



Welcome to

Grace Lutheran Church and School

Bring in, build up, and send
out disciples for Jesus Christ.



Visitors

Welcome! We are glad you are here.

Read more about worship on the inside
cover of this worship folder.

Fill out the form on the back cover to tell us
more about you.

Worship at Grace

The service is printed in this worship folder.

Hymns are ordinarily in the green LBW and
blue WOV hymnals.

Information is printed on the next page about
additional resources for worship.

Learn More

Today's insert contains announcements
about ministries of Grace Church and School.

Learn more about Grace by visiting us online
at graceriverforest.org.

The Holy Communion

New Year's Eve
December 31, 2025

7:00 p.m.

WELCOME TO GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH



Children's Resources Children's resources, including activity bags, worship bulletins and booster seats, are available in the narthex and from the ushers.

Assistance in Worship For those who find it difficult to stand during any part of the service, please remain seated and contact an usher if you would like Holy Communion to be brought to you.

Sound enhancement units and large print bulletins are available in the back of the church and from the ushers.

Altar Flowers Altar flowers may be sponsored by members to celebrate a special occasion or honor the memory of a loved one. See the front desk for more details.

Cell Phones and Pagers Please silence all cell phones and pagers. Thank you.

Holy Communion In Holy Communion the crucified and risen Christ is present, giving his true body and blood as food and drink. All baptized Christians are invited to the table where Christ is host.

✠ GATHERING ✠

PRELUDE: *Das alte Jahr vergangen ist*, BWV 614
(The old year has passed)

Johann Sebastian Bach

We stand.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

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.

C Amen.

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just
will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination

P Most merciful God,

C we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves.

**We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will
and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us
and, for his sake, God forgives us all our sins.
As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority,
I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins,
in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

ENTRANCE HYMN: Greet Now the Swiftly Changing Year

(green) LBW #181

Stanzas three and five are sung by the choir in a harmonization by John Folkening.



- All** 1 Greet now the swift - ly chang - ing year with
All 2 Re - mem - ber now the Son of God and
Choir 3 This Je - sus came to end sin's war; this
All 4 His love a - bun - dant far ex - ceeds the



joy and pen - i - tence sin - cere. Re - joice! Re - joice! With
 how he shed his in - fant blood. Re - joice! Re - joice! With
 name of names for us he bore. Re - joice! Re - joice! With
 vol - ume of a whole year's needs. Re - joice! Re - joice! With



thanks em - brace an - oth - er year of grace.
 thanks em - brace an - oth - er year of grace.
 thanks em - brace an - oth - er year of grace.
 thanks em - brace an - oth - er year of grace.

- Choir** 5 With him as Lord to lead our way **All** 6 "All glory be to God on high,
 in want and in prosperity, and peace on earth!" the angels cry.
 what need we fear in earth or space Rejoice! Rejoice! With thanks embrace
 in this new year of grace! another year of grace.

- All** 7 God, Father, Son, and Spirit, hear!
 To all our pleas incline your ear;
 upon our lives rich blessing trace
 in this new year of grace.

