

The Third Sunday in Advent
December 14, 2025
Divine Service, Setting 4
10:00 AM

Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church

465 Pond Path ~ East Setauket, NY 11733

e-mail: info@messiahny.org

website: www.messiahny.org

(631) 751-1775

Mr. Thom Brownworth ~ Deacon

Mr. Chris Cuvier ~ Organist

WELCOME TO MESSIAH!

To all who carry a burden of sin and need a Savior; to all who wish to rejoice and give thanks; to all who are strangers and need a Church home; to all who are lonely and long for companionship; to all who worship the Lord, our Creator; to all who hunger for the Word; to all who are weary and need rest, the people of Messiah, in the Spirit and Name of Jesus, say

WELCOME!

If you are a visitor, we ask you to please introduce yourself to our pastors (don't worry, they're friendly!) and please sign our Guest Register in the narthex or fill out the yellow card in your bulletin. This will help us to get to know you better!

If you would like us to pray for you (or with you), please see one of our pastors before the church service or write a prayer request on the back of the yellow card.

OUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church exists in order to lead people to faith in Christ Jesus and Fellowship in His family, to celebrate His presence in worship and the study of His Word, and to use all their God-given Time, Talents, and Treasures according to His Will in the ministry of His church and mission to the world.

PRIVATE PRAYERS FOR BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER WORSHIP:

On entering a church

Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells. In the multitude of Your tender mercies prepare my heart that I may enter Your house to worship and confess Your holy name; through Jesus Christ, my God and Lord. Amen.

Before worship

O Lord, my creator, redeemer, and comforter, as I come to worship You in spirit and in truth, I humbly pray that You would open my heart to the preaching of Your Word so that I may repent of my sins, believe in Jesus Christ as my only Savior, and grow in grace and holiness. Hear me for His sake. Amen.

Before confession & absolution

Almighty, everlasting God, for my many sins I justly deserve eternal condemnation. In Your mercy You sent Your dear Son, my Lord Jesus Christ, who won for me forgiveness of sins and everlasting salvation. Grant me a true confession that, dead to sin, I may be raised up by Your life-giving absolution. Grant me Your Holy Spirit that I may be ever watchful and live a true and godly life in Your service; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Before communing

Dear Savior, at Your gracious invitation I come to Your table to eat and drink Your holy body and blood. Let me find favor in Your eyes to receive this holy Sacrament in faith for the salvation of my soul and to the glory of Your holy name; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

After communing

Almighty and everlasting God, I thank and praise You for feeding me the life-giving body and blood of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Send me Your Holy Spirit that, having with my mouth received the holy Sacrament, I may by faith obtain and eternally enjoy Your divine grace, the forgiveness of sins, unity with Christ, and life eternal; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Prelude

Welcome ~ *The order of service for today may be found in the Hymnal, page 203.*

Stand

Lighting of the Advent Wreath - Third Sunday

L As we gather at the Advent wreath this morning, we remember and give thanks to God that Advent is a time when we pray, and look forward to Jesus' coming with expectant joy. Advent is a time for us to worship and to contemplate, to pause and wonder at just what it means for God to come to us, and not we to God.

A time to know that God comes to us in love in Christ Jesus, and teaches us to love one another because He loved us first.

A reading from First John, chapter 4:

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

[The first, second, and third candles on the Advent wreath are lit.]

C We light this candle to announce the coming of the love of God among us in the world. For we remember that He took on flesh and pitched His tent among ours, and yet we knew Him not. And even though we knew Him not, He still came and died and rose again out of love for us. Jesus is Love to us, and so we love others in return.

L Let us pray: Oh God, we give thanks to you for the love that your Son shows to all of us, regardless of our age, regardless of our estate, regardless of whether we are weak or strong. Kindle in our hearts that same kind of all-encompassing, self-sacrificial love for all people that your Son has for us.

