

*Being present*

*with*

*LOVE*

*4th Sunday of Advent*

*December 24, 2023*



## Ascension Lutheran Church

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Ogden, UT 84404

801.782.2810

### Welcome to Worship...

Welcome to all God's guests, including those who call themselves "members" of this church named Ascension Lutheran Church more than 50 years ago.

A special welcome to guests who are here for the first time or who call yourselves "visitors" among the people of this community. It is at God's invitation, through worship, the Holy Spirit calls each of us to come to a place of **community, communion** and **commitment**. Each of us brings a different lens to worship, and yet, in a worshiping community, these differences become celebrations of diversity.

**Children are always welcome in worship services;  
however please know a nursery space is available for  
parents who need to tend to their little ones.**

#### Introduction

*Advent can be filled with worry about finding the perfect Christmas gifts. Deep down we want people in our lives to know they are special and that we love them. But sometimes we overlook the greatest gift of all... our very presence. Our spiritual ancestors were also worried — often about survival in the midst of political occupation. And the response of the scriptures is "the Holy Living One is with you." Like a shepherd who never leaves the flock, we are held close. This season, we are invited to be the gift of presence for our loved ones, for our communities, for those who need it most.*

# *Being Present with Love*

## *Welcome to Worship*

*P* ...We can simply be a gift of presence; we can give our hearts.

*Cantors*     *What can I give Him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a Wise One, I would do my part;  
Yet what can I give Him: I will give my heart.*

## *Lighting of the Advent Wreath*

*WA* We unwrap a present on this third Sunday of Advent with great anticipation for the gift that God will reveal.

***All* We open our hearts as we open the gift!**

*WA* The promise of Love is the Divine Gift we receive.

***All* And what will we do with it?**

*WA* The gift of love is the essence of the birth of Christ. The Holy One wanted to be so present to us that God's Spirit became flesh in order to inhabit the gifts of touching, healing, comforting, and challenging. Love is the clarion call to us as Jesus' disciples. The more love we put into the world, the better the world will be.

***All* We light this Candle of Love as a sign that we will be Present with Love in the world.**

All

What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shep-herd,  
 I would bring a lamb. If I were a Wise One, I would do my part; yet  
 what can I give Him? I will give my heart.

*P* Let us pray:  
 Holy Living Light of God, you are our Loving Presence.

**All** Let this love grow in our lives each day,  
 so we can be a Present of Love to others.  
 Unwrap and open our hearts.  
 May it be so. Amen.

*Gospel Acclamation*

*Please stand in body or spirit.*

Em - man - u - el, \_\_\_\_\_ Em - man - u - el, \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ His name is called \_\_\_\_\_ Em - man - u - el: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ God with us, \_\_\_\_\_ re - vealed in us! \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ His name is called \_\_\_\_\_ Em - man - u - el. \_\_\_\_\_

## Gospel Reading

*P* The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.

**All** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*And so it is that the Child of Love comes from the most humble of families, though we are sure to be informed by the gospel writer that Joseph was from the lineage of David. While David had built a house for God in his time, Mary's womb became a house of the holy in hers. She accepts the role she is given... to be Present with Love growing inside of her.*

Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, "Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!" Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel's greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You'll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus — 'Deliverance.' His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have never been with a man?" The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you — hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God. Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with God." Mary said, "I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say." With that, the angel left her.

*Luke 1: 26-38*

*P* The Gospel of our Lord.

**All** **Praise to you, O Christ.**

[You may be Seated](#)

Hymn of the Day

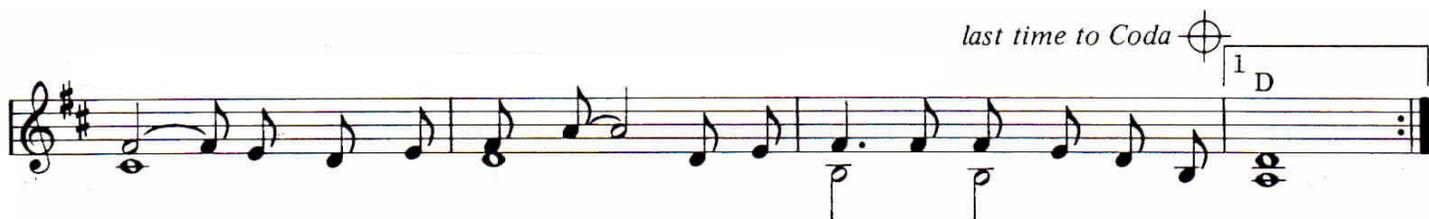
Please stand in body or spirit.