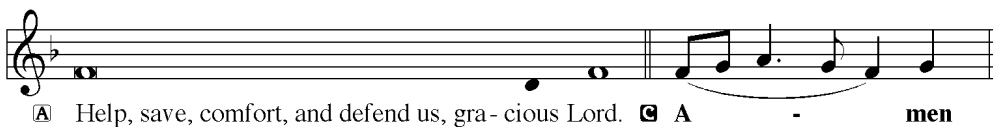
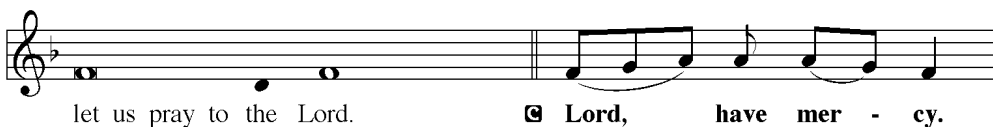
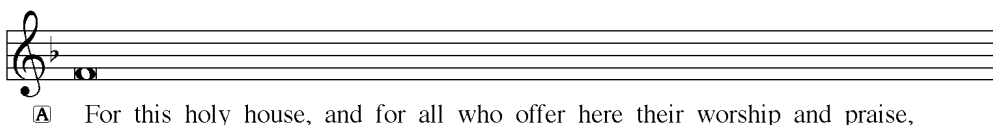
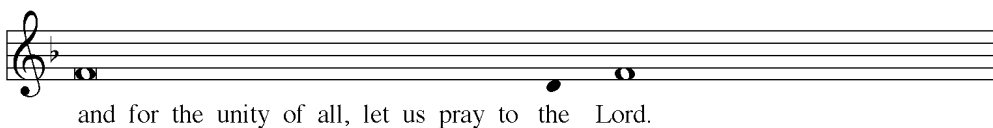
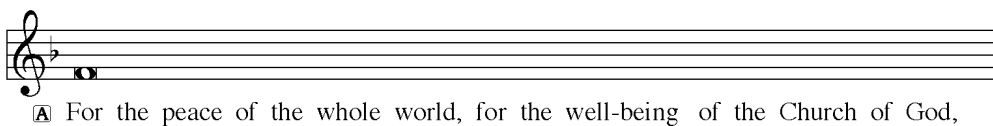
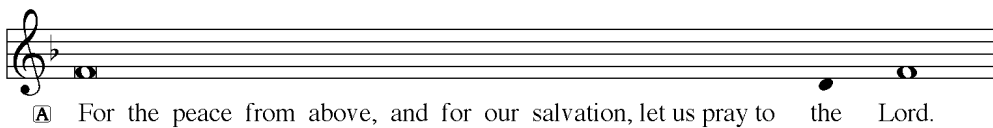
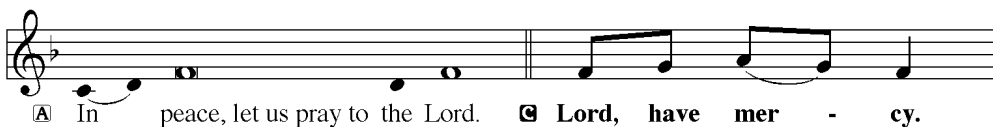
Text: Slovak; tr. Jaroslav J. Vajda, b. 1919, alt.
 Music: ROK NOVY, Závorka, *Kancional*, 1602

Text © 1969 Concordia Publishing House

APOSTOLIC GREETING

- 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



HYMN OF PRAISE: Glory to God in the Highest



A Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his peo - ple on earth.



B 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 The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

Eternal God, you have placed us in a world of space and time,
and through the events of our lives you bless us with your love.

Grant that in the new year we may know your presence, see your love at work,
and live in the light of the event that gives us joy forever—the coming of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

We sit.

✝ WORD ✝

FIRST READING: Ecclesiastes 3:1–13

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: ²a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; ³a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; ⁴a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; ⁵a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; ⁶a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; ⁷a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; ⁸a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. ⁹What gain have the workers from their toil? ¹⁰I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with.

¹¹He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. ¹²I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; ¹³moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.



ANTIPHON: How exalted is your name in all the world!

- L** O | Lord our Lord,*
how exalted is your name in | all the world!
- C** **Out of the mouths of in- | fants and children***
your majesty is praised a- | bove the heavens.
- L** You have set up a stronghold against your | adversaries,*
to quell the enemy and | the avenger.
- C** **When I consider your heavens, the work | of your fingers,***
the moon and the stars you have set | in their courses,
- L** what is man that you should be mind- | ful of him,*
the son of man that you should | seek him out?
- C** **You have made him but little lower | than the angels;***
you adorn him with glo- | ry and honor;
- L** you give him mastery over the works | of your hands;*,
you put all things un- | der his feet:
- C** **all | sheep and oxen,***
even the wild beasts | of the field,
- L** the birds of the air, the fish | of the sea,*
and whatsoever walks in the paths | of the sea.
- C** **O | Lord our Lord,***
how exalted is your name in | all the world!



