

ADVENT 2023

BEHOLD!



MUHLENBERG
LUTHERAN CHURCH



Behold! ~ December 3, 10 and 17, 2023

WELCOME

We welcome you in the name of Christ. **We love welcoming guests/visitors** and encourage you to complete one of the blue cards in the pew rack and place it in the offering basket, or **scan this QR Code** with your smart phone to complete the visitor card digitally. We have a gift for you at our Welcome Desk – please stop by after worship. You are invited to join in all parts of worship. Everything you need is printed in this worship booklet. All who desire to receive Holy Communion are welcome at the table. If you do not wish to receive, you are still welcome to come forward for a blessing! For instructions on how to receive the bread and wine, see the Communion section later in this booklet. Portions of worship in bold print are to be spoken by the whole congregation. We stand for portions of our worship service. **Please feel free to remain seated, if you prefer.**



HEALTH AND SAFETY

We are grateful that the prevalence of COVID in our community has decreased, and we do not require masks in the building. However, we continue to follow the current CDC guidance and we request that anyone who experiences symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, stay home, self-isolate and get tested. Please wear a well-fitted mask if you have a known exposure to COVID in the past 10 days. Wearing a mask for any reason is always welcomed. Thank you for doing all you can to help care for one another by reducing the spread of germs in our community!

OUR WORSHIP

Our worship is rooted in the ancient pattern of the church – gathering, word, meal, sending. The shape of this liturgy and much of the actual words/prayers come directly from scripture. Though we make seasonal shifts, the constancy of our worship reflects God’s constant love and promises through forgiveness, scripture, and the sacraments of baptism and communion. Following this liturgical pattern, as well as the Narrative Lectionary (a four-year cycle of scripture readings in biblical order), we are connected through our worship with Christians around the world and throughout time. *For details, see “About Our Worship” on the last page.*

Worship will be live-streamed this morning. Digital ministry is an essential part of our community with the Wellstream service at 11:00 am allowing those at home to worship alongside our gathered community for a service of Holy Communion. The cameras will be primarily focused on our worship leaders and offer some wide-angle views of the sanctuary. If you have questions or concerns about appearing on camera, contact Pastor Alex or Communication Minister Christian Perritt (perritt@muhlenberglutheran.org).

OTHER NOTES

- **Amplification devices** for the hearing impaired are available from ushers or at the Welcome Desk.
- A **restroom** is located at the north end of the Gathering Area (additional restrooms downstairs).

MUHLENBERG LUTHERAN CHURCH: A WELLSPRING OF GOD’S GRACE

Open ✝ Authentic ✝ Relational ✝ Serving

Pastor Lauren Eanes

Pastor Alex Zuber

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Harrisonburg, VA 22801

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WORSHIP WITH HOLY COMMUNION

GATHERING

We come from our homes, our labor, our struggles, and our joys – which we share in fellowship as a Christian community. We are gathered together as God’s people to worship. In this first part of our worship, we share together honestly – our sins in confession, our joy in forgiveness.

WELCOME

PRELUDE

(We stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We stand and face the baptismal font. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation. **Amen.**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Eternal God, we search for hope and salvation, but hold no expectation of finding you. We build up our walls and strength, but make no preparation for your merciful reign among us. We rush through the movements of the season, and fail to put our faith in you. We stand complicit in oppression, and withhold your promise from all people. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us attentive to your will and show us how to walk in your ways, for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.

BEHOLD! I bring you good news of great joy which will come to all the people. God’s salvation is at hand, God’s mercy endures forever. In the tender compassion of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. With attentive hearts, BEHOLD the goodness of our God! **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

The congregation turns to face the cross as the procession approaches the altar, reminding us that Christ leads us into the presence and love of God.

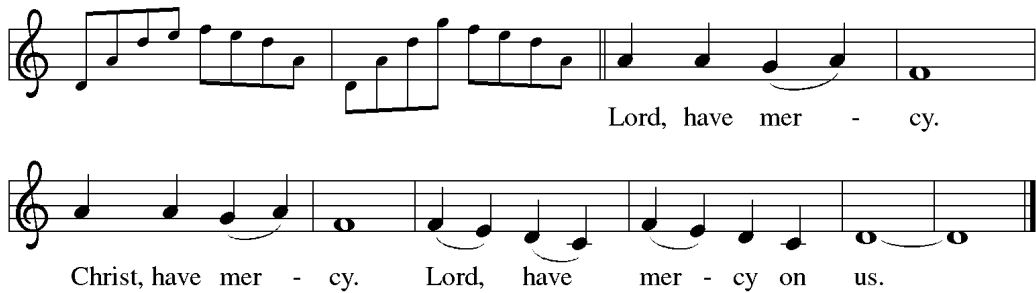
December 3	<i>Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus</i>	ELW 254
December 10	<i>Savior of the Nations, Come</i>	ELW 263
December 17	<i>Awake! Awake and Greet the New Morn</i>	ELW 242

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.**

KYRIE ~ we sing twice

ELW 158



Lord, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy on us.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

(We sit)

CHILDREN'S TIME AND ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

Children are invited forward for a brief message with the pastor.