Love Came Down at Christmas

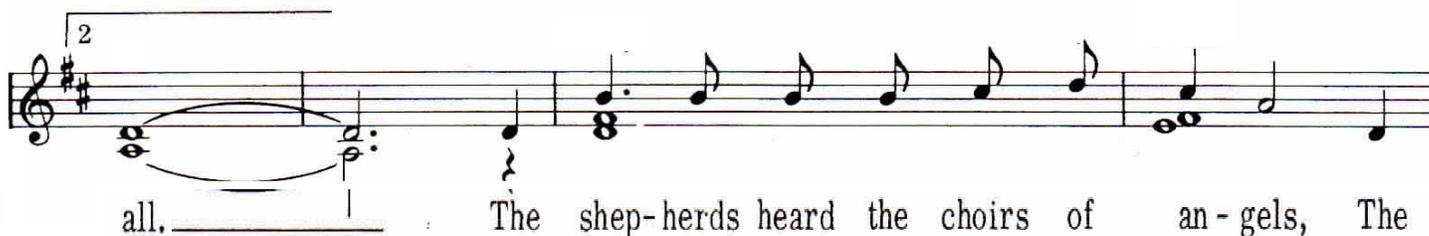
Words and Music by Roger Copeland



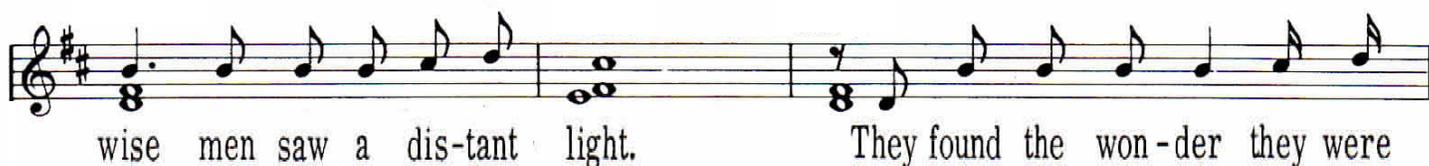
1. 3. Love came down at Christ-mas, Love, all love di - vine;  
2. Love was in a man-ger, In a cat-tle stall,



Love came down at Christ-mas, And I know, I know that love is mine.  
And while an-gels hov-ered, Love was born to be the King of



all. The shep-herds heard the choirs of an-gels, The



wise men saw a dis-tant light. They found the won-der they were



search-ing for, And wor-shipped Him that ho-ly night. (to Vs. 3)



mine. And I know, I know that love is mine.

# Prayers of Intercession

You may be Seated

**L** With love and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God’s day of restoration.

Right here and right now we o-pen our sen-  
 ses to see and per-ceive the gifts we've been giv-  
 en, to know and be-lieve that what we must do is  
 o-pen our hearts to let all gifts flow through.

(each prayer petition ends with)

**L:** Merciful God,      **All: Receive our prayer.**

# Sharing the Love of Christ

Please stand in body or spirit.

In our continued physical distancing out of love for the health of one another, we will share the love of our risen Lord by “speaking” that love through sign language.

**P** Christ become Love with you.

**All** And also with you.

## Offering

*You may be Seated*

*While we still will not physically pass the offering plates we will continue to have the plates available at the entrance to receive your offerings and will lift them up in thanksgiving before the throne of grace.*



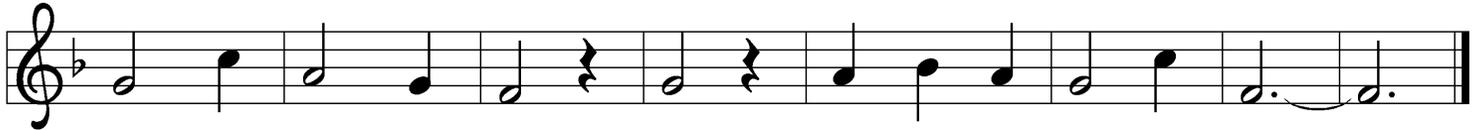
1 Love has come— a light in the dark - ness! Love shines forth in the



Beth - le - hem skies. See, all heav - en has come to pro - claim it;



hear how their song of joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to



you, a Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.

## Offertory Prayer

*P* God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people.

**All** Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our love.

## Confession and Assurance

*Please stand in body or spirit.*

*P* God of love,

**All** We cut ourselves off from being present with you.

We distance ourselves from the love that is ours as your heirs  
in the family of God.

It seems too wonderful a gift!

**All** Yet, the Shepherd comes to find us, leading us gently back into safety,  
back into care, back into relationship.

**P** People of God, know this... there are gifts with your name on them -  
gifts called Grace,  
called Forgiveness,  
called "Assurance."

They are yours whenever you accept and open them.

They are already and always there for you.

You do not have to be good enough to get them.