C Amen

Opening Hymn: 348 The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns



1 The King shall come when morn-ing dawns And light tri - um-phant breaks,
2 Not as of old a lit - tle child, To bear and fight and die,
3 Oh, bright-er than the ris - ing morn When Christ, vic - to-rious, rose
4 Oh, bright-er than that glo - rious morn Shall dawn up - on our race
5 The King shall come when morn-ing dawns And light and beau - ty brings.



When beau - ty gilds the east - ern hills And life to joy a-wakes.
But crowned with glo - ry like the sun That lights the morn-ing sky.
And left the lone-some place of death De - spite the rage of foes.
The day when Christ in splen-dor comes And we shall see His face.
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your peo-ple pray: Come quick-ly, King of kings!

Text: John Brownlie, 1859–1925, alt.
Tune: Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, 1813, Harrisburg, ed. John Wyeth
Text and tune: Public domain

Confession and Absolution

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

L In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

L If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

L Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

Kneel/Stand

C Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Holy Baptism You declared us to be Your children and gathered us into Your one, holy Church, in which You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Stand

Service of the Word

Introit

Psalm 71:14–18; antiphon: Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord | always;*
again I will say, | Rejoice.

I will hope con- | tinually*

and will praise you yet | more and more.

My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation | all the day,*
for their number is past my | knowledge.

With the mighty deeds of the Lord GOD | I will come;*

I will remind them of your righteousness, | yours alone.

O God, from my youth you have | taught me,*
and I still proclaim your | wondrous deeds.

So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not for- | sake me,*

until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all | those to come.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*

and to the Holy | Spirit;

as it was in the be- | ginning,*

is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

Rejoice in the Lord | always;*
again I will say, | Rejoice.



C Lord, have mer - cy; Christ, have mer - cy; Lord, have mer - cy.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

L The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

L Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Sit

Children's Message

Any children present (and Mom and Dad, too!) are encouraged to come up to the chancel.

Lectionary Summary

The Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ Brings True Rejoicing, Even Under the Cross

Sometimes life requires the astonishing patience of Job. Like him, we are to rejoice in the midst of affliction, be grounded in repentance under the cross of Christ, and hope relentlessly in His resurrection, that we might see “the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful” (James 5:11). In the promise of the Gospel, therefore, “be patient” and “establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand” (James 5:7, 8). Like St. John the Baptist, whatever your own kind of prison or suffering may be, call upon Jesus and receive the strength of His Word from those He sends to you. For as “the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up,” so is the Good News of Jesus preached to you also (Matt. 11:5). He comes and restores the fortunes of Zion, His Holy Church, so that “sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Is. 35:10).

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 35:1–10

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;
²it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.
³Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
⁴Say to those who have an anxious heart,
“Be strong; fear not!
Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
⁶then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.
For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
⁷the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
⁸And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it.
It shall belong to those who walk on the way;
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.
⁹No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual

Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26, alt.

C Rejoice greatly, O daughter of | Zion.*
Shout aloud, O daughter of Je- | rusalem.
Behold, your king is com- | ing to you;*
righteous and having sal- | vation.
Blessèd is he who comes in the name | of the Lord.*
From the house of the Lord we | bless you.

Epistle

James 5:7–11

⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

Alleluia and Verse



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

These things are writ-ten that you may be - lieve that

Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 11:2–15

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eleventh chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

²When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” ⁴And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is he of whom it is written,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you.”

¹¹Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. ¹³For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, ¹⁴and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

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.

Sit

Hymn of the Day: 338 Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus



1 Come, Thou long - ex - pect-ed Je-sus, Born to set Thy peo-ple free;
2 Born Thy peo-ple to de - liv-er; Born a child and yet a king!



From our fears and sins re-lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Born to reign in us for-ev-er, Now Thy gra-cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con-so - la-tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art,
By Thine own e - ter-nal Spir-it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;



Dear de - sire of ev-'ry na-tion, Joy of ev-'ry long-ing heart.
By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo-rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-88, alt.
Tune: Southern Harmony, 1835, New Haven
Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon

Stand

Prayer of the Church

The response for the prayers of the church is as follows:

- L** ... Lord, in Your mercy,
- C** hear our prayer.