WORD

The first half of our liturgy focuses on the Word of God through the reading of scripture and preaching. The pattern of reading, singing, reading, singing is an ancient one, which comes from Christianity's roots in Jewish synagogue worship.

FIRST READING

December 3 Jeremiah 32:26-27; 33:10-18 Pew Bible page 819

December 10 Isaiah 40:1-11 Pew Bible page 740

December 17 Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-4, 10-13 Pew Bible page 464

The reading concludes:

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

(We stand)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to ... **Glory to you, O Lord.**

December 3 Mark 8:27-29 Pew Bible N.T. page 44

December 10 Mark 1:1-4 Pew Bible N.T. page 35

December 17 Luke 2:25-32 Pew Bible N.T. page 60

After the reading:

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

(We sit)

SERMON

Silence for reflection follows.

(We stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

December 3	<i>O Come, O Come Emmanuel we sing verses 4-8</i>	ELW 257
December 10	<i>Comfort, Comfort Now My People</i>	ELW 256
December 17	<i>God is Here!</i>	ELW 526

NICENE CREED

Let us 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.**

PRAYERS

After each petition:

. . . Merciful God, receive our prayer.

The Lay Assisting Minister concludes the prayers:

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Have a prayer concern to share? Forms are available in the back cover of each hymnal.

PEACE

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

The congregation may greet one another with a gesture of peace, using these or similar words:
“Peace be with you.”

(We sit)

MEAL

In the second half of our liturgy, we gather around the table, following Jesus' invitation. Here in this meal we encounter the risen Lord who gives himself for the forgiveness of sins and strengthening the Body of Christ.

OFFERING *see The Chimes*

An offering is gathered at this time to support the mission of the church and care for those in need. Our offerings are a humble and grateful response to the gifts that God has first given us. You can place a gift in the offering plate as the ushers come around, or give online by scanning the QR Code and visiting our online giving portal.

**MAKE YOUR OFFERING DIGITALLY
BY SCANNING HERE**



**MUHLENBERG
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

(We stand)

OFFERING ~ Soon and Very Soon we sing verse 1 and coda

ELW 439



1 Soon and ver - y soon
2 No more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,
3 No more dy - in' there,
4 Soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon
no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,
no more dy - in' there,
soon and ver - y soon

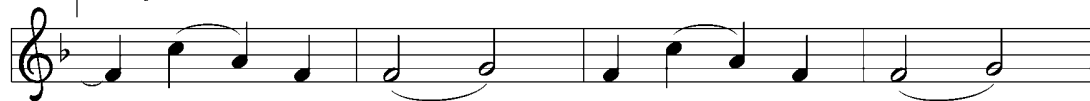


soon and ver - y soon
no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King.
no more dy - in' there,
soon and ver - y soon



Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, we're goin' to see the King!

Coda after stanza 4



Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu -

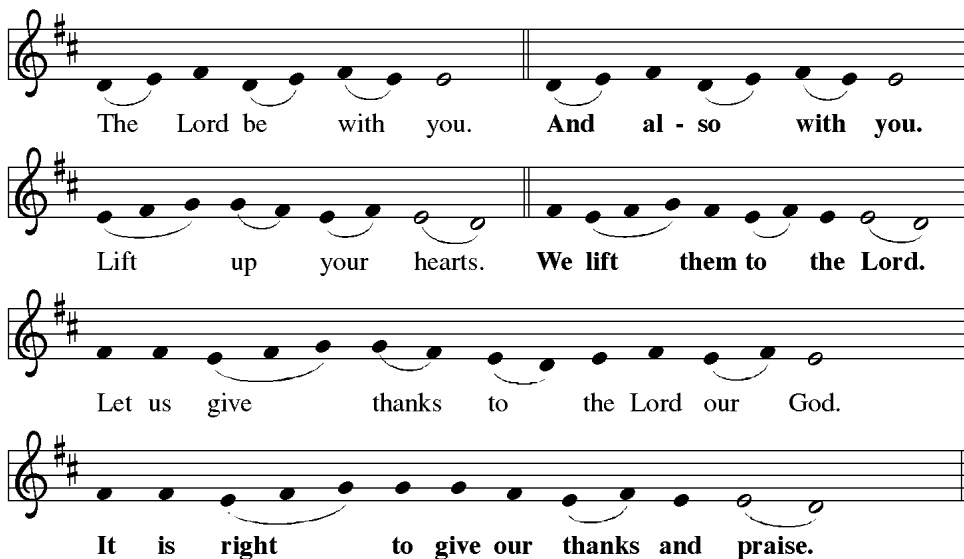


jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of our waiting and watching, 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.

