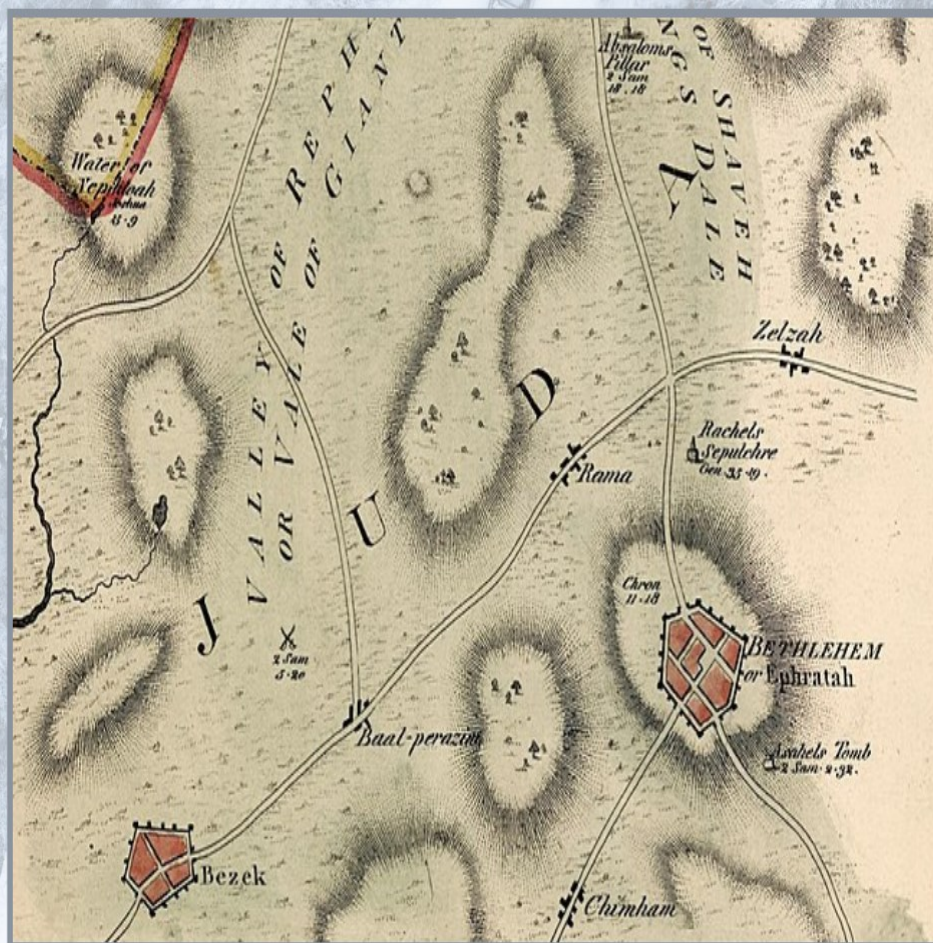


On the Way to Bethlehem



Love love LOVE love Love

December 22, 2024
4th Sunday of Advent



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 the cry room at the back of the sanctuary is available for
parents who need to tend to their little ones.

Introduction

We are so often focused on the destination in our travels. "Where are you going?" is the most common question upon hearing that someone is heading out of town. While the destination is perhaps the impetus for deciding to "go," it is often the journey itself that offers the most memorable moments—frustrating or delightful. This Advent season, we will pay attention not just to the destination of Christmas, but also to the places where events occurred that led to a starry night on which a child was born who would change the world. And we will ponder our own milestones—the progress and the potholes "on the way."

Bethlehem: A Place of Humility

G It is time we got to Bethlehem. *[counts on fingers]* First, a decree set by Rome; second, a declaration of birth for an elderly couple in Jerusalem; third, a girl surprised by news of pregnancy in Nazareth! And NOW it all culminates in our travels to Bethlehem. Bethlehem is the ancestral home of mighty King David as well as his humble and faithful descendant: Joseph, the carpenter.

P Bethlehem was called “little” by the prophet Micah who recognized that something of great worth would come from a humble place. As a champion of the “least of these,” Jesus’ ministry would shine light on the worth of humble people and places. Let us ask, how will we show this kind of humble love to others?

