

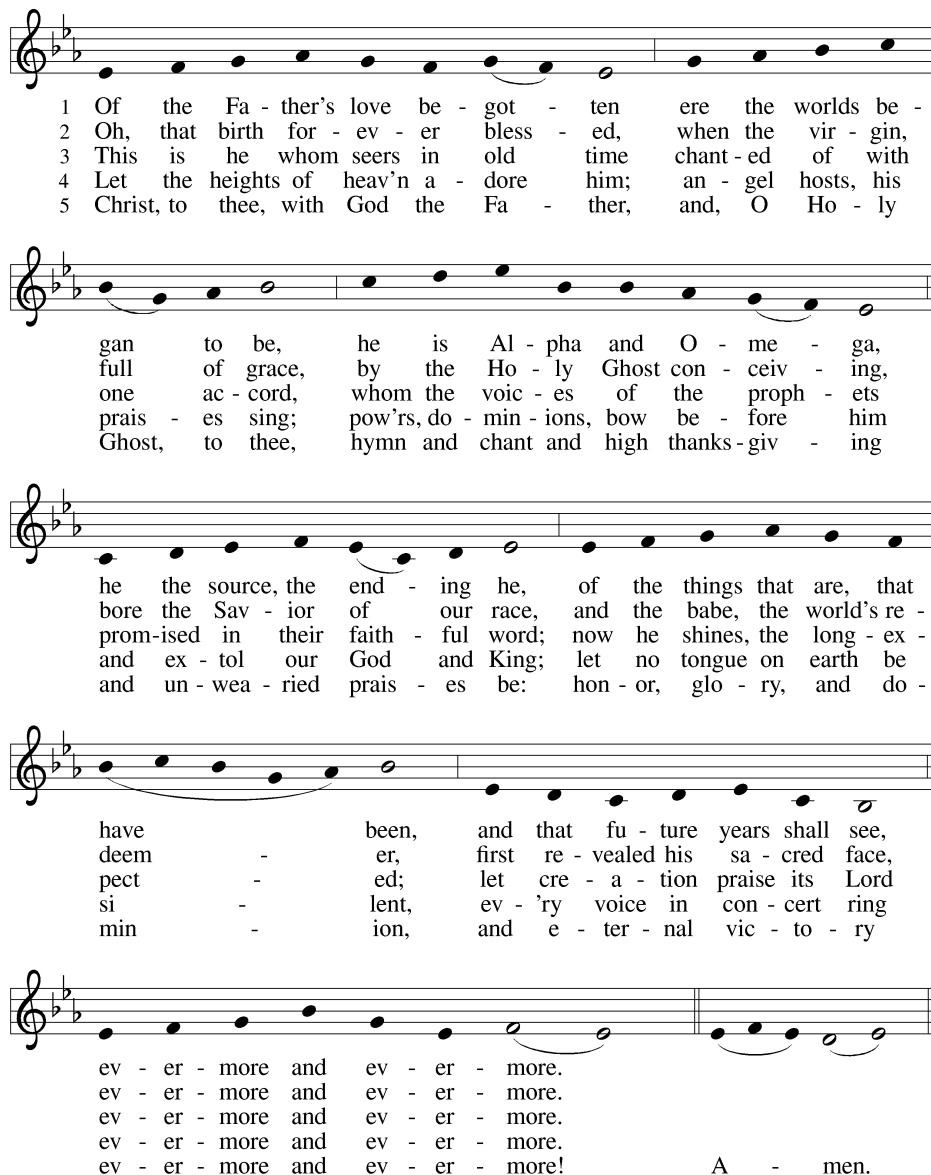
### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,  
whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever. Amen.  
Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

Loving and forgiving God,  
**we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God.  
May you be strengthened in God's love, † comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

### GATHERING SONG *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (ELW 295)



1 Of the Fa-ther's love be-got-ten ere the worlds be-  
2 Oh, that birth for-ev-er bless-ed, when the vir-gin,  
3 This is he whom seers in old time chant-ed of with  
4 Let the heights of heav'n a-dore him; an-gel hosts, his  
5 Christ, to thee, with God the Fa-ther, and, O Ho-ly

gan to be, he is Al-pha and O-me-ga,  
full of grace, by the Ho-ly Ghost con-ceiv-ing,  
one ac-cord, whom the voic-es of the proph-ets  
prais-es sing; pow'rs, do-min-ions, bow be-fore him  
Ghost, to thee, hymn and chant and high thanks-giv-ing

he the source, the end-ing he, of the things that are, that  
bore the Sav-ior of our race, and the babe, the world's re-  
prom-ised in their faith-ful word; now he shines, the long-ex-  
and ex-tol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be  
and un-wea-ried prais-es be: hon-or, glo-ry, and do-

have deem- been, and that fu-ture years shall see,  
pect- er, first re-vealed his sa-cred face,  
si- lent, ev-'ry voice in con-cert ring  
min- ion, and e-ter-nal vic-to-ry

ev-er-more and ev-er-more.  
ev-er-more and ev-er-more.  
ev-er-more and ev-er-more.  
ev-er-more and ev-er-more.  
ev-er-more and ev-er-more! A-men.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:15, 8-11

<sup>1</sup>Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup>Get 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!”

<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup>He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

### PSALM: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13



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<sup>1</sup>You have been gracious to your | land, O LORD;  
you have restored the good for- | tune of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup>**You have forgiven the iniquity | of your people  
and blotted out | all their sins.**

<sup>8</sup>I will listen to what the LORD | God is saying;  
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their | hearts to you.

