

Grace Lutheran Church

3020 Grace Church Rd. Salisbury, NC 28147

(704) 857-8641

www.grace-salisbury.com



Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025

5:00pm & 10:00pm

- + Ministers: The People of Grace +
- + Pastor: the Rev. Joshua Copeland +
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- + Director of Youth & Family Ministries Sarah Stirewalt +
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- + Secretary Terri Brown +
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- + Director of Music Lynn Lippard +
- + Director of Children & Youth Choirs Emily Copeland +
- + Accompanist for Children & Youth Teresa Yost +
- + Accompanist for Chancel Choir Becky Lippard +
- + Pastor Emeritus Rev. Gene C. Bost +

+ *Those who are able please stand.*

(Congregation responses are printed in bold type)

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

+ CALL TO WORSHIP

Tonight the long road of Advent brings us to a place of light. Our Advent journey ends, and yet our true journey begins here, with Christ born among us.

We come to the place where hope breaks open the night and grace takes on flesh.

For weary feet that have walked in shadows, a soft light begins to grow. For hearts that have waited for mercy, grace appears in the most ordinary of places, a stable full of wonder with a child who gathers the world in love.

At Christmas, we celebrate that the road has led us here, to God's gift of life that changes everything.

The manger is not a temporary stop, but the very heart of home. And in Christ, that home is wide enough for every traveler who comes seeking peace.

So we come with joy and open hearts. Christ is born, and we are home.

+ THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

Blessed be the Holy One, the fountain of life, the light in our darkness, the One who gathers us home.

Amen.

On this night, as our journey brings us to the manger, we remember the waters of baptism that mark our place in God's story. Christ is born among us tonight, and we are renewed in grace.

Christ has traveled with us through this whole season,
teaching us to pack light, to set down what we do not need.

Christ has shown us signs along the way,
pointing us toward hope when we needed direction.

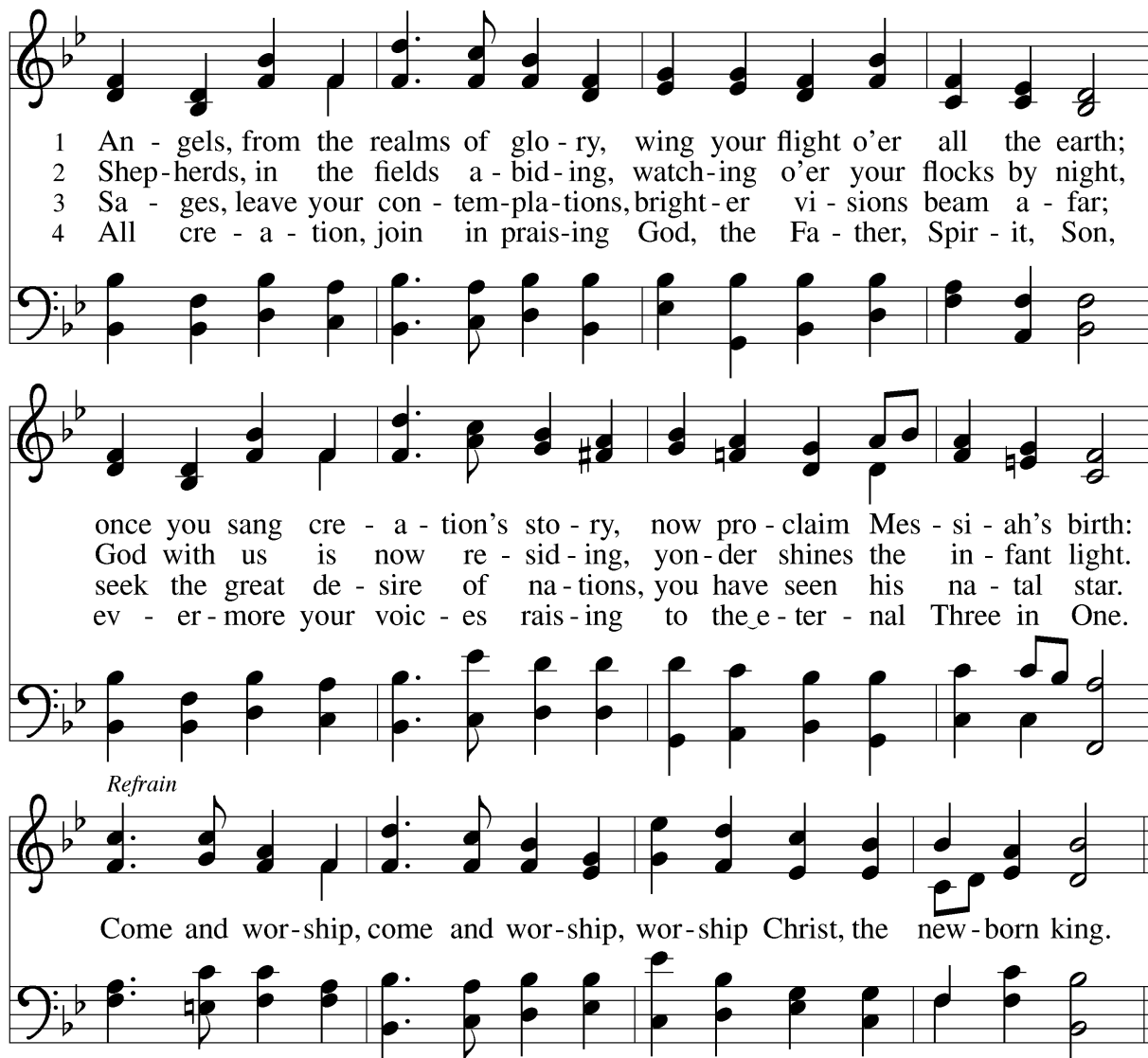
Christ has given us rest stops and surprises,
moments that renewed our strength and opened our eyes.