The Sharing of the Peace

Following the prayers, the people may greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying, "Peace be with you," as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matt. 5:22–24; Eph. 4:1–3). You are invited to greet one-another in whichever manner you are comfortable.

Sit

Offering

Service of the Sacrament

In Holy Communion, our Lord invites us to eat and drink His true Body and Blood for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life (Matthew 26:26-28). In preparation for this sacrament, each communicant should examine him or herself and come to the Lord's Table seeking these things. As the Catechism teaches, "a person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: 'Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.'" We likewise take seriously St. Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 regarding recognizing the Lord's Body and Blood in this sacrament and receiving it worthily. Therefore, we invite all baptized Christians who have been instructed in the Christian faith and who believe that Jesus offers here His true Body and Blood, in, with, and under the elements of bread and wine, for the strengthening of their bodies and souls, cleansing them of their old nature and giving them new life, to join us at His table. If you have any questions about this, please speak to our pastor. He will be happy to discuss it with you.

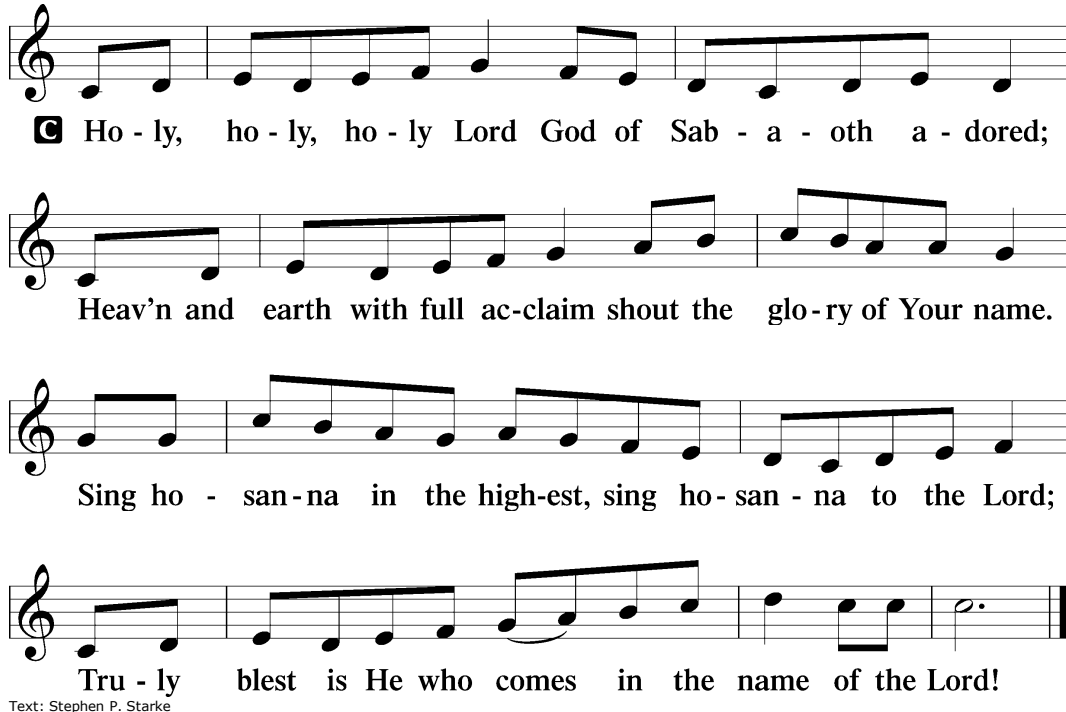
If you do not wish to commune or have not been baptized or instructed in the Christian faith, we invite you to come forward for a blessing. When you come forward toward the altar, please ask the pastor if he would bless you. If you would like to learn more about the Christian faith or wish to be baptized, please speak to our pastor!