They are yours already because that is the nature of our loving God,  
God-with-us, Emmanuel.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

**All** Glory to God, Amen

## *The Great Thanksgiving and Words of Institution*

*To the tune of What Child is This?*

**P**                    ♪ ♪ *The Lord be with you.* ♪ ♪

**All**                    *And with you too.*  
*We lift our hearts to God.*

**P**                    *Let us give thanks.*

**All**                    *Its right to do*  
*We open our hearts to let gifts flow through.*

**P** 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.

**P** 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.

**All**                    *♪ ♪ This, this is Christ the One ♪ ♪*  
*who mirrors love for all of us.*  
*Haste, haste to bring him laud,*  
*the Word of time eternal.*

### *The Lord's Prayer*

**P** Let us approach the throne of grace as we pray as Jesus taught us:

**All**                    **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.**

### *The Invitation*

**P** In this meal, righteousness and love meet together.  
Come, take your place at the table.

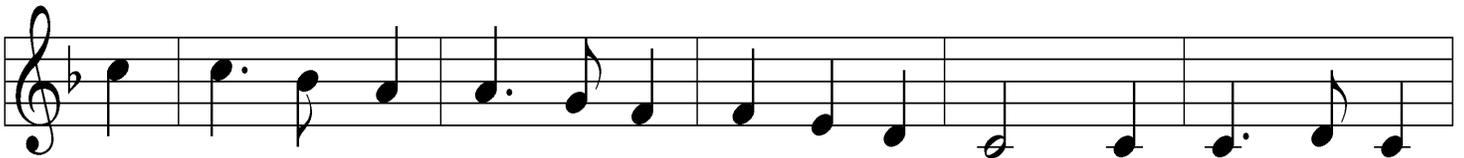


Note: the communion cups on the periphery of the tray contain red wine while the cups in the center contain white grape juice.

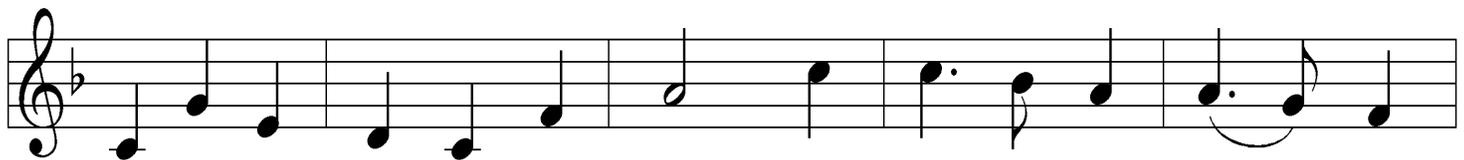
*Gluten Free wafers available –ask the communion attendant*

## Communion Songs

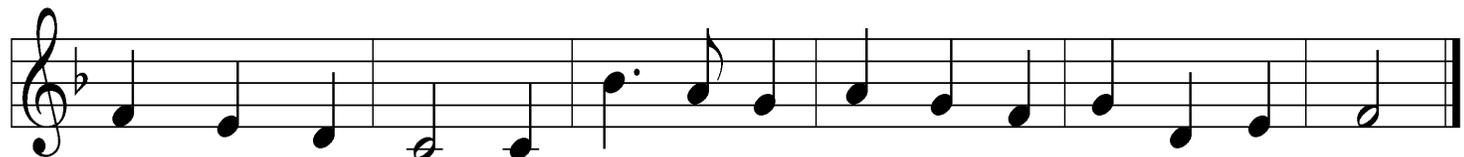
## Away in a Manger



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord  
2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the poor ba - by wakes, but lit - tle Lord  
3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -



Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the sky looked  
Je - sus no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus; look  
ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in

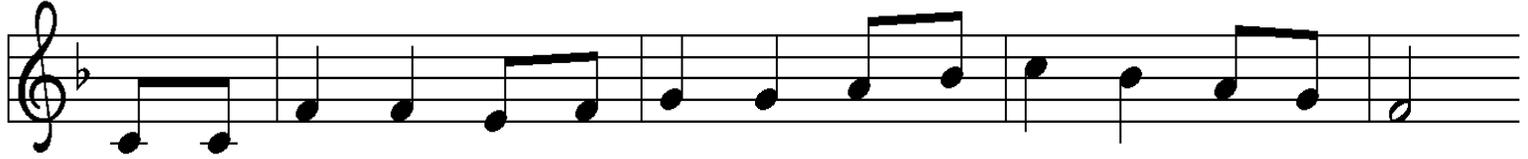


down where he lay; the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.  
down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.  
your ten - der care and fit us for heav - en, to live with you there.

# Infant Holy, Infant Lowly



1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;  
2 Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new



ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the child is Lord of all.  
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel true.



Swift - ly wing - ing, an - gels sing - ing, bells are ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing:  
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the mor - row:



Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!  
Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

## *Post Communion Blessing and Prayer*

*Please stand in body or spirit.*

*P* The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you  
and keep you in his grace.