SECOND READING: Revelation 21:1–6a

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” ⁵

And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

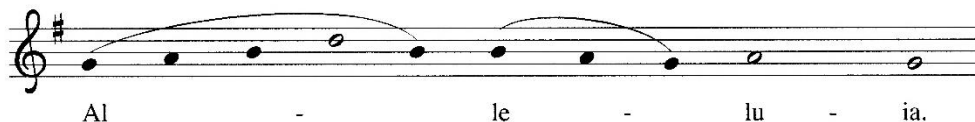
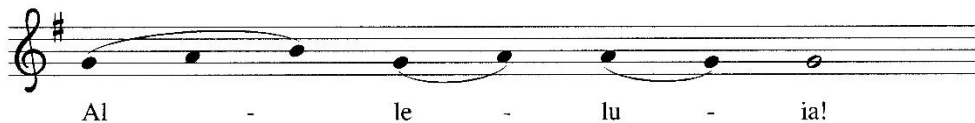
We stand and join in singing the refrain as indicated.

GOSPEL VERSE: Psalm 90:1

Carl Schalk

Choir Alleluia.

C **REFRAIN** (*below*)



Choir Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another. Alleluia!

C **REFRAIN**

HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 25:31–46

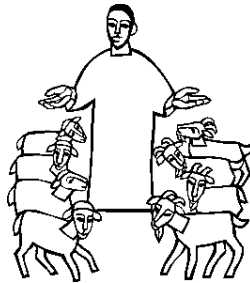
📖 The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.

🔊 Glory to you, O Lord.

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

📖 The Gospel of the Lord.

🔊 Praise to you, O Christ.



We sit.

CANTATA: *Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende*, BWV 28
(Praise God! Now the year comes to an end)

Johann Sebastian Bach

*Translation of the German text and notes corresponding to each movement are below.
Background notes for the cantata are found on page 27 in this worship folder.*

1. ARIA (Soprano)

Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende,
Praise God! Now the year comes to an end,
Das neue rücket schon heran.
The new year is already drawing near.
Gedenke, meine Seele, dran,
Think, my soul, on this,
Wieviel dir deines Gottes Hände
How much your God's hands
Im alten Jahre Guts getan!
Did for you in the old year!
Stimm ihm ein frohes Danklied an;
Sing a joyful song of thanks to him;
So wird er ferner dein gedenken
So he will think of you in the future
Und mehr zum neuen Jahre schenken.
And grant you more in the new year.

The cantata begins, not with the large choral and instrumental movement that is common in Bach cantatas, but with a joyful soprano aria in a dance-like triple meter. After a brief instrumental introduction, the soloist sings *Gottlob!* (Praise God!), a common, reverent German vernacular exclamation of the day. As the aria unfolds, the instruments accompany the soloist in blocks of contrasting sound—oboes versus strings. The original instrumental score is marked *piano* (soft) when the soloist is singing and *forte* (loud) when she is silent. Such explicit indications are unusual for Bach who assumed that players knew when to play softly or loudly and who himself adjusted the number of instruments needed for proper balance. As the movement progresses the soprano part grows ever more animated until at the word *gedenken* (to remember) she breaks into a lengthy florid passage that emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance in the coming year.

2. CHORALE

Nun lob, mein Seel, den Herren,
 Now praise, my soul, the Lord,
Was in mir ist, den Namen sein!
 Whatever is in me, praise his name!
Sein Wohltat tut er mehrn,
 He multiplies his acts of kindness,
Vergiß es nicht, o Herze mein!
 Do not forget this, oh my heart!
Hat dir dein Sünd vergeben
 He has forgiven your sins
Und heilt dein Schwachheit groß,
 And heals your great weakness,
Errett' dein armes Leben,
 He rescues your wretched life,
Nimmt dich in seinen Schoß.
 Takes you into his bosom.
Mit reichem Trost beschüttet,
 He showers you with abundant comfort,
Verjüngt, dem Adler gleich.
 He makes you young, like the eagle.
Der Kön'g schafft Recht, behütet,
 The king creates justice; he protects
Die leid'n in seinem Reich.
 Those who suffer in his kingdom.

The choir now takes up the theme of thanks, praise, and prayer in an impressive, motet-like setting of the first stanza of a well-known sixteenth-century chorale by Johann Gramann, *Nun lob mein Seel, den Herren* (My soul, now bless your maker, *LBW* 519). This splendid polyphonic setting, archaic even in Bach's time, assigns the melody (the *cantus firmus*) to the sopranos in long notes. The other voice parts often anticipate each new phrase of the melody before the soprano entrance, and the counterpoint often contains variants of the chorale melody. Bach's music highlights particular words; *Sünd* (sin), for example, appears in the lower choral voices in a rising chromatic passage.