And now we stand on the threshold, where God has placed a welcome sign on the front porch, and invites us in with warmth and joy. Through the waters of Baptism, Christ brings us inside and we are home at last. Here at the manger, God welcomes us fully, and our journey through life truly begins.

Through the waters of Baptism, we are embraced, forgiven, and restored, and for the first time, we can truly say: we are home at last!

We give thanks for the waters that refresh us, reshape us, and welcome us into God's household of love. Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus, and let the angels sing of your glory.



1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
 2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
 3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,

once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
 God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.
 seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.
 ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

Refrain

Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.

+ THE GREETING *(Melody: "Angels We Have Heard on High")*

May the Good Lord be with you.

Lift your hearts to God in praise.

May the Lord be with you, too.

To the Lord our hearts we raise.

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Gloria in excelsis deo!

In the word of God made flesh –

Great and wondrous mystery.

Now we see with vision fresh

God's abundant mystery!

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Therefore with the church on earth
 And the hosts of heav'n above,
 Let us praise his name, whose birth
 Brings to us eternal love!

Gloria in excelsis deo!

Gloria in excelsis deo!

+ PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together...

Holy God, tonight the road ends in a manger and the journey begins again with joy. In Christ you have come to live among us, to make your home with us, and to bring light into our darkness. Dwell with us now and always, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

Reader: *"The Word became flesh and lived among us... and we have seen his glory"* (John 1:14).

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

Tonight we light the Christ candle, for the road has led us home. In Jesus, God makes a home with us. Our waiting is over! Our journey ended!


Christ is born!

Tonight we light the Christ candle, the light of the world, the home of our hearts.

Christ is our light and our home.

ADVENT HYMN

Melody: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" verse 1-5



1. Come, God of Hope, and li - ght our way, and guide us on the ro - ad to - day.
2. Come, Prince of Peace, and sh - ow us signs so we may foll - ow wh - ere love shines!
3. Come, Gift of Joy, our hea - rts re - new and fill our souls with li - ght so true.
4. Come, Ho - ly Love, and le - ad us home! Through wind - ing ways, we're ne' - re a - lone.
5. Come, Son of God, and br - ing us home to dwell with you, no mo - re to roam!

3
Help us to leave all fe - ars be - hind, and walk with you in pea - ce of mind!
Your peace will calm our wand' - ring hearts, your gui - ding light our strength im - parts!
Your joy sus - tains through tri - als we face, so lead us on with stead - fast Grace!
You call us on to li - ght the way, So oth - ers find your care a - long the way.
5
Though we are home, you still guide our way and walk with us through ni - ght and day!

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall lead the way, O Pil - grims of God!

Text: Rev. Joshua Lewis Copeland 1995-

Tune: VENI EMMANUEL, French Processional 15th Century

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Again We Find Our Way”

Pastor Josh & Emily

PSALM 96

¹O sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth.

²**Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.**

³Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.

⁴**For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; he is to be revered above all gods.**

⁵For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

⁶**Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.**

⁷Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

⁸**Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts.**

⁹Worship the LORD in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth.

¹⁰**Say among the nations, "The LORD is king! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity."**

¹¹Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

¹²**let the field exult, and everything in it. Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy**

¹³**before the LORD; for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.**

SECOND READING: Titus 2:11-14

¹¹The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly,

¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

+ GOSPEL PROCESSIONAL "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

Good Christian friends, rejoice

With heart and soul and voice;

Give ye heed to what we say;

Jesus Christ is born today;

Ox and ass before him bow,

And he is in the manger now.

Christ is born today!

Christ is born today!

+ HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-20

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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 for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, O Christ.

+ GOSPEL RECESSIONAL "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

**Good Christian friends, rejoice
With heart and soul and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave;
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
To gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!**

SERMON

“Home at Last!”

+ HYMN OF THE DAY

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to all the earth!
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
oh, come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

+ NICENE CREED

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in hope and trust, we confess our faith.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

+ THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

All things have been clothed in grace by the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Rejoicing in the company of Mary, mother of our Lord, and of all the witnesses of the incarnation, we commend these prayers and all our life to you, O God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

+ SHARING THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always!

And also with you!

OFFERING

ANTHEM

“The Star of Hope Arises”

Chancel Choir—10PM

+ OFFERTORY “What Child Is This” (vs. 3)

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;

Come, peasant king, to own him.

