

Third Sunday of Advent.

December 11, 2022

INTRODUCTION

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

PRELUDE

Light Dawns on a Weary World

Aaron David Miller

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

INVOCATION

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**



St. Matthew's
LUTHERAN CHURCH

12351 All Saints Place
Woodbridge, VA 22192
703-494-3090
www.stmatthewsva.org

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS ~ *Please stand, sit, or kneel for Confession. Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep.

Let us confront our sins, and confess them to the one who is merciful and just.

~Silence is kept for reflection.

P: God of new beginnings,

C: we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign.

We have strayed from your paths. We prepare for war instead of peace.

We dishonor one another and your creation.

Purify us with your refining fire and set us again on your way of love,

that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance, and welcome your coming among us.

Amen.

P: People of God,

a new thing is growing in our midst,

a tender branch, a living sign.

By water and the Spirit you are joined to this wonder.

You have put on ✝ Christ,

and your sins have been washed away.

Rejoice in the way of the Lord. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN ~*Please stand*

He Came Down

ELW 253



- 1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
- 2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
- 3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
- 4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have light; hal - le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.
he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have joy;

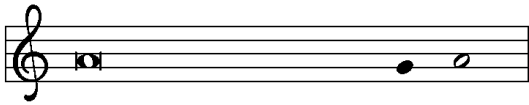
Text: Cameroon traditional

Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



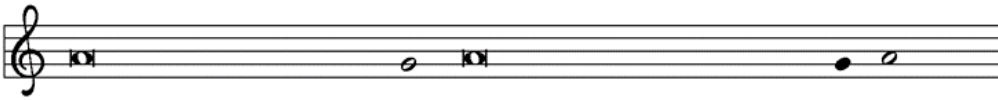
Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



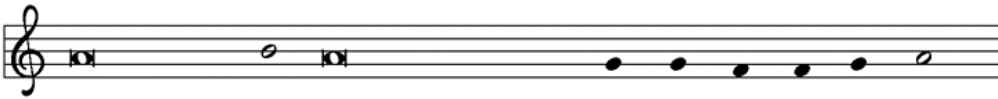
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Assisting minister



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa-ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.



For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,



in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther. A-men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of the Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

~ Please share a sign of peace with those around you

~Please be seated

FIRST READING

Isaiah 35:1-10

The first reading is from the Prophet Isaiah, the 35th chapter...

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 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.
Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."
Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
No 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.
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The Word of the Lord; Thanks be to God.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Pat Knock, Kathy Lundgren

Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer, with your wonders near at hand.
Amen.

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (verse 3)

ELW 240



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them home - ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate - way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954
Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune
Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

SECOND READING

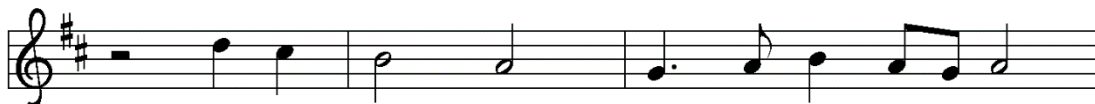
James 5:7-10

The second reading is from the letter of James, the fifth chapter ...

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord; Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL**Matthew 11:2-11**

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 11th chapter ... C: Glory to you, O Lord.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way before you.'

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Holy Words, Holy Wisdom. Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**Kathy Lundgren****MESSAGE****Rev. Kirsten Laderach****HYMN OF THE DAY ~Please stand*****Light Dawns on a Weary World*****ELW 726**

1 Light dawns on a wea - ry world when eyes be - gin to
 2 Love grows in a wea - ry world when hun - gry hearts find
 3 Hope blooms in a wea - ry world when crea-tures, once for -



see all peo - ple's dig - ni - ty. Light dawns on a
 bread and chil - dren's dreams are fed. Love grows in a
 lorn, find wil - der - ness re - born. Hope blooms in a



wea - ry world: the prom-ised day of jus - tice comes.
 wea - ry world: the prom-ised feast of plen - ty comes.
 wea - ry world: the prom-ised green of E - den comes.



Refrain
 The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs;



the hills and moun-tains shall break forth with sing - ing!



Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953
 Music: TEMPLE OF PEACE, William P. Rowan, b. 1951
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THE APOSTLE'S 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 INTERCESSION ~ *Please stand, sit, or kneel for the prayers*

P: As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.
 ~A *brief silence*.

