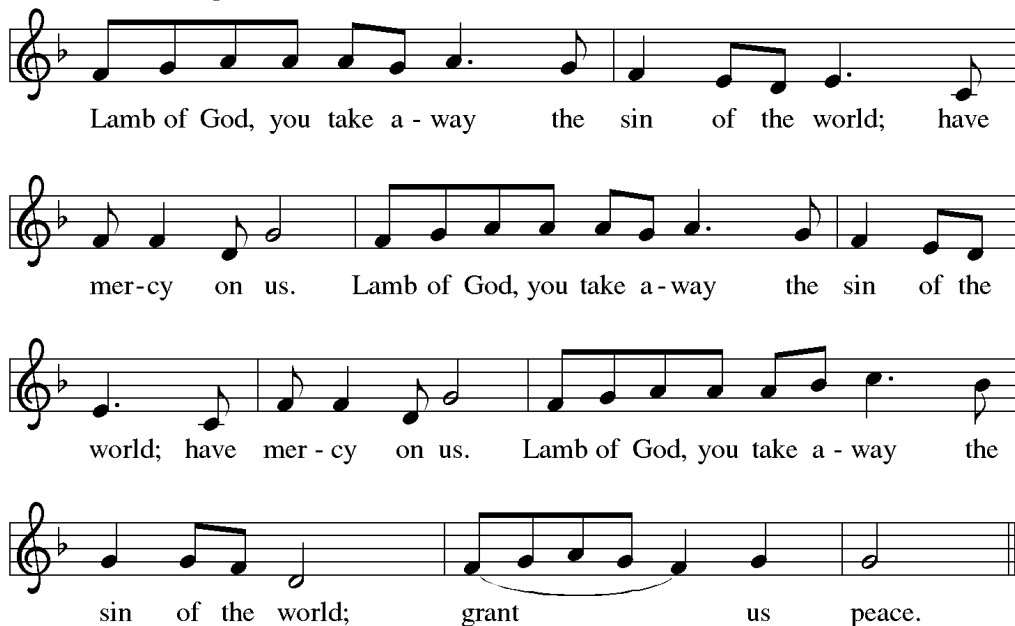
**and the glory are yours,**

**now and forever. Amen.**

Come to the Lord's Table There is a place for you and enough for all.

*All are welcome at the Lord's table. We receive communion by intinction (i.e. dipping the wafer into the cup). Please use a little Purell on your hands before coming forward. For those who would prefer not to dip their wafer, you may be assured that the crucified and risen Christ is fully present for you in, with and under one element.*

## Communion Hymn



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have  
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the  
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
sin of the world; grant us peace.

## Choir Song

### Communion Hymn #

December 2/3 #715 – Christ, Be Our Light

December 9/10 #242 – Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

December 16 #266 – All Earth is Hopeful

December 23 #245 – Creator of the Stars of Night

## SENDING

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

## Announcements

*Please stand as you are able.*

## Post Communion Prayer

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit † remain upon you now and forever. **Amen.**

## **SENDING SONG**

December 2/3 #439 – Soon and Very Soon  
December 9/10 #631 – Love, Divine, All Loves Excelling  
December 16 #244 – Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers  
December 23 #267 – Joy to the World

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Keep awake. **Thanks be to God.**

*Please share a sign of God's peace with those around you.*

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## **Announcements**

**Our Giving Tree will be up November 25–December 10! Grab an ornament(s) from the tree with items to purchase that will be donated to: Trinity Center at Luther Park, ChildServe, Johnston Partnership. Please bring new, unwrapped items to church and place under tree by Sunday, December 10.** Thank you for your generosity in making Christmas joyful for others! Contact Lynette Allison [l.allison@mchsi.com](mailto:l.allison@mchsi.com) or Rebecca Allison [education@stjamesjohnston.org](mailto:education@stjamesjohnston.org) with questions!

**Join us for the Children's Christmas Program during worship on December 17 as we explore the symbols of Christmas.** This worship will be mostly led by students! Afterward will be the epic gingerbread village and hot cocoa bar during fellowship. You won't want to miss this!

**Food Pantry weekend is December 16/17.** We encourage you to give a financial donation or bring an item for the Food Pantry. Thank you!

**Christmas Eve Services will be at 9:30am and 5:00pm.**

**Year-end gifts are important** and need to be received by Wednesday, Decedmber 27. Thank you for your faithful support of the Mission & Ministry of Saint James! It is greatly appreciated.