

SENDING SONG *Word of God, Come Down on Earth* (ELW 510)



1 Word of God, come down on earth, liv - ing rain from
2 Word e - ter - nal, throned on high, Word that brought to
3 Word that speaks God's ten - der love, one with God be -



heav'n de - scend - ing; touch our hearts and bring to birth
life cre - a - tion, Word that came from heav'n to die,
yond all tell - ing, Word that sends us from a - bove



faith and hope and love un - end - ing. Word al - might - y,
cru - ci - fied for our sal - va - tion, sav - ing Word, the
God the Spir - it, with us dwell - ing, Word of truth, to



we re - vere you; Word made flesh, we long to hear you.
world re - stor - ing, speak to us, your love out - pour - ing.
all truth lead us; Word of life, with one bread feed us.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Invitation to Communion – We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present in the bread and wine of Holy Communion, bringing to us the gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. All who share in this belief are welcome to gather at the Lord's table. Allergen free elements are available for those who request them, and grape juice is located in the center ring of each communion tray. If you would like to come forward for a blessing instead of communion, please come.

Copyright © 2019 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SB132520. New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



First Sunday of Advent
Service of Lessons and Songs

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father,
and of the ✝ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

As we wait for and watch for Your coming, O Lord, we are aware of our
sinfulness and our need for repentance.
Most Merciful God,
**We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. We deserve your
punishment. We seek your forgiveness. In the name of Jesus, and because
of His sacrifice for us, forgive us our sin.**
(Silence for a time of reflection.)

God is our loving Creator and our Redeemer. Jesus, the only begotten Son of
God, came down from heaven to be our Savior. Because of His incarnation, life,
death, and resurrection we have forgiveness in His name. By grace you have
been saved. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty
God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in
your hearts through faith.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG *The Advent of Our God (6 verses)



1 The ad - vent of our God shall be our theme for prayer;
2 The ev - er - last - ing Son in - car - nate stoops to be,
3 Come, Zi - on's daugh-ter, rise to meet your low - ly king,
4 As judge, on clouds of light, he soon will come a - gain,



come, let us meet him on the road and place for him pre - pare.
him - self the ser - vant's form puts on to set his peo - ple free.
nor let your faith - less heart de - spise the peace he comes to bring.
and all his scat - tered saints u - nite with him on high to reign.

***LORD’S PRAYER**

**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.**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the
hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds
and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior
and Lord.
Amen.

***BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.
Amen.

***PEACE**
The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

OFFERING
***OFFERING PRAYER**

God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

As we anticipate the fullness of the presence of Christ, we join with the church throughout the world, praying for all who are in need.

P: We pray,
C: come down, O Lord.
Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, those spoken aloud and those known only to you, and grant us peace through Jesus Christ, our coming Savior.
C: Amen

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

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.

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,
 shed for you and for all people
 for the forgiveness of sin.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

5 Before the dawning day
 let sin be put to flight;
 no longer let the law hold sway,
 but walk in freedom’s light.

6 All glory to the Son,
 who comes to set us free,
 with Father, Spirit, ever one
 through all eternity.

***GREETING**
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**
Let us pray.
Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

"THE HANGING OF THE GREENS"

Introduction

THE ADVENT WREATH


SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 9:2
The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined.

VERSE 6 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257)
**O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight.**


EXPLANATION AND ACTION

L: For most churchgoers, the most characteristic symbol of the Advent season may well be the Advent Wreath. Week by week its light increases, like “the Dayspring from on high”—the “Radiant Dawn”—for which God’s people pray. Christmas itself, when it arrives, is characterized by light: “all is calm, all is bright”... “and the glory of the Lord shone round about them.” As they focus our attention on ever-brightening light, Advent candles help prepare the way, not only for Christmas, but for our Lord’s return in the brightness of everlasting glory.
(The Advent candle is lit.)

VERSE 1 Arise, Your Light Has Come! (ELW 314)



1 A - rise, your light has come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;



show forth the glo - ry of your God which shines on you to - day.