3. RECITATIVE (Bass)

So spricht der Herr:

So says the Lord:

Es soll mir eine Lust sein,

It will be a joy for me

daß ich ihnen Gutes tun soll,

To do good for them

und ich will sie in diesem Lande pflanzen treulich,

And I will plant them in this land faithfully,

von ganzem Herzen und von ganzer Seele.

With my whole heart and my whole soul.

After a recitative announces *So spricht der Herr* (Thus saith the Lord), the bass, traditionally the *vox Christi* (voice of Christ), sings a lyrical setting of a text drawn from Jeremiah 32:41. The motive presented in the opening phrase appears in several permutations in both the vocal line and the continuo.

4. RECITATIVE (Tenor)

Gott ist ein Quell, wo lauter Güte fließt;

God is a fountain, where pure goodness flows,

Gott ist ein Licht, wo lauter Gnade scheint;

God is a light, where pure grace shines;

Gott ist ein Schatz, der lauter Segen heißt;

God is a treasure, which means pure blessings;

Gott ist ein Herr, der's treu und herzlich meinet.

God is a Lord who means it faithfully and sincerely.

Wer ihn im Glauben liebt, in Liebe kindlich ehrt,

The person who loves him in faith honors him in childlike love,

Sein Wort von Herzen hört

Hears his word in his heart

Und sich von bösen Wegen kehrt,

And turns away from evil paths,

Dem gibt er sich mit allen Gaben.

To him God gives himself with every gift.

Wer Gott hat, der muß alles haben.

Whoever has God has everything.

Sustained string chords and continuo envelop the tenor's declamation of a poetic text that extols God's virtues and describes our corresponding devotion.

5. ARIA (Alto and Tenor)

Gott hat uns im heurigen Jahre gesegnet,
God has blessed us in this current year,
Daß Wohltun und Wohlsein einander begegnet.
So that well-doing and well-being meet each other.
Wir loben ihn herzlich und bitten darneben,
We praise him sincerely and also ask
Er woll auch ein glückliches neues Jahr geben.
That he might grant us a happy new year.
Wir hoffens von seiner beharrlichen Güte
We hope this because of his steadfast goodness
Und preisens im voraus mit dankbarm Gemüte.
And praise him in advance with grateful hearts.

A prayer for continued blessings in the new year is sung in a typical Baroque duet for two voices over the bass of the *continuo*. The pastorate-like movement in 6/8 meter is divided into three sections separated by an instrumental *ritornello* (returning section) with abundant descending arpeggios in the bass line. The third section repeats material from the first, but with considerable freedom.

6. CHORALE

All solch dein Güt wir preisen,
For all such kindness, we praise you,
Vater ins Himmels Thron,
Father on heaven's throne,
Die du uns tust beweisen
That you demonstrate to us
Durch Christum, deinen Sohn,
Through Christ, your son,
Und bitten ferner dich:
And we beseech you further:
Gib uns ein friedsam Jahre,
Give us a peaceful year,
Für allem Leid bewahre
Spare us from all suffering
Und nähr uns mildiglich.
And nourish us gently.

All instruments and voices join in the closing chorale which sums up the cantata theme of thanks, praise, and prayer for a peaceful new year. The 16th-century chorale text is set to a melody that is no longer in use today, but that bears a resemblance to *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen* (From God can nothing move me, *LBW*, No. 468), also from the 16th century.

*We stand.***HYMN OF THE DAY:** Our Grateful Hearts We Lift in Praise

1. Our grate-ful hearts we lift in praise to you, O bless-ed Lord,
 2. Your plans for us are full of good; our prayers of thanks as-cend
 3. We join the cho-rus of your church in ev-'ry time and place,



For you have been our dwell-ing place, O God, by all a-dored.
 For prom-i-ses you will ful-fill; your mer-cies ne-ver end.
 And blend in-to the great re-frain of saints, who see your face:



Your faith-ful peo-ple heed your call and gath-er in this place,
 With joy-ful ex-pec-ta-tion, Lord, your peo-ple long to see
 All glo-ry be to God: the Fath-er and to Christ, his Son,



To hear, to touch, to taste your Word, re-ceive your liv-ing grace.
 Your stead-fast love made new a-gain, the fu-ture yet to be.
 And glo-ry be to Spir-it blest, to you, the Three in One!