<sup>9</sup>**Truly, your salvation is very near to | those who fear you,  
that your glory may dwell | in our land. R**

<sup>10</sup>Steadfast love and faithfulness have | met together;  
righteousness and peace have | kissed each other.

<sup>11</sup>**Faithfulness shall spring up | from the earth,  
and righteousness shall look | down from heaven.**

<sup>12</sup>The LORD will indeed | grant prosperity,  
and our land will | yield its increase.

<sup>13</sup>**Righteousness shall go be- | fore the LORD  
and shall prepare for | God a pathway. R**

## SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

A reading from Romans.

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup>which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, <sup>3</sup>the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup>and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup>through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, <sup>6</sup>including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup>To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 188)

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

Text: Taizé Community  
Music: WAIT FOR THE LORD, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994  
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## GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

### Glory to you, O Lord.

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup>"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, <sup>25</sup>but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

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

## SERMON

### HYMN OF THE DAY *As the Dark Awaits the Dawn* (ELW 261)



1 As the dark a - waits the dawn,  
2 As the blue ex - pec - tant hour  
3 As the moon re - flects the sun  
4 Shine your fu - ture on this place,

so we a - wait your light. O Star of  
be - fore the sil - v'ring skies, we long to  
un - til the night's de - crease, may we your  
en - light - en ev - 'ry guest, that through us

prom - ise, scat - ter night, lov - ing bright, lov - ing  
see your day a - rise, whole and wise, whole and  
heal - ing light re - lease, liv - ing peace, liv - ing  
stream your ho - li - ness, bright and blest, bright and

bright, till shades of fear are gone.  
wise, O lu - cent Morn - ing Star.  
peace, un - to your ho - ly dawn.  
blest; come dawn, O Sun of grace.

Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, b. 1953  
Music: LUCENT, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929  
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Music © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

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## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (PRAYED FROM HOME BY ZOOM PARTICIPANTS)

God of power and might, fulfill your promise and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

Gracious God, all generations call you blessed. In this holy season we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths (*Nearby churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues may be named*). Inspire the faith of their people. Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community. Hear us, O God.

### **Your mercy is great.**

Creator God, you scatter the proud. Everything we have belongs first to you. Bless and protect the seas, mountains, plains, forests, skies, and soils that surround us. Give us humility as we tend them. Hear us, O God.

### **Your mercy is great.**

Righteous God, you humble the powerful and lift up the lowly. We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they amplify the voices of people in need. Guide all people entrusted with leadership, to create societies in which everyone can flourish. Hear us, O God.

### **Your mercy is great.**

Compassionate God, you fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. Nourish those who lack access to adequate food and nutrition. Bless the work of advocates, community organizers, and food pantries. Encourage others to provide for their neighbors in need. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Healing God, you pour out mercy to all who cry out to you. Surround everyone in need of healing in body, mind, or spirit with your tender presence. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Eternal God, you are faithful to the promises you made to our forebears. We give thanks for the ministry of Katharina von Bora Luther and other ancestors who organized, planned, dreamed, encouraged, and reached out as they served you. We give thanks for the bold leadership of female leaders in our own time. Inspire others with their steadfast witness. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

(We give give thanks to God for caring for us and for your gifts to support the church.)

Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season.

Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing.

In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. **Amen.**

### **THE SHARING OF PEACE**

#### **HOLY COMMUNION**

*At this time you would prepare your own 'Lord's Table' with the food and drink you have prepared to be the Body and Blood of Christ for us*

#### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

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.

### **LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 112)**

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

**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.**

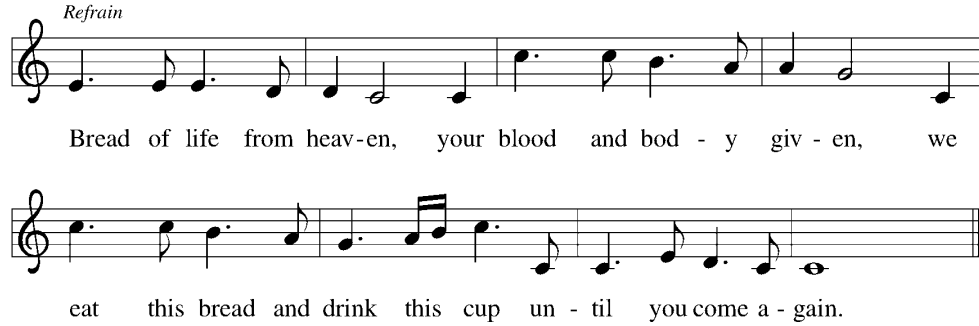
### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Friends of Jesus, know that Christ is with you at your table. Receive nourishment for your journey. For this food is for us the Body and Blood of Christ, given and shed for you.

(At this time you are invited to receive communion, having heard the words of Christ's promise in this meal. If you are with someone else you can commune one another with the words "Body of Christ, given for you" and "Blood of Christ, shed for you". If you are alone, you have heard them from the pastor.)

**SONG AFTER COMMUNION *Bread of Life from Heaven, (ELW 474, chorus only, repeated)***

*Refrain*



Bread of life from heav-en, your blood and bod - y giv - en, we  
eat this bread and drink this cup un - til you come a - gain.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

Gracious and abundant God, you have done great things for us, and we rejoice. In this bread and cup you give us life forever. In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts to the world's needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

**SENDING SONG *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (JEFFERSON) (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

**BENEDICTION**

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, † now and forever. **Amen.**

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