

Being present

with

ASSURANCE

Sunday of Christmas

December 31, 2023



Ascension Lutheran Church

1105 N. Washington Blvd.

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

The overwhelming message of the Christmas story is the assurance that we, too, are children of the Holy One. In this, our very presence is a gift if we will only allow the Spirit to move in and through us. Every day of our ordinary lives, we can show up — be present — and proclaim the assurance of hope, peace, joy, and love to those who need it most.

Being Present with Assurance

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 come giving thanks that the gifts we've been given are the gifts we can give.

***All* We open our hearts, readying them for the gift of a new year!**

WA The promises of Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, and Light are the Divine Gifts we receive.

***All* We will use them to reassure those who need to know that they are the recipients of these gifts as well.**

WA The gift of hope is an essential survival tool because it reminds us that the hard times do not have the last word.

The gift of Christ's peace reminds us that we can have peace even in the midst of non-peaceful situations.

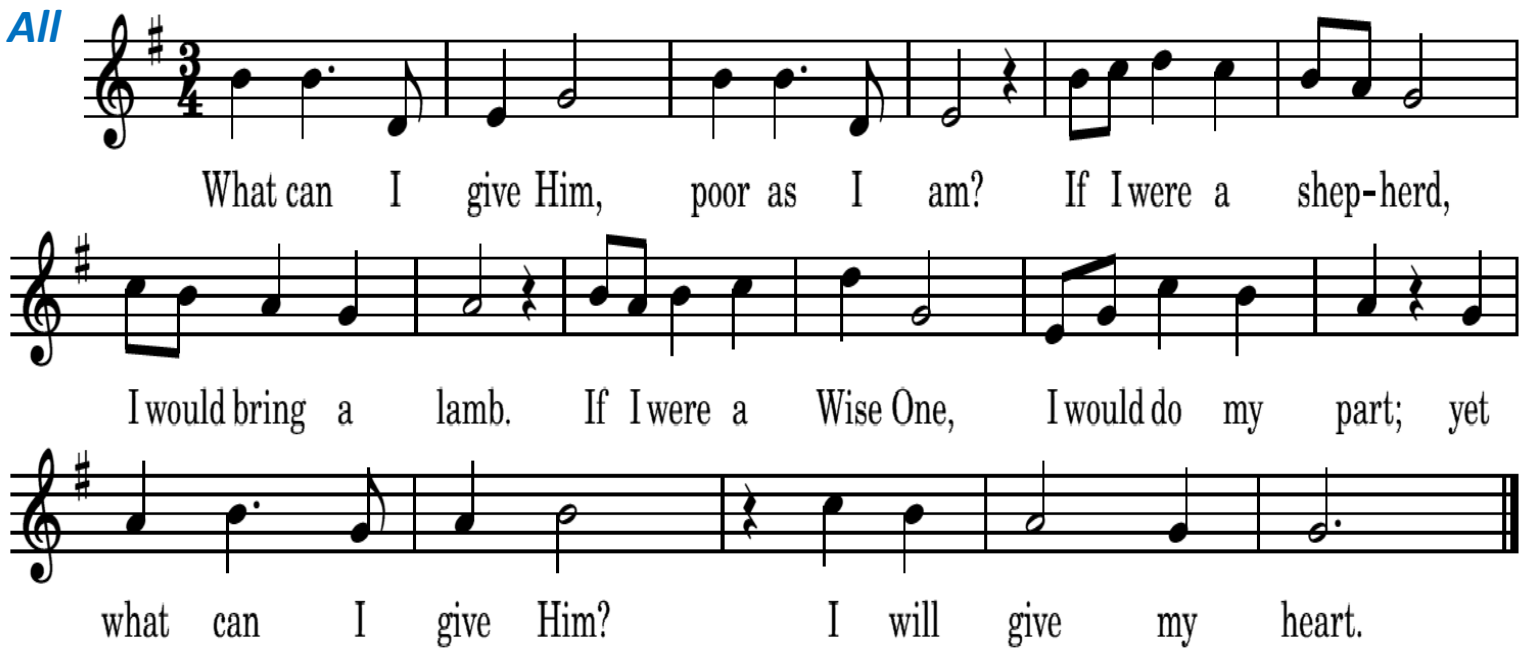
The gift of joy is not the equivalent of happiness, but rather the deep call to delight in the small things.

The gift of love is the clarion call to us as Jesus' disciples. The more love we put into the world, the better the world will be.

The gift of Christ's light is the reassurance that we are never alone.

***All* We light these candles as a sign that we will be Present with Assurance 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 Reassuring Presence.

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

A Responsive Reading from Isaiah, the 62nd chapter

By the end of the Book of Isaiah, the Hebrew people are out of exile and the author declares with assurance that the people have a “new name” for this new time.