**All Amen**

*P* Eternal God,  
We give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have made the  
Gift of your Presence known to us.

**All** Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to  
give ourselves as a gift of love to others.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

*You may be Seated*

## *Stewardship of Life and Ministry Announcements*

### *Benediction & Sending*

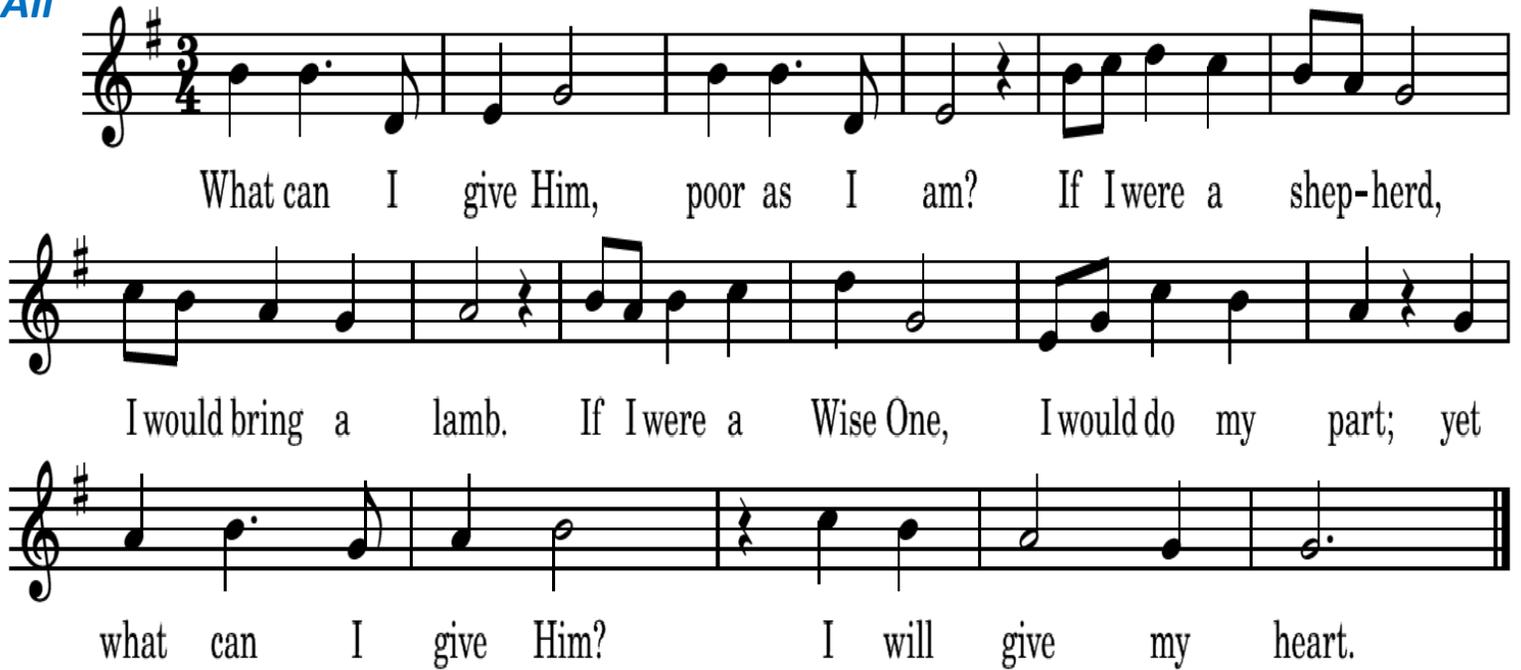
*Please stand in body or spirit.*

*P* So now go and be truly present  
so you may be a gift of presence for others.  
That's all that is expected —  
that the gift that is YOU  
is the best gift you can give.

In the name of the Holy Presence,  
the Divine Gift,  
and the ✝ Spirit of Love  
that is just waiting for us to unwrap abundant life.

**All** Amen

All



What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shep-herd,  
I would bring a lamb. If I were a Wise One, I would do my part; yet  
what can I give Him? I will give my heart.

### *Dismissal*

*P* Go in love. Keep Awake!

**All** Thanks be to God.

“Every day we seek to discern how to live faithfully  
as we surf the Internet choosing which  
sites get our attention,  
as we choose news sources  
that will shape our worldview,  
as we buy groceries and steward our resources.  
We are always making choices about how we love the  
world that God so loves,  
how our attention, our presence,  
participates in the mission of God — abundant life for all.”

“[adapted from Amy Oden, *Right Here, Right Now*]

Readings for next Sunday,  
December 31<sup>st</sup>  
Sunday of Christmas

**First Reading:**

2 Samuel 7:1-11

**Psalm:**

**Second Reading:**

Gospel:

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