The King of kings salvation brings;

Let loving hearts enthrone him.

Raise, raise the song on high, The virgin sings her lullaby;

Joy, joy, for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mary!

+ OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray...

Gracious God, you provide signs of hope along our journey. **We bring our gifts with hope.**

You make peace where the world is restless. **We bring our gifts for peace.**

You surprise us with joy in unexpected places. **We bring our gifts with joy.**

You welcome us home with love beyond measure. **We bring our gifts with love.**

Tonight Christ is born, the light of the world and our true home. **We bring our gifts to celebrate Christ.**

Receive these offerings, O God, and use them to guide all people home to you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

+ THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (Melody: O Come All Ye Faithful!)

The Lord be with you.

And with you, his servant.

Oh, come, let us lift our hearts unto the Lord.

With hearts uplifted,

Thanks to him we render:

With joy we come before him

In gratefulness implore him

With thankful hearts adore him,

Evermore!

+ PREFACE

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. Long ago you set your people on a journey, guiding them through wilderness and exile, promising a home where justice and mercy would dwell. Through prophets and messengers you gave signs along the way, stirring hope, peace, joy, and love in waiting hearts. In these last days you have made your home with us in Jesus, the Word made flesh, the light that shines in our darkness, the road that leads us safely home to you. And so, with all travelers on the way, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

+ THE SANCTUS *(Melody: Hark, the Herald Angels Sing)*

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of Hosts, by heav'n adored!
Heav'n and earth cannot contain all the glory of your name!
Hail, Hosanna, God most high! Blest is He who now draws nigh!
In the name of God the King Hallelujahs glad we sing:
Hail, Hosanna! Praises due Be forever, Lord, to you!**

+ WORDS OF INSTITUTION *(Tune: In the Bleak Midwinter)*

+ THE LORD'S PRAYER *(Melody: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear)*

**O Father, Lord, on Heav'n's high throne
Most holy be your Name.
Your Kingdom come. Your will be done.
On earth, in Heav'n - the same.
Give us this day the food we need;
Forgiven may we be
Into temptation do not lead;
From evil set us free.**

**Yours is the Kingdom; unto you
In grateful love we bow;
And yours the pow'r, Lord, let us view
Your gracious presence now.
The glory yours; Your praise be sung
By angel hosts and then
In ev'ry land, by ev'ry tongue
Forevermore! AMEN.**

+ INVITATION TO THE TABLE

**Taste and see that the Lord is good!
Thanks be to God.**

DISTRIBUTION – All children of God are welcome at the table for communion. Come forward in two lines to receive the bread from the pastor and wine/grape juice from a communion assistant.

LAMB OF GOD *(Melody: Away in a Manger)*

**O, Lamb of our Lord God, the most holy Son,
This world needs your mercy, your love and
your grace.
Draw near to us, dear Lord, bring liberation!
Have mercy upon us and grant us your peace!**

**O, Lamb of our Lord God, the most holy Son,
You came to this dark world to lead us from
night!
Have mercy upon us and bring us your light!
And grant to the whole world your peace.
Amen.**

+ BLESSING

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace, now and forevermore.

Amen.

+ PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together...

God with us, in this holy meal we have tasted your presence and shared in the joy of Christ's birth. As you have made your home among us tonight, send us out to carry your light into the world. Fill us with hope, peace, joy, and love, that all may know the good news: Christ is born, our Savior and our home. Amen.

+ CANDLE LIGHTING LITANY: *[lighting of individual candles]*

In the beginning and in the midst of darkness, God spoke.

Let there be light.

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word came and dwelt among us. And the Word was the light of all peoples.

Let there be light.

We light our candles, knowing that the One who is the source and promise of all light is the One whose birth we celebrate.

Let there be light.

We are here to seek a little light by which we can see, by which we can live, by which we can love.

Let there be light.

We need to know that we are part of something greater than the flicker of our own little candles. We long to be assured that the light of Christ is with us even in the moment.

Let there be light.

So we light our candles in gratitude for the love and light that shine through the babe born in Bethlehem who became the Redeemer of us all.

Let there be light.

May we be so emboldened as to share the love of God with a world longing for light and hope, purpose, and love. May our actions and generosity shine in a world under the shadow of despair.

Let there be light.

We join the chorus of those whose carols have echoed through the years—
“O come to us, abide in us, our Lord, Emmanuel.”

Let there be light.

+ CANDLE LIGHTING

“Silent Night”



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,
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,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.
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,



Hold - er Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher
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



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

+ BENEDICTION

The grace of our newborn Savior, Christ Jesus,
the love of God who makes a home with us,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
go with you now and always.

Go in peace, rejoicing in the gift of Christ,
our light, our hope, our joy, and our home.

Amen.

+ SENDING HYMN

“Joy to the World”

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heav'n and na - ture sing,

+ DISMISSAL

Go in peace. God is with you! Merry Christmas!!!

Thanks be to God! Merry Christmas!!!

POSTLUDE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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