Text and Tune: © 2014 by Michael D. Costello, b. 1979

ST. JOHN'S DES MOINES
14.14.14.14

NICENE CREED

- P** Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith:
C 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 OF THE CHURCH

Each petition concludes:

- A** Lord, in your mercy,
C hear our prayer.

The prayers conclude:

- P** Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray,
Trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
C Amen.

✠ MEAL ✠

PEACE OF CHRIST

☞ The peace of the Lord be with you always.

☞ And also with you.

We greet one another in the name of the Lord.

We sit.

OFFERING/ANTHEM: *Helft mir Gotts Güte preisen*, BWV 613

Johann Sebastian Bach

(Help me praise God's goodness)

Giving is one of the ways we participate in all that God is doing through Grace.

Visit GraceRiverForest.org to give online.

We stand as the gifts are presented.

OFFERTORY VERSE: Ephesians 5:15, 18–20

Walter Pelz

Look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise;
Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart,
always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

☞ Let us pray. Merciful Father,

☞ we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us—
our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love.
Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING



P The Lord be with you. **C** And al - so 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 and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory; that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



C Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:



Heav- en and earth are full of your glo- ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.



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 God, mighty Lord, gracious Father:
Endless is your mercy and eternal your reign.
You have filled all creation with light and life;
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

We praise you for the grace shown to your people in every age:
the promise to Israel, the rescue from Egypt,
the gift of the promised land, the words of the prophets;
and, at this end of all the ages, the gift of your Son,
who proclaimed the good news in word and deed
and was obedient to your will, even to giving his 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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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

P Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup
we remember the life our Lord offered for us.
And, believing the witness of his resurrection,
we await his coming in power to share with us the great and promised feast.

C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

P Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit,
that we who share in Christ's body and blood,
may live to the praise of your glory
and receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

C Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

- P** Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place,
and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest
until he comes as victorious Lord of all.



C Through him, with him, in him, in the u - ni - ty of the
Ho - ly Spir - it, all hon - or and glo - ry is yours, al -
might- y Fa - ther, now and for - ev - er. A - men

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

- 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.

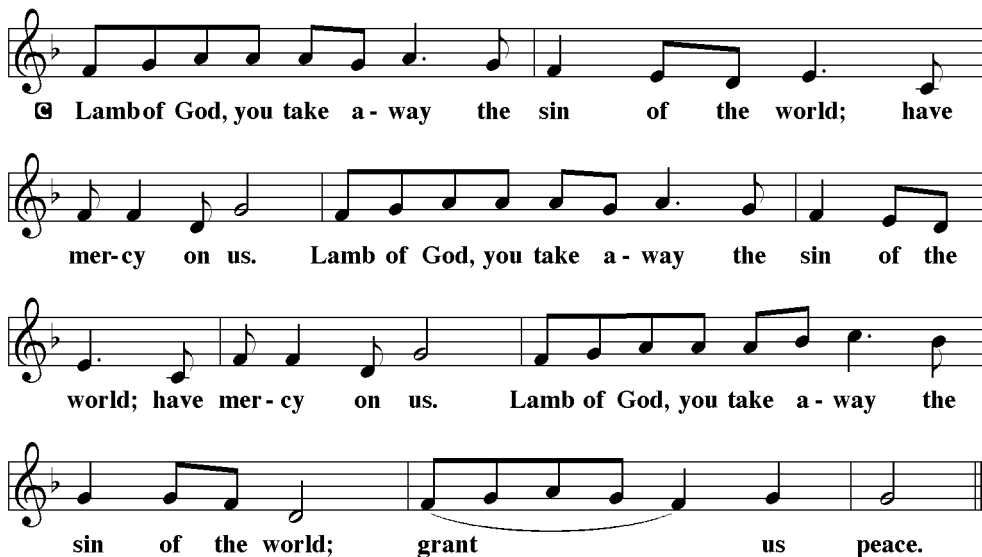
- P** The gifts of God for the people of God.

- C** Thanks be to God.

- P** Come, for all is now ready.

We sit.

AGNUS DEI



♩ 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.