LITANY


P: O Radiant Dawn, come!
C: Shine on those who dwell in deadly darkness.
P: O Splendor of Eternal Light:
C: Arise and come, O Son of Righteousness!

THE PARAMENTS

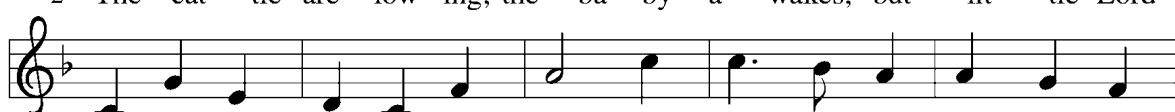
SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:30-33

³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."


VERSES 1 & 2 Away in a Manger (ELW 277)



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



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



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.

LITANY

P: O Emmanuel, come!
C: You are the King of creation, the Hope of all nations, the Savior of all.
P: O King and Lord:
C: God-with-us, come!

SERMON

*VERSE 8 WITH REFRAIN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257)
O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

LITANY

P: O King of the nations, come!
C: You are the only joy of every human heart; you bring together peoples long apart.
P: O Cornerstone:
C: Save us, whom you fashioned from the dust!

THE CRECHE

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 1:22-23

A reading from Matthew. ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

VERSE 1 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257)

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

EXPLANATION AND ACTION

L: God with us. Week by week, with candles and colors, with prayers and preparations, the Advent season moves us toward the joyful celebration of GOD WITH US. The figures of the manger scene can keep reminding us just how very “with us” God has come in Jesus Christ. Here commoners and kings may kneel together, in the circle of a family... and even animals nudge to find their place. It’s just that earthy, just that real—what we prepare to celebrate. And the heaven it makes possible is just that real too!

(The Figures of the Crèche are placed.)

VERSE 5 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257)

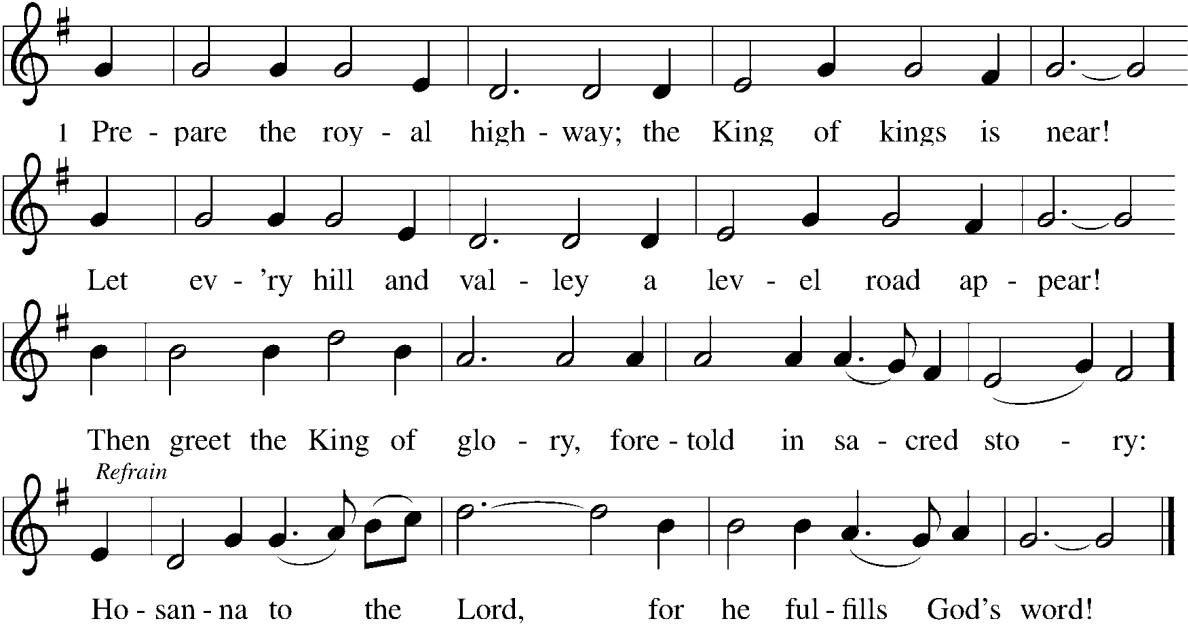
O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.