Stand

Preface

LSB 208

- L** The Lord be with you.
- C** And also with you.
- L** Lift up your hearts.
- C** We lift them to the Lord.
- L** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- C** It is right to give Him thanks and praise.
- L** It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;
 Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.
 Sing ho - san-na in the high-est, sing ho - san - na to the Lord;
 Tru - ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

Text: Stephen P. Starke

Prayer of Thanksgiving

L Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

In Your boundless mercy You sent Your servant, John the Baptist, to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of heaven draws near.

With thankful hearts we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus," confident that in His body and blood, given us to eat and drink, we receive the forgiveness of sins and so proclaim His death until He comes again in glory.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

Lord's Prayer

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.

The Words of Our Lord

L *The elements for today's communion have been pre-consecrated by Pastor Bell.*
He spoke:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Come now and receive the gifts of God for the people of God.

Pax Domini

L The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

Agnus Dei

LSB 210

C 1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
You take the sin of the world a - way;
You take the sin of the world a - way;
O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,
Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

Text: Stephen P. Starke

Sit

Distribution

Attendance Cards

Prior to the communion liturgy, we ask that all attendees fill out the yellow attendance card in the pew.

When the usher dismisses your row to go to the altar, please hand your yellow card to the usher. Thank you!

Distribution Song: Break Thou the Bread of Life

Break Thou the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee, O Living Word.

Bless Thou the truth, dear Lord, to me, to me,
As Thou didst bless the bread by Galilee;
Then shall bondage cease, all fetters fall;
And I shall find my peace, my all in all.

Thou art the bread of life, O Lord, to me,
Thy holy Word the truth that saveth me;
Give me to eat and live with Thee above;
Teach me to love Thy truth, for Thou art love.

O send Thy Spirit, Lord, now unto me,
That He may touch mine eyes, and make me see:
Show me the truth concealed within Thy Word,
And in Thy Book revealed I see Thee, Lord.

Text: Alexander Groves, Lani Smith, Mary Artemisia Lathbury, William Fiske Sherwin

Text: Public domain

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The Dismissal

L The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul
to life everlasting. Depart ✠ in peace.

C Amen.

Stand

Nunc Dimittis

LSB 211



C 1 O Lord, now let Your ser - vant De -
2 All glo - ry to the Fa - ther, All
part in heav'n - ly peace, For I have seen the
glo - ry to the Son, All glo - ry to the
glo - ry Of Your re - deem - ing grace:
Spir - it, For - ev - er Three in One;
A light to lead the Gen - tiles Un -
For as in lead the be - gin - ning, Is
to Your ho - ly hill, The glo - ry of Your
now, shall ev - er be, God's tri - une name re -
peo - ple, Your cho - sen Is - ra - el.
sound - ing Through all e - ter - ni - ty.

Post-Communion Collect

A Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Benedicamus

LSB 212

A Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

L 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.

Sit

Matters of Importance

Stand

Closing Hymn: 345 Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding



1 Hark! A thrill - ing voice is sound - ing! "Christ is
2 Star - tled at the sol - emn warn - ing, Let the
3 See, the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, Comes with
4 So, when next He comes in glo - ry And the
Δ 5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, do - min - ion To the
near," we hear it say. "Cast a - way the
earth - bound soul a - rise; Christ, its sun, all
par - don down from heav'n. Let us haste, with
world is wrapped in fear, He will shield us
Fa - ther and the Son With the ev - er -
works of dark - ness, All you chil - dren of the day!"
sloth dis - pel - ling, Shines up - on the morn - ing skies.
tears of sor - row, One and all, to be for - giv'n;
with His mer - cy And with words of love draw near.
liv - ing Spir - it While e - ter - nal a - ges run!

Text: Latin, c. 5th–10th cent.; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814–78, alt.
Tune: William H. Monk, 1823–89
Text and tune: Public domain

Postlude

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Four from Lutheran Service Book

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