***♪ ♪ O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! ♪ ♪
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.***

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "O Little Town of Bethlehem" in 4/4 time. The score is written on three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The lyrics "We're on our way." are written below the first two measures. The second staff continues the melody with a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F5, and a quarter note G5. The lyrics "We're on our way." are written below the first two measures. The third staff begins with a quarter note A5, a quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note B5. The lyrics "Dream of the day when love holds sway." are written below the first two measures. The fourth staff continues the melody with a quarter note A5, a quarter note G5, a quarter note F5, and a quarter note E5. The lyrics "With all the earth, in" are written below the first two measures. The fifth staff begins with a quarter note D5, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The lyrics "all our hearts." are written below the first two measures. The sixth staff continues the melody with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The lyrics "We're on our way." are written below the first two measures. The seventh staff begins with a quarter note C4, a quarter note B3, a quarter note A3, and a quarter note G3. The lyrics "This is the day." are written below the first two measures.

G The journey continues, and this candle will help light our way.

All We are on our way to more love.

G So many are in need of grace, in need of loving acceptance.

All We are a people who can bring Good News.

G Stories of generosity are markers and signs that
goodness is the nature of God.

All God's light goes before us, we are not alone.

The musical score is written on three staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "We're on our way. We're on our way. Dream of the day when love holds sway. With all the earth, in all our hearts. We're on our way. This is the day." The score includes various musical notations such as rests, eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, with some notes beamed together and others held over from the previous staff.

Confession and Forgiveness

Please stand in body or spirit.

P Holy and Living God, we pray for hearts and minds
to open wide to merciful acts in your name.

**All Too often, we clench our fists in fear that what we have
will not be enough for us.**

Give us the humility to make more room.

Call us to a "generosity of grace."

Call us to be generous—not to a fault—but to a future

where all have a place and a home where they are deeply loved.

We pray this in the name of your Son,

Jesus, the Christ, your Love Incarnate. Amen.

P Let this be a marker of assurance that we are moving in a faithful direction:
God is with us every step of our way toward the Love of Bethlehem.
Jesus is being born into our lives even now. ✚
The Spirit is transforming us in this place.

All Amen.

[You may be Seated](#)

A Reading from Romans, the 13th chapter

The obligation of Christians is to love one another and so fulfill the heart and goal of the law. Clothes make the person as we “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” and live today in light of the future God has in store for us.

Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone; the day is near.

Romans 13: 8-11

WA The word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

[Please stand in body or spirit.](#)

♪ ♪ *Emmanuel, Emmanuel, His name is called Emmanuel* ♪ ♪
God with us revealed in us. His name is called Emmanuel

Gospel Reading

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 2nd chapter.

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

God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered.

Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom God favors!"