GREAT THANKSGIVING



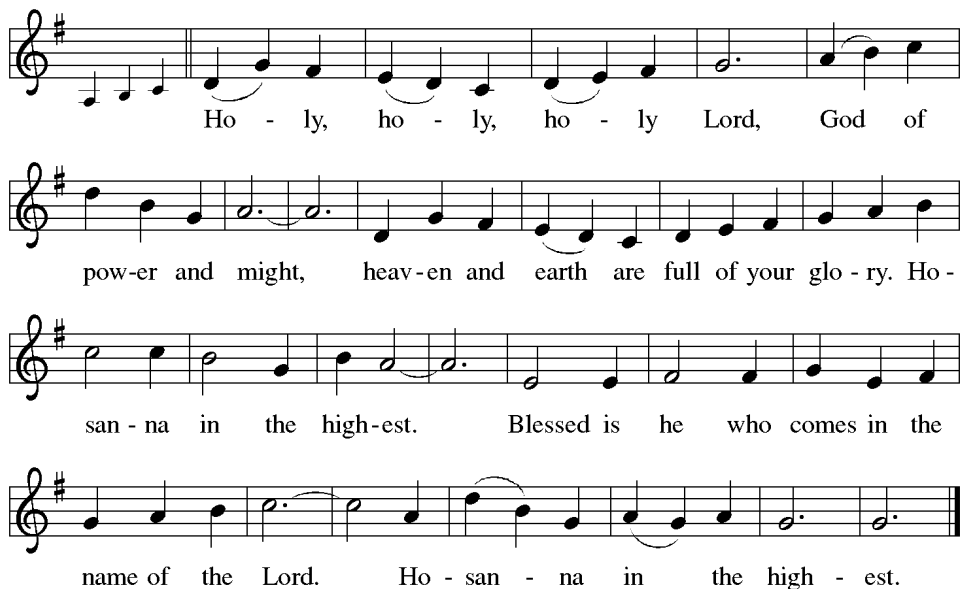
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right . . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of

pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the

name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

As the shadows lengthen in this season, we bless you, sheltering God.

We glorify you for the endless, starlit sky, deep with the mystery of your creative labor through all time and space. We praise you for the fertile earth and for the life its darkness holds and births: plants of every variety, animals curled in sleep, humankind you shaped by your own hand.

Stay with us, Lord. **We behold your hope.**

Through the night you led your people into freedom by your presence. At day's end you rained down manna in the wilderness. At sundown your Son brought healing to people in need. In the midday night when Jesus died on the cross, life came forth for all. Stay with us, Lord. **We behold your life.**

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.

Our hearts burn within us as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

Like a mother hen, hold us close through the transforming night. Watch with those who labor, accompany those who long for peaceful sleep, welcome those whose waking will be only in you. Into our deepest night, come, Lord Jesus.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Come, Holy Spirit, make here the body of Christ: in the breaking of the bread, in justice for our broken world, in rest for the weary, come, Holy Spirit.

Come, Holy Spirit.

To you, O God, painter of both night and day, guiding star and healing sun, breath of peace and wind of change, be all glory, all honor, all praise through Advent's night until we behold your coming dawn, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

All who hunger and thirst, come. Behold the God of our salvation!

(We sit)

COMMUNION

All are welcome at the Lord's Table! After the invitation to communion, the ushers will direct each row to come forward. If, for any reason, you prefer not to receive communion, you are welcome to come forward to receive a blessing. If you are unable to come forward, signal an usher or raise your hand, and an assisting minister will bring the elements to you.

As you come forward, pick up a small cup from the table at the front and then receive the bread (wafer) from the minister. Gluten-free wafers are located on the table. If you require gluten-free, please take one and present it to the pastor for blessing.

Next, proceed to one of the two communion assistants. The first chalice has wine, and the second chalice has grape juice.