EXPLANATION AND ACTION

L: The paraments we place out during Advent are truly “fit for a king.” BLUE is a regal color—“royal blue”—a reminder that the descendant of David whose birth we prepare to celebrate is the one who left his eternal throne to take his place among us, a royal ambassador... so that we might be welcomed at last, as those who have been made members of the Royal Family, into the grand home he has prepared for us. Advent BLUE is often seen as the color of heaven. Through Jesus Christ, the way is open!

(The Paraments are placed.)

VERSE 1 Prepare the Royal Highway (ELW 264)



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!

Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!

Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:

Refrain

Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

LITANY

P: O Key of David, come!
C: You open and no one can close; you close and no one can open.
P: O Royal Power of Israel:
C: Break down the walls of prison death!

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 11:1-3a

¹A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

VERSE 4 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257)

O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

EXPLANATION AND ACTION

L: The Christmas tree is certainly the largest decoration we attempt each year, isn't it? It's hard to miss, and therefore hard to miss its message: There is no question what time of year this is, what we are preparing to celebrate. The Bible uses a picture very much like this to describe the coming Christ, that "he shall stand as an ensign for the peoples"—a sign so obvious that it can't be missed. The cross of Christ has become just such a sign, hasn't it? Even when no words are spoken, its message of forgiveness and love towers over everything else.

(The Christmas tree is lit.)

VERSE 7 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257)


O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new.

EXPLANATION AND ACTION

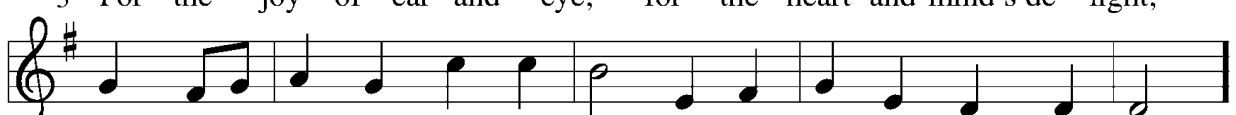
L: The greens kind of tie it all together, don't they? Garlands provide a kind of visual unity, and wreaths are even in the shape of a circle, a symbol of oneness, of togetherness. As they all grew from common soil, they may remind us that we too share a common origin, created by our one heavenly Father, redeemed by the one Savior of the world, united by the one Spirit... to bear fruit for the Lord, "to display his glory."

(The Greens are hung.)


VERSES 1 & 3 For the Beauty of the Earth (ELW 879)




1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the beau - ty of the skies,



3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,



for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:



Refrain

Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

VERSE 3 *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* (ELW 272)

3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the
air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
sin and death he saves us and light-ens ev - 'ry load.

LITANY

- P: O Sacred Lord, come!
C: **You showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush and gave him the Law on Mount Sinai.**
P: O Ruler of the house of Israel:
C: **Stretch out your arm and save us!**

THE GREENS

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 61:1, 3

A reading from Isaiah. ¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion — to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

VERSE 3 *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (ELW 279)

How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.

LITANY

- P: O Branch of Jesse, come!
C: **Kings are silent in your presence and nations bow before you.**
P: O Sign for all peoples:
C: **Come quickly to deliver us!**

THE CHRISMONS

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 40:9, 5a

A reading from Isaiah. ⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"... ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

VERSE 2 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257)