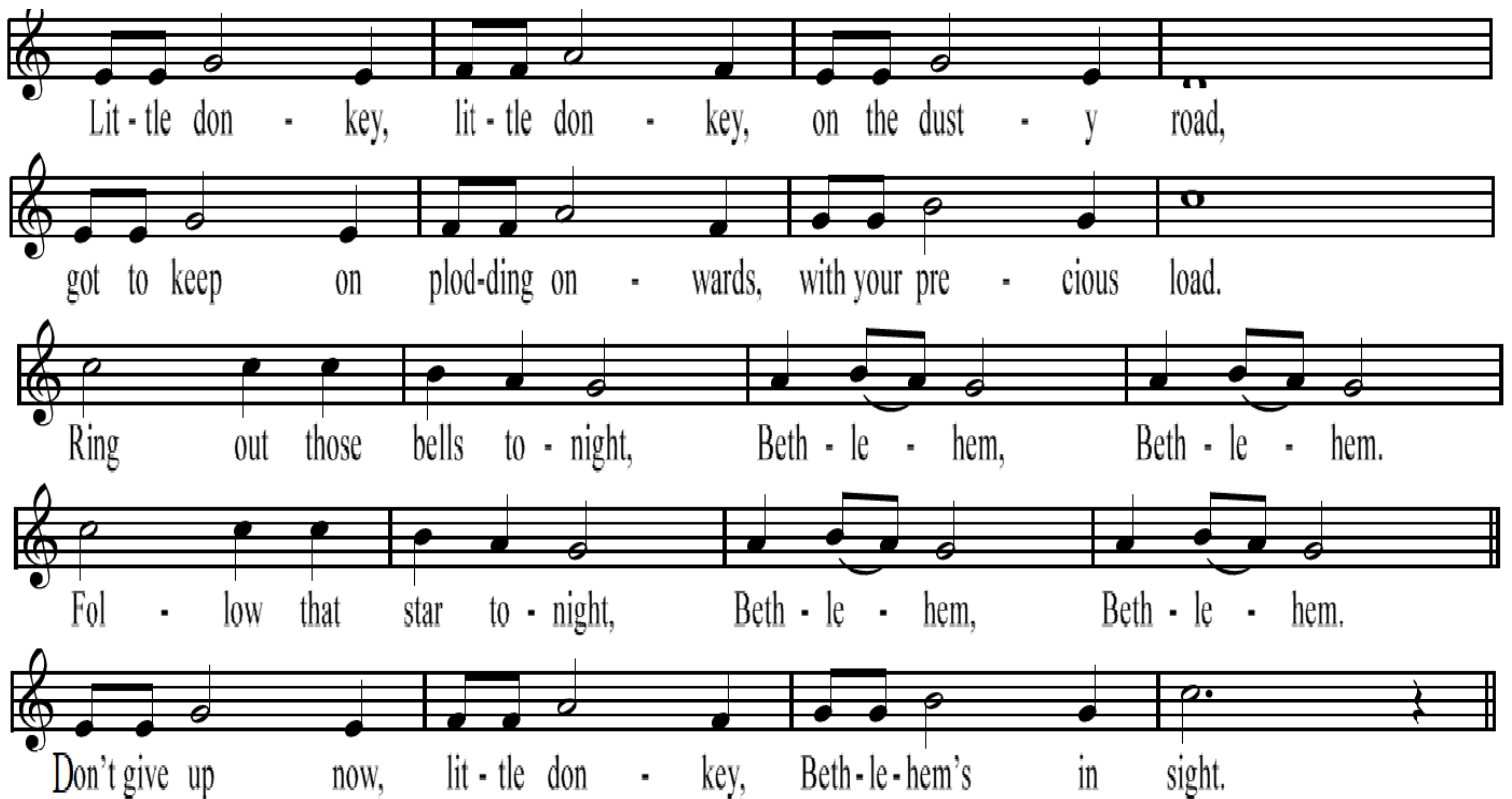
Luke 2:1-14

P The Gospel of our Lord.

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

[You may be Seated](#)

Children's Sermon & Noisy Offering



Lit - tle don - key, lit - tle don - key, on the dust - y road,
got to keep on plod-ding on - wards, with your pre - cious load.
Ring out those bells to - night, Beth - le - hem, Beth - le - hem.
Fol - low that star to - night, Beth - le - hem, Beth - le - hem.
Don't give up now, lit - tle don - key, Beth - le - hem's in sight.

*Each week our congregation is **led by children** to collect pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters. Through this offering, we are reminded that together, the smallest of offerings can change lives and make "hope" tangible.*

In recent years, our Noisy Offering has fed 10 children for an entire year through Food for the Poor.

*The Noisy Offering has helped families by providing:
4 goats; 2 hens; 12 chicks; 2 piglets; mosquito netting;
honeybees and a vegetable garden.*

*You've provided a Farmer's Field School, 3 fruit tree seedlings, seeds,
and gardening tools.*

We can't wait to see how the children will choose to share next!