COMMUNION

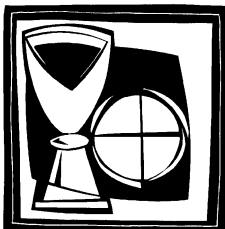
Our Lord Jesus Christ welcomes you to this meal of the baptized.

The crucified and risen Christ is present in the Lord's Supper, giving us his true body and blood as food and drink.

We receive communion at the head of the center aisle, receiving the consecrated bread and then drinking directly from the chalice or dipping the bread into the wine (intinction).

Those choosing individual cups will find non-alcoholic wine in the center of the tray.

Those with a gluten allergy may ask the pastor for a gluten-free host.



DISTRIBUTION HYMN: O Christ the Same

ELW #760



1 O Christ the same, through all our sto - ry's pag - es,
2 O Christ the same, the friend of sin - ners, shar - ing
3 O Christ the same, se - cure with - in whose keep - ing



our loves and hopes, our fail - ures and our fears;
our in - most thoughts, the se - crets none can hide,
our lives and loves, our days and years re - main,



e - ter - nal Lord, the king of all the a - ges,
still as of old up - on your bod - y bear - ing
our work and rest, our wak - ing and our sleep - ing,



un - chang - ing still a - mid the pass - ing years:
the marks of love, in tri - umph glo - ri - fied:
our calm and storm, our plea - sure and our pain:



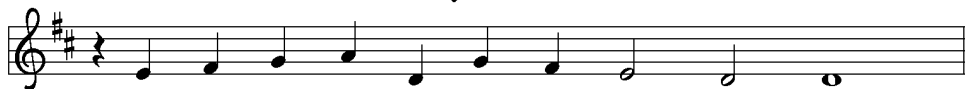
O liv - ing Word, the source of all cre - a - tion,
O Son of Man, who stooped for us from heav - en,
O Lord of love, for all our joys and sor - rows,



who spread the skies, and set the stars a - blaze,
O Prince of life, in all your sav - ing pow'r,
for all our hopes, when earth shall fade and flee,



O Christ the same, who wrought our whole sal - va - tion,
O Christ the same, to whom our hearts are giv - en,
O Christ the same, be - yond our brief to - mor - rows,



we bring our thanks for all our yes - ter - days.
we bring our thanks for this the pres - ent hour.
we bring our thanks for all that is to be.

ANTHEM: I Am the Alpha and the Omega

Michael D. Costello

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.
To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.
Let everyone who is thirsty come.
Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.
God will be with them and be their God;
He will wipe every tear from their eyes.
I am making all things new.
I am coming soon!
Amen, come, Lord Jesus!
Based on Revelation 21 and 22

We stand.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING & PRAYER

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

C Amen.

A Let us pray.

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart,
and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ.
Now send us forth to be your people in the world,
and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore;
through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

✠ SENDING ✠

BENEDICTION

P Almighty God: Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

☐ *Sung by all.* | ☐ *Sung by higher (treble) voices.* | ☐ *Sung by lower (bass) voices.*



☐ You are God; we praise you. You are the Lord; we ac - claim you.



You are the e - ter - nal Fa - ther; all cre - a - tion wor - ships you.



☐ To you all an - gels, all the pow'rs of heav - en, cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim,



sing in end - less praise: ☐ Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,



God of pow'r and might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.



☐ The glo - rious com - pan - y of a - pos - tles praise you.



☐ The no - ble fel - low - ship of proph - ets praise you.



☐ The white - robed ar - my of mar - tyrs praise you.



☐ Through - out the world the ho - ly Church ac - claims you:



☩ Fa-ther, of maj-es-ty un-bound-ed; your true and on-ly Son,



wor-thy of all wor-ship; and the Ho-ly Spir-it, ad-vo-cate and guide.



Ⅰ You, Christ, are the king of glo-ry, the e-ter-nal Son of the Fa-ther.



Ⅱ When you be-came man to set us free, you did not spurn the vir-gin's womb.