Let us read responsively :

*For Zion’s sake, I will not be silent;
 for the sake of Jerusalem, I will not rest —
 not until her integrity shines like the dawn,
 her deliverance like a flaming torch.*

*The nations will see your vindication, and the rulers your splendor;
 you will have a new name that God’s mouth will bestow.*

*You will be a garland of beauty in YHWH’s hands,
 a solemn crown worn by your God.*

A Reading from Galatians, the 4th chapter

Paul's Letter to the Galatians sought to tear down the walls between those of differing traditions, gender roles, and socioeconomic status. Through Jesus, there is proof that they are all children of God, heirs to the gifts of God. The presence of a diversity of people is seen as a gift in itself — God's design. Hear this excerpt:

When the designated time had come, God sent forth the Christ — born of a woman, born under the Law — to deliver from the Law those who were subjected to it, so that we might receive our status as adopted heirs. The proof that you are children of God is the fact that God has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of the Child who calls out "Abba!" You are no longer slaves, but descendants! And if you are descendants, you are also heirs, by God's design.

Galatians 4: 4-7

L Word of God, Word of Life.

All Thanks be to God!

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 2nd chapter.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

Luke's gospel account of the life of Jesus also includes the story of the presentation of Jesus in the Temple, a part of every Jewish family's rituals regarding a first-born heir. There were people present who recognized him not just as an heir to the household of his earthly father's household that came from the lineage of David, but also his extra-ordinary lineage as the Messiah they were waiting to see.

When the day came for them to be purified, as laid down by the Law of Moses, the couple took Jesus up to Jerusalem and presented him to God. For it's written in the Law of our God, "Every firstborn heir is to be consecrated to God." They likewise came to offer in sacrifice "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons," in accord with the dictate of the Law of our God.

Now there lived in Jerusalem a man named Simeon. He was devout and just, anticipating the consolation of Israel, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. She had revealed to Simeon that he wouldn't see death until he had seen the Messiah of God. Prompted by her, Simeon came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child to perform the customary rituals of the Law, he took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, "Now, O God, you can dismiss your servant in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the peoples to see — a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel." As the child's mother and father stood there marveling at the things that were being said, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, the mother, "This child is destined to be the downfall and the rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that is rejected, so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare. And a sword will pierce your heart as well."

There was a woman named Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher, who was also a prophet. She had lived a long life, seven years with her husband, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple, worshiping day and night, fasting and praying. Coming up at that moment, she gave thanks to God and talked about the child to all who

anticipated the deliverance of Jerusalem. When the couple had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the Law of God, they returned to Galilee and their own town of Nazareth. The child grew in size and strength. He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was with him.

Luke 2: 22-40

P The Gospel of our Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

You may be Seated

Message

Pr. Debra Jimenez

Hymn of the Day

Please stand in body or spirit.

SIMEON'S SONG

Lord, now send your ser - vants forth in
peace ac - cord - ing to your word.—
Here we have seen your sav - ing
work done in the sight of all hu -- man
kind. to those in dark - ness a
prom - ise bright, to be - liev - ers a liv - ing

hope. — Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther, —
 — and to the Son, —
 and to the Ho - ly Spir - it; — as it was in
 the be - gin - ing, — is now and ev - er
 shall be, — world with - out end.
 A - men.

Apostles' Creed

P Let us join together with the saints across the ages confessing our faith with 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. Amen.

Prayers of the People

You may be Seated

L 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.

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: Hear us, O God.

All: **Your mercy is great.**

Sharing the Peace 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 Peace of our risen Lord by “speaking” that Peace through sign language.