Hope Has Hands

Love has a Heartbeat and Grace has a Face

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.**

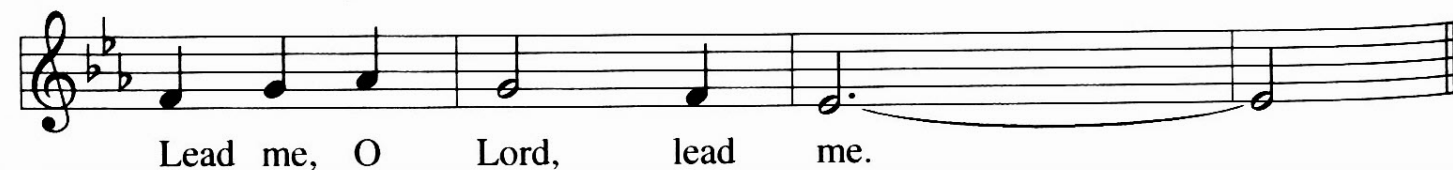
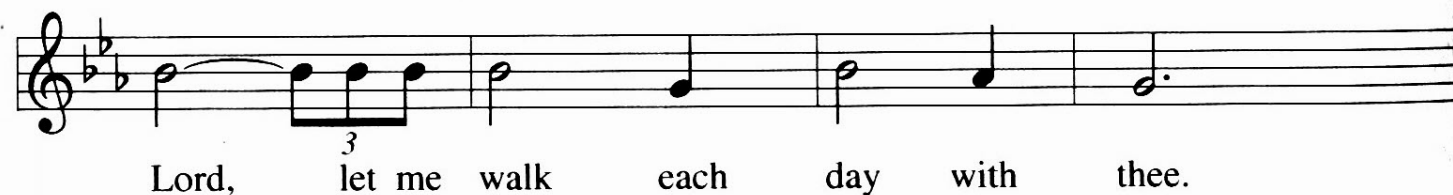
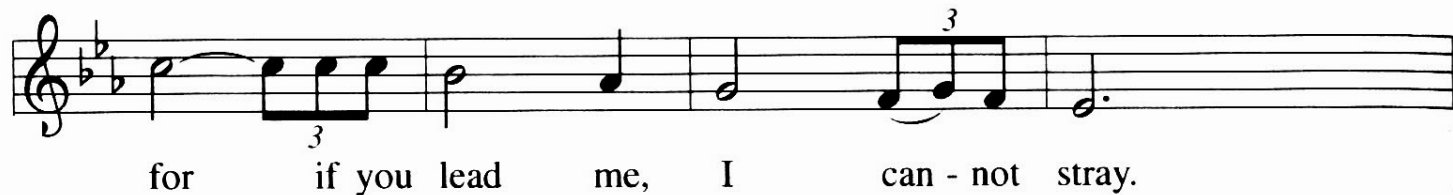
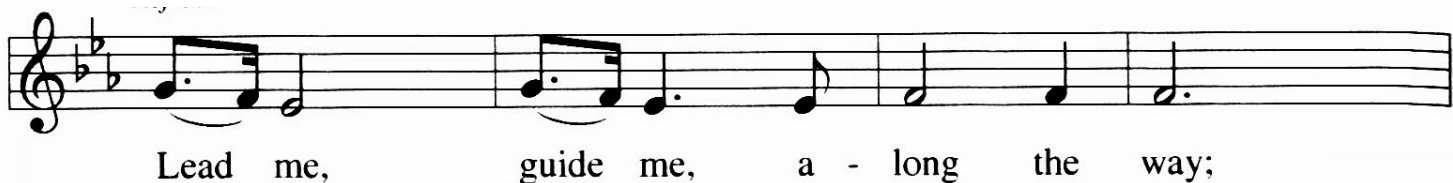
**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of 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

WA As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us,
let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.



(each prayer petition ends with)

WA: God of Love

All: You hear our prayer.

Passing of the Love

P Jesus Christ become Love with you.

All And also with you.

Offertory

Tune: Away in a Manger

♪ ♪ Praise God for these gifts that we offer today ♪ ♪
and bless them for good in the world, this we pray.
Praise Jesus, the Christ-Child, our Hope and our Stay,
the Spirit, our Keeper, our Guide on the Way.

Offertory Prayer

P Let us pray,
God of our waiting and watching,

All we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives
to the service of all your people.