As the ministers give the bread and cup to you, they say these words:

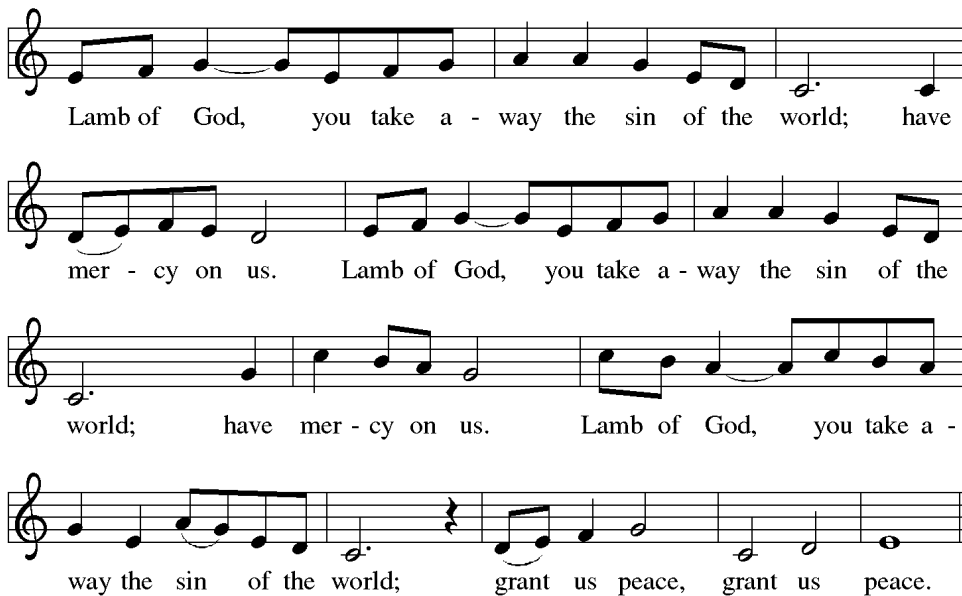
"The body of Christ, given for you . . . The blood of Christ, shed for you."

You may say: "Amen."

*After consuming the wine/juice, please put your cup on the tray along the side wall, and return to your seat via the side aisle. **If you don't wish to remove your mask up front**, you may choose to bring the elements back to your pew to eat/drink there.*

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION

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.

(We stand)

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

NUNC DIMITTIS

Following our reception of the Lord's Supper, we sing Simeon's ancient song of faith — "Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace" — and nothing could be more appropriate. Indeed, in the gifts of bread and wine, our eyes have seen his salvation, beholding the real presence of Christ. Better yet, we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good (Ps. 34:8).



Now, Lord, you let your ser-vant go in peace: your word has been ful -



filled. My own eyes have seen the sal - va - tion which you have pre-pared in the



sight of ev - 'ry peo - ple: a light to re-veal you to the na - tions



and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.



Now, Lord, you let your ser - vant go in peace.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to behold together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

SENDING

Our worship does not end, but continues in the world. In our daily lives we are called to be ministers of God's love and mercy as we live and serve by the power of the risen Christ.

SENDING HYMN

The congregation turns & faces the cross reminding us that we follow Christ into the world & our daily lives.

December 3	<i>The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns</i>	ELW 260
December 10	<i>Prepare the Royal Highway</i>	ELW 264
December 17	<i>The Wellspring of God's Saving Grace</i>	<i>see The Chimes</i>

BLESSING

May God's gracious presence wrap around and protect you. May the promise of the holy Christ child forever rest in the curve of your life. May the sweet, fearless song of the Holy Spirit sing you to sleep and waken you in Advent dawns. May you, and those you love and serve, expect the good news, +Emmanuel, God-With-Us.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

We have been renewed at the Wellspring of God's grace! Now, go in peace to live out Christ's love!

We go to be: Open † Authentic † Relational † Serving
Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Permission to print/podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from One License with license # A-701538, CCLI license # 20104877, Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License: SAS014720, and St James Press, license #15220.

After worship, Pastor Lauren and Pastor Alex invite you to greet them and each other in the Gathering Area. Please leave this worship booklet in the basket at the sanctuary entrance for use in future services (or recycling).

ABOUT OUR WORSHIP...

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS: + All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins, but no one should feel compelled. Both our confession of sin and God's promise of mercy are rooted in our baptism. We come before God recalling our brokenness, but even more God's great grace.

GATHERING HYMN: We sing as the Spirit gathers us for worship and this hymn sets the tone for the day.

KYRIE: The Kyrie is an ancient piece of service liturgy that may date back to the second century. Kyrie Eleison is Greek for "Lord have mercy" and is in reference to both New and Old Testament scriptures which use the same words and pattern.