A: Gracious God, we rejoice in the gifts of your Spirit. Equip the global church to magnify your love and peace in every land. We pray for the work of the Lutheran World Federation and ELCA Global Mission.

God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

A: Abundant God, we rejoice in your creation. Revive lands we have squandered and depleted. Make gardens flourish in cities and neighborhoods. Cleanse polluted air and water so living things may breathe, drink, and praise you.

God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

A: Righteous God, we rejoice in your justice. End racism and oppression. Deliver all who are unjustly imprisoned or persecuted. Reconcile nations and peoples in conflict. Help us pray for our enemies.

God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

A: Healing God, we rejoice in your compassion. Comfort any in distress because of worry, illness, or loss, (especially). Strengthen and protect health care workers, rescue teams, crisis counselors, and all who risk themselves to keep others safe.

God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

A: Abiding God, we rejoice in your company. Give us calm and patient hearts as we gather with family and friends. Keep us mindful of those for whom this season is not happy. Console the grieving and surround them with loving support.

God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

A: Faithful God, we rejoice with Mary, Mother of our Lord, and with all the saints, that your mercy endures for all generations. Look with favor on those who have died and lead us to joyfully sing of your everlasting promises.

God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

P: God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

OFFERING *We give thanks to God by offering the gifts we have been given for the sake of the world. We invite you to place your donations in the plate as it is passed. Donations can also be made online at stmatthewsva.org/give. Your offerings go toward the mission of the church and allow us to respond to the needs of our congregation and community locally, nationally, and internationally.*

OFFERTORY

A Little Child Shall Lead Them Senior Choir

Roy Hopp

OFFERING SONG



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the
brim our cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the
seeds that were sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u - nite them with the
prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence,
and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

P: Eternal God,

C: you make the desert bloom and send springs of water to thirsty ground.

Receive these simple gifts of bread, wine, and money,

and make us messengers of your mercy and love

for all in need of your healing and justice. We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you

C: And also with you

P: Lift up your hearts

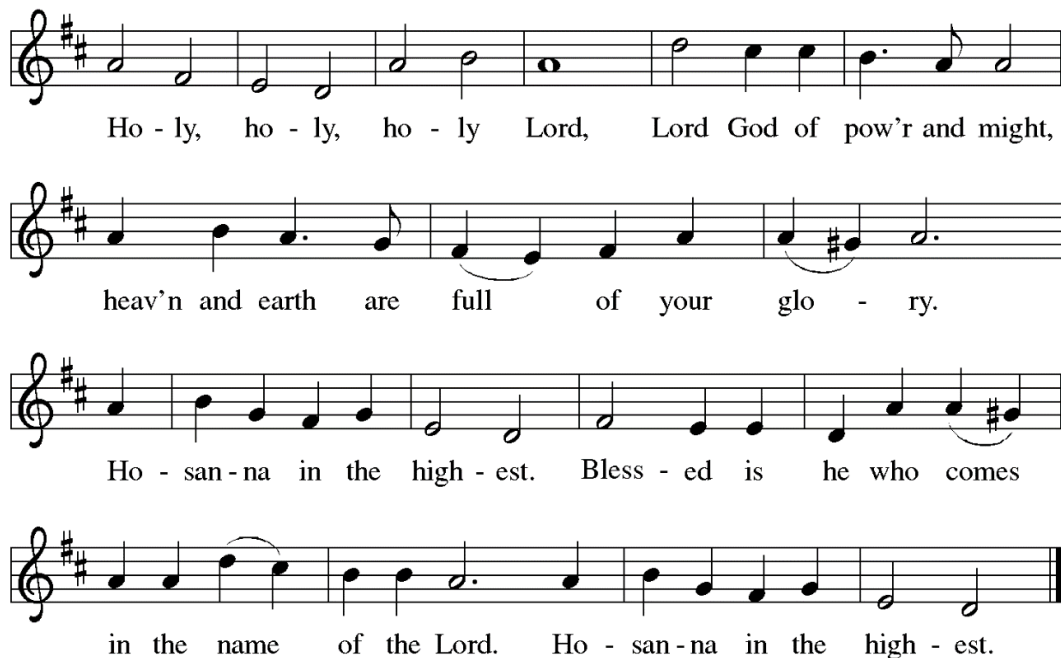
C: We lift them to the Lord

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise

P: 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. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

P: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,

the Word made flesh.