Ⅰ You o-ver-came the sting of death, and o-pened the king-dom of heav-en



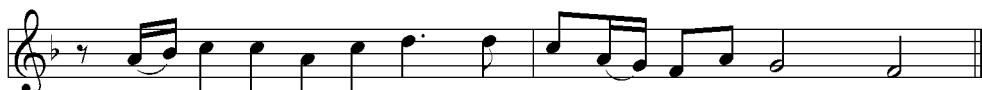
to all be-liev-ers. Ⅱ You are seat-ed at God's right hand in glo-ry.



We be-lieve that you will come and be our judge. ☩ Come, then,



Lord, and help your peo-ple, bought with the price of your own blood,



and bring us with your saints to glo-ry ev-er-last-ing.

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE: *In dir ist Freude*, BWV 615
(In thee is gladness)

Johann Sebastian Bach

LEADING WORSHIP

The Rev. David R. Lyle, presiding minister
Lori Martin, deacon
Christine Nelson, assisting minister
Mary Margaret Bartley, David Simpson, lectors
Carolyn Becker, Susan Weber, gift bearers
Jane Andrew, altar guild
Lois Harb, Dan Lehmann,
Julie Lehmann, Mary Rasmusson, ushers
Bill Rohlfing, audio engineer
George Hogenson, Michael Starrick,
livestream audio/video
Susan Bogner, greeter
Grace Parish Choir
The Rev. Michael D. Costello, cantor
Thomas Schmidt, organist
Carolyne DalMonte, soprano soloist
Emlynn Shoemaker, alto soloist
Ryan Townsend Strand, tenor soloist
David Goversen, bass soloist

ORCHESTRA

Christine Janzow Phillips, Meg Busse, oboes
Natalie Johnson, English horn
Becky Coffman, David Belden, Lou Torick, violins I
Irina Fatykhova, Dan Galat, violins II
Naomi Hildner, Karl Davies, violas
Jean Hatmker, cello
Douglas Johnson, double bass
Thomas Schmidt, organist

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BACKGROUND OF THE CANTATA

Christmas was a wonderful season in eighteenth-century Leipzig for many reasons, not the least of which was the glorious music heard in church, especially the cantatas of Cantor Bach. It was particularly wondrous because the celebration followed the musically fallow period of Advent, when cantatas were not permitted in worship because Advent was designated a time of somber, penitential reflection and preparation for Christmas. (It was not until the mid-20th century that, liturgically, Advent was transformed by the church into a season of hope and expectation in anticipation of Christmas.)

The Christmas celebration in Leipzig consisted of the day itself, followed by second and third Christmas Day, at least one (and possibly two) Sundays after Christmas, and the Circumcision of Our Lord on New Year's Day). For these six festive days Bach wrote, over the years, a total of nineteen different cantatas, not counting Epiphany and its following Sunday, for which another five cantatas were written. The scripture readings, hymns, and prayers for these days all related in some way to the events and meaning of the Incarnation.

The gospel for the Sunday after Christmas, for which the present cantata was written, was Luke 2:33–40, which included Simeon's song of praise to Christ (the *Nunc dimittis*) and Anna's prophecy concerning Christ's coming. The epistle was Galatians 4:1–7, which tells of redemption and freedom in Christ. The designated hymns and prayers also related to Christmas. Surprisingly, the cantata text selected by Bach for this day addresses specifically the turning over of the chronological year, an event he appreciated, perhaps for its proximity to the mystery of the Incarnation. The text of *Gottlob! nun geht das Jahr zu Ende* expresses thanks to God for past blessings and a firm reliance on God for guidance in the new year.

The cantata libretto was written by Rev. Erdmann Neumeister, Lutheran pastor-poet who wrote several annual cycles of cantata texts, many of which Bach set to music. It was first performed on December 30, 1725, as part of Bach's third annual cycle of cantatas. It is scored for the usual strings (2 violins, viola, cello), cornetto (high trumpet), 2 oboes, tenor oboe (*oboe da caccia* or English horn), 3 trombones, basso continuo (keyboard and bass), four-part choir, and soprano, alto, tenor, and bass soloists. It should be noted that the trombones of Bach's day had a narrower bore than the modern trombones developed in the nineteenth century, and therefore were an agile instrument with a more mellow, blending sound. In this festive cantata Bach uses them only to double the choral voices and thereby strengthen and clarify their parts. (For reasons of balance between voices and modern instruments, the cornetto and trombones are not employed in today's performance of the cantata.)

Carlos Messerli

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