PRAYER OF THE DAY: The Prayer of the Day collects the themes from today's scripture readings.

READINGS AND PSALM: Liturgy, from the Greek, means "the work of the people." Our worship is designed so we all take part. We are far more than just spectators. The scripture readings follow a three-year cycle, called a lectionary. We are connected with other Christians all over the world, in many denominations, reading the same texts. The Psalms were the original Hymns in Holy Scripture, used by God's people for personal and corporate devotion. They continue to be prayed, sung and read by God's people all over the world as a rich and honest expression of faith. We stand during the gospel because we believe our Lord is present with us in the reading.

HYMN OF THE DAY: This hymn complements the day's scripture readings and sermon.

NICENE & APOSTLES' CREEDS: The creeds (statements of faith) date back to the 4th century and contain the basics of what Christians around the world hold to be true. The use of the non-capitalized word "catholic" means simply worldwide or universal.

PRAYERS: We pray as a community. The assisting minister leads this time to gather the prayers of all, and at his/ her invitation you may add others aloud or silently in your heart.

PEACE: Much more than a pleasant greeting — we do this to proclaim God's promise of peace to one another.

OFFERING: Our offerings are collected and dedicated to our Lord's service. They support the ministries of Christ's church in this congregation, the Virginia Synod, ELCA, and our global mission partners.

OFFERING SONG: This song becomes our prayer as our gifts are collected and dedicated to our Lord's service.

GREAT THANKSGIVING & HOLY, HOLY, HOLY: The Great Thanksgiving is an ancient part of the worship that proclaims our thanks for the gifts of God in the meal. The "Holy, Holy, Holy" echoes the heavenly chorus in Isaiah 6:3 and the crowds of Mark 11:9 as Jesus enters Jerusalem. This reminds us that we are in the presence of a God identified both by holiness and humility. Some will make the sign of the cross at the announcement of God's presence: "Blessed is He..."

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER: Eucharist is the Greek word for thanks. These are the words and actions, the commands and promises of Jesus at the last supper with his disciples as recorded in scripture: 1Cor. 11:23-26, Matt. 26:26-29, Luke 22:15-20.

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Jesus taught his disciples this prayer. In this prayer, all our needs and concerns are addressed. See ELW page 1163 for Martin Luther's explanation of this prayer in the small catechism.

COMMUNION: The "last supper" was a meal that Jesus shared with his disciples before his crucifixion. He invited them to share this meal in the future to remember him and he promised to be present in a mysterious, but very real sense. All who desire to participate are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Feel free to remain seated if you prefer.

RECESSIONAL HYMN: We gather once more in song as our worship concludes, and we prepare to take this good news into the world.

BLESSING: In this blessing we are reminded we bear God's name as we depart to live out our baptism, serving our neighbor and spreading the gospel. It reaffirms our mission and reminds us that if we are to be a Wellspring of Grace, we need to be renewed first through Water, Word, and Meal—the means of grace God has given to us.

SAVE THE DATE!



Advent Begins & ADVENT-ure Sunday - *Sun. Dec. 3* - worship at 8:30am and 11:00am, and Advent-ure Sunday activities from 9:30am - 11:30am

Holden Evening Prayer - Wednesdays in Advent - services on Dec. 6, 13, and 20 at 7:00pm. In-person in the Sanctuary and live-streamed to Facebook and YouTube.

Hanging of the Greens - *Sun. Dec. 10, 9:45am-10:30am* - at the church

Christmas Caroling - *Sun. Dec. 10, 12:15pm* - meet for a light meal in Wayland Hall and then go caroling!

175th Anniversary Kickoff - *Sun. Dec. 17* - help kick off our year of celebration!

Christmas Pageant - *Sun. Dec. 17, 9:45am-10:45am* - support our young performers in the MAC!

Longest Night Worship - *Thurs. Dec. 21, 7:00pm, Park View Mennonite Church* - join 7 other congregations in worship.

Youth Christmas Party - *Fri. Dec. 22, 6:00-8:00pm* - at Pastor Lauren's house.

Christmas Eve Worship - *Sun. Dec. 24* - 10:00am "Fireside Advent", Christmas Photos starting at 3:20pm, 4:00pm "Family Service", 7:00pm "Traditional Service", 10:00pm "Late Service"

Community Christmas Dinner - *Mon. Dec. 25, 4:30pm* - in the MAC

Epiphany Party & Chili Cook-off - *Sun. Jan. 7, 4:30pm* - join us for Chalking the Doors, Burning the Greens, Homemade Chili, and more!