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.

P: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

C: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P: With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.

C: Come, Lord Jesus.

P: Holy God, we long for your Spirit.

Come among us.

Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us.

Awaken your people.

Fill us with your light.

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

C: Come, Holy Spirit.

P: All praise and glory are yours,
Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: So, come to this table, you who have much faith and you who would like to have more. You who have been to this sacrament often, and you who have not been for a long time. You who have tried to follow Jesus, and you who have failed. Come. It is Christ who invites us to meet him here. These are the gifts of God for the people of God. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ~Please be seated

All who believe Jesus is present in this sacrament are invited to receive the bread and wine. Communion will be distributed by stations; when invited by an usher, please come forward using the center aisle to receive the bread and wine. Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are available. Know that if you only take the bread that you have fully communed. Whether you are receiving communion at in-person worship or if you are receiving communion at home, we extend to you: The body of Christ given for you. And the blood of Christ shed for you.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on

us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have

mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the

sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

ELW 254



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, 1707-1788

Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835*Come, Let Us Eat*

ELW 491

Leader or All



1 Come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread,
 2 Come, let us drink, for now the wine is poured,
 3 In Je - sus' pres - ence now we meet and rest,
 4 Rise, then, to spread a - broad God's might - y word,

All




come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread.
 come, let us drink, for now the wine is poured.
 in Je - sus' pres - ence now we meet and rest.
 rise, then, to spread a - broad God's might - y word.

Leader or All



Our Lord's bod - y let us take to - geth - er,
 Je - sus' blood poured let us drink to - geth - er,
 In the pres - ence of our Lord we gath - er,
 Je - sus ris - en will bring in the king - dom,

All



our Lord's bod - y let us take to - geth - er.
 Je - sus' blood poured let us drink to - geth - er.
 in the pres - ence of our Lord we gath - er.
 Je - sus ris - en will bring in the king - dom.

Text: Billema Kwillia, b. 1925, sts. 1–3; Gilbert E. Doan Jr., b. 1930, st. 4, alt.; tr. Margaret D. Miller, b. 1927, sts. 1–3, alt.
 Music: A VA DE, Billema Kwillia, adapt.
 Text sts. 1–3 and tune © Lutheran World Federation; text st. 4 and music adapt. © 1972 *Contemporary Worship 4*, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

ELW 256



1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
 2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
 call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be-fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for-ev - er.
 Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635–1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
 Music: FREU DICH SEHR, *Trente quatre pseumes de David*, Geneva, 1551

COMMUNION BLESSING

P: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: Faithful God,
in this meal you have remembered your mercy,
bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ.
As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled,
sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery.
Guide us toward your promised future,
coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN ~Please stand

Joy to the World

ELW 267



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



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.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

BLESSING

P: God the eternal Word, who dwells with us in Jesus,
and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit, ✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Christ is near.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE*

Lo! He Comes With Clouds Descending

Arr. Nancy Raabe

**During the postlude, you are invited to exit the sanctuary or sit and enjoy the musical offering.*

✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠

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Lector: Angela Allen

Ushers: Amy Stone, Angela Allen, Mike Craighead, Zach Allen

The Eternal Candle for the month of December is sponsored by The Bortner Families,
In celebration of the advent and birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

For more announcements, please visit www.stmatthewsva.org

Happening Today – Part 1 of our Annual Congregational Meeting will be held directly following worship in the Nave. We will be voting on Council positions and our 2023 budget. PreK-5th grades and confirmation will meet in their regular classrooms.

Wednesday, Dec. 14, 21, 7pm - Midweek Advent Services. These are contemplative services of candles, silence, and song as we get ready for the Holy Disruption of Christmas. The services are about 30 minutes and are in-person only.

Sunday, December 18 and Saturday, December 24 –We're looking for families and/or friends who would like to light the Advent Wreath during our remaining Advent and Christmas Eve services. Reach out to Kathy Lundgren (klundgren@stmatthewsva.org) for more information or sign up on the St. Matthew's SignUp Genius.

Tuesday, December 20, 7pm – Come lend a hand for the Greening of the Church—there will be opportunities for all ages to help as we decorate the church! Stay afterwards for cider and cookies in the narthex.