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

The Great Thanksgiving and Words of Institution

P The God of Hope be with you

All And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

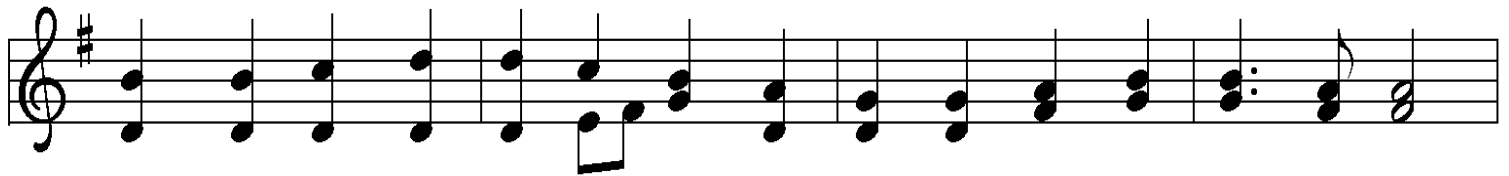
P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give God thanks and praise.

P It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.
Especially on this road to Bethlehem, we remember
that like the first breath of all things born,
you formed each of us in your image
and breathed into us the breath of life.

May we always be certain that in every journey, you guide and protect us
every step of the way just as you did with our spiritual ancestors.

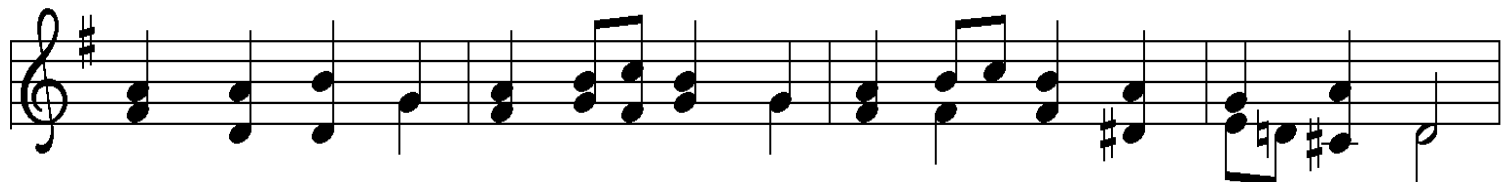
P And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!



Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore thee, prais - ing thee, their sun a - bove.



Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive the gloom of doubt a - way.



Giv - er of im - mor - tal glad - ness, fill us with the light of day.

P On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in 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 which is shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

Please stand in body or spirit.

P God in Community, Holy and One,
we lift our prayers to you, saying ...

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 Christ has set the table with more than enough for all. Come!

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

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

D.C. al Coda

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

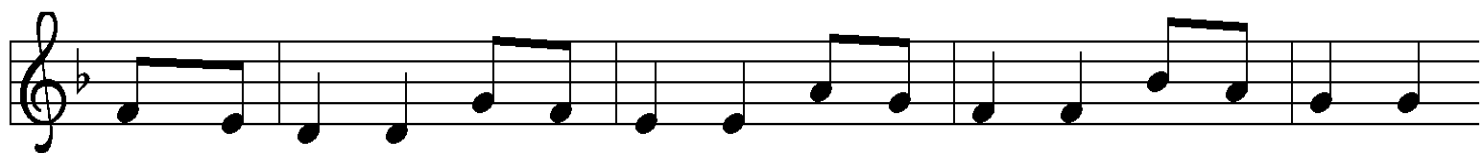
Coda

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

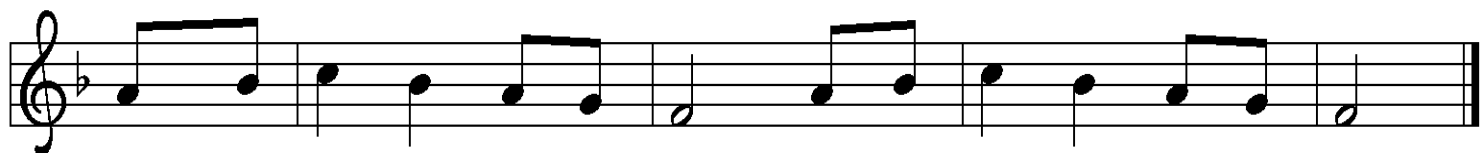
Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

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.