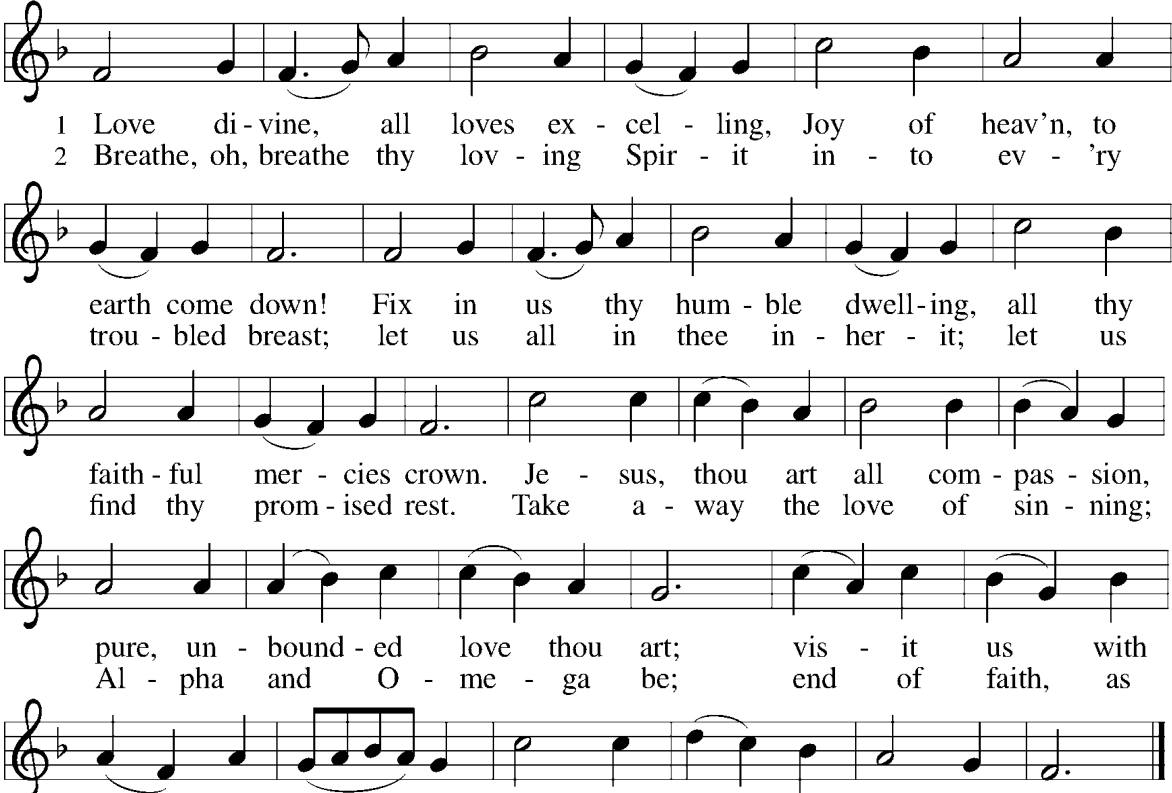
O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way.

EXPLANATION AND ACTION

L: But it is not a bare tree that we set up in this house of God. Each of the Chrismons with which we adorn the tree is a teaching tool; it has a meaning, it tells a story, it conveys a truth.

(The Chrismons are hung.)

VERSES 1 & 2 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* (ELW 631)



1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heav'n, to
2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - 'ry

earth come down! Fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy
trou - bled breast; let us all in thee in - her - it; let us

faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion,
find thy prom - ised rest. Take a - way the love of sin - ning;

pure, un - bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with
Al - pha and O - me - ga be; end of faith, as

thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.
its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.

LITANY

P: O Wisdom, come!
C: You govern all creation with your strong yet tender care.
P: O holy Word of God:
C: Come, teach us; make us wise!

THE POINSETTIAS

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 35:1-2

A reading from Isaiah. The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with 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.

VERSE 3 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257)

O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe.

EXPLANATION AND ACTION

L: Whenever flowers bloom in the desert, it is something to be noticed, a reminder—even there—of the goodness and presence of God. But what caught Moses' attention that day was even more striking. It was flame red, and made him turn aside for a closer look. Poinsettias in church can serve that same function. The red in "Christmas red-and-green" has always been looked upon as a reminder of the blood of Jesus Christ. Holly berries do that too, of course, but poinsettias splash the color big. Let them serve to assure us—as that bush once did for Moses—of the presence of the Lord.

(The Poinsettias are placed.)