

ASSISTING WITH WORSHIP

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Preacher: Pastor David Olson, Rock of Ages Lutheran Church, Madison, TN

Organ/Piano: Randy Cochran

Choir Director: Charis Scharf

Cantor: Tim Babler

Violin: Phil Warnecke

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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