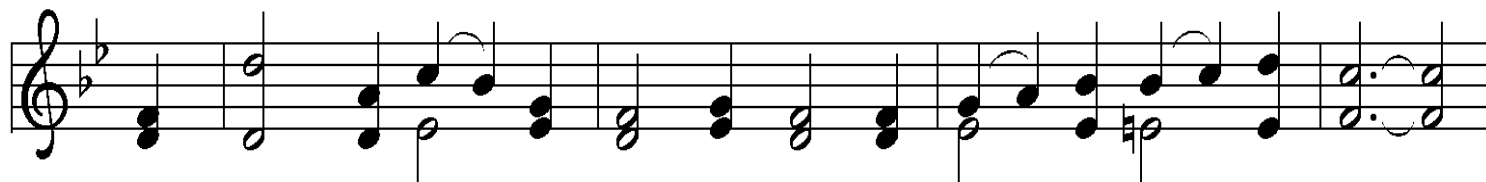


Swift-ly wing-ing, an - gels sing-ing, bells are ring-ing, tid - ings bring-ing:
 Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic-ing, greet the mor - row:

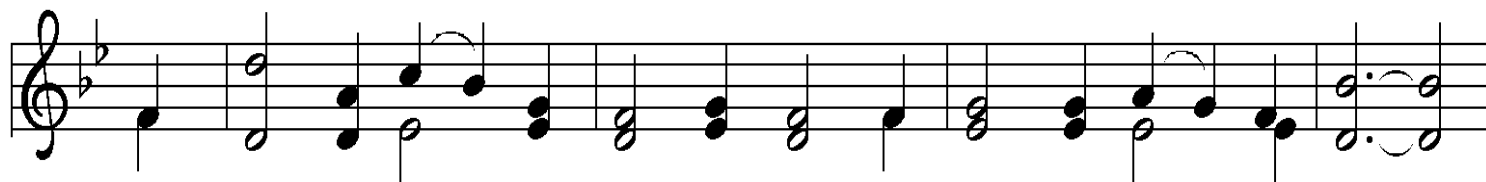


Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!
 Christ the child was born for you! Christ the child was born for you!

It Came upon the Midnight Clear



1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
 4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph-ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
 when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav’n’s all - gra - cious king.”
 when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen-dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still-ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
 and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

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 Holy God,

All we have received from your table more than we could ever ask.
As you have nourished us in this meal,
now strengthen us to love the world with your own life.
In your name we pray. Amen

You may be Seated

Stewardship of Life & Ministry Announcements

Benediction

Please stand in body or spirit.

P And now as you go forth from this place,
know that all the places you encounter in the world
will contain signs and markers of God's work among us.

So keep your senses alert, your perception wide, ✝
and your heart open to new discoveries along the way.

All Amen.

Sending Song

♪ ♪ *O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray, ♪ ♪
cast out our fear, and draw us near; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.*

We're on our way. We're on our way.
 Dream of the day when love holds sway. With all the earth, in
 all our hearts. We're on our way. This is the day.

Dismissal

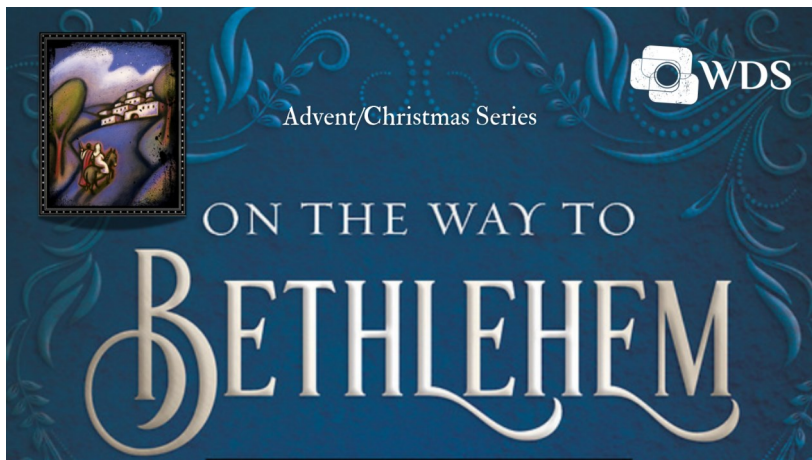
WA Go out in Love. Prepare the way for Emmanuel!

All Thanks be to God!

Reading for next Sunday,
 December 29th
 The Sunday of Christmas

1st Reading	1st Samuel 2:18-20,26
Psalm	Psalm 148
2nd Reading	Colossians 3:12-17
Gospel:	Luke 2:41-52

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