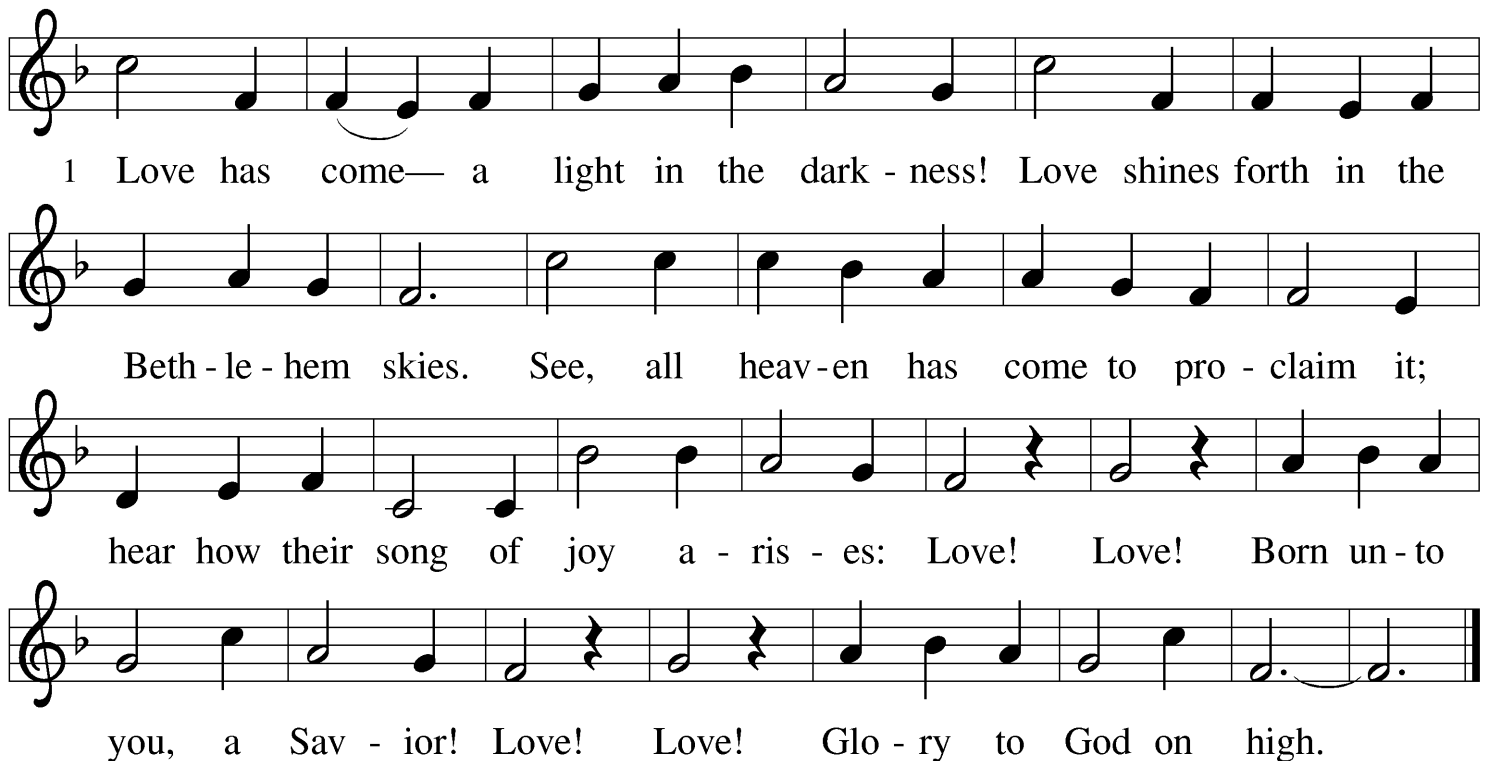
P Christ become Peace with you.

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 Assurance.

Confession and Assurance

Please stand in body or spirit.

P God of Assurance,

All We cut ourselves off from being present with you.

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

It seems too wonderful a gift!

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

You may be Seated

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.

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 Assurance for all of us.
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
the Word of time eternal.*

The Lord's Prayer

Please stand in body or spirit.

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 Glory to God in the highest!
Come to the table of peace.

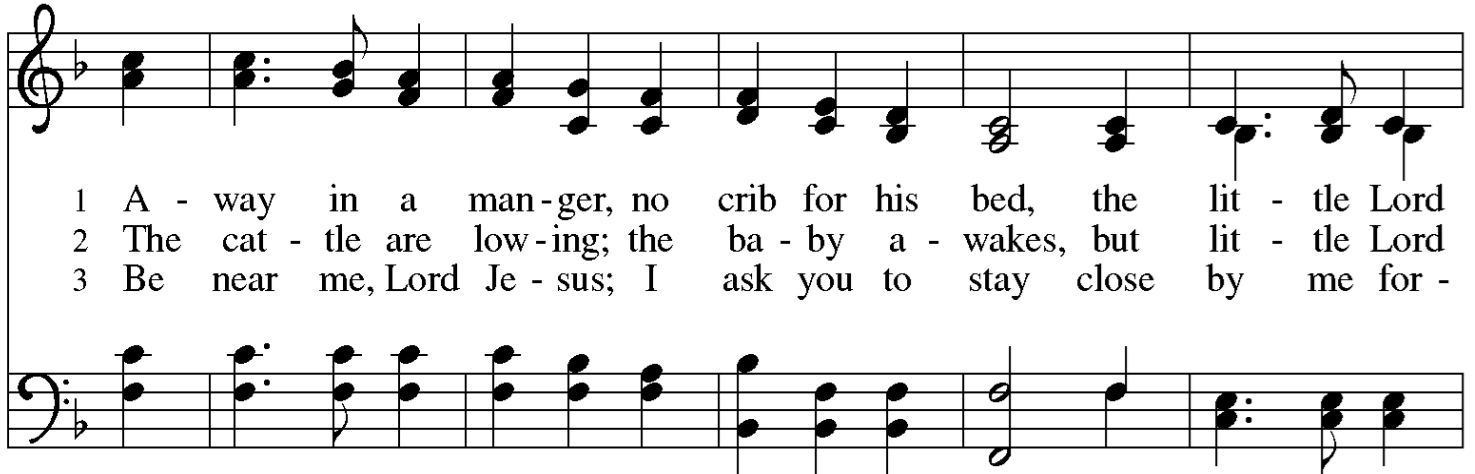
Note: the communion cups on the periphery of the tray contain red wine while the cups in the center contain white grape juice.

Gluten Free wafers available –ask the communion attendant

Communion Songs

[You may be Seated](#)

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 ba - by a - 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 bright 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 night.
your ten - der care and fit us for heav-en, to live with you there.

Text: North American, 19th cent.

Music: AWAY IN A MANGER, James R. Murray, 1841–1905

Silent Night, Holy Night!

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,

all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,

Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your

peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

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 God our redeemer,
you have fed us at this table
with gifts of grace, truth, and life.

**All 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.**

You may be Seated

Stewardship of Life and Ministry Announcements

Benediction & Sending

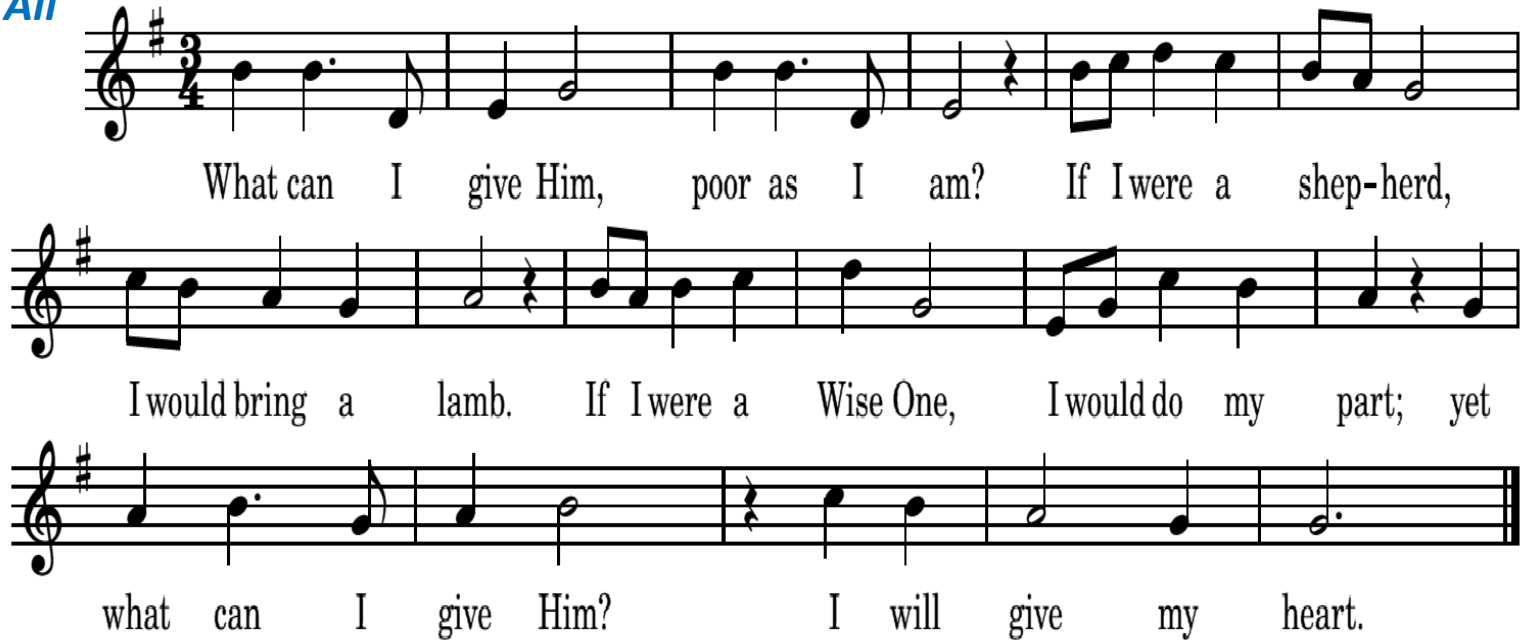
Please stand in body or spirit.

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 Assurance
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 Christ the Savior is born!
 Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

All Thanks be to God.

Readings for next Sunday,
 January 7th
Baptism of Our Lord

First Reading:	Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm:	Psalm 29
Second Reading:	Acts 19:1-7
Gospel:	Mark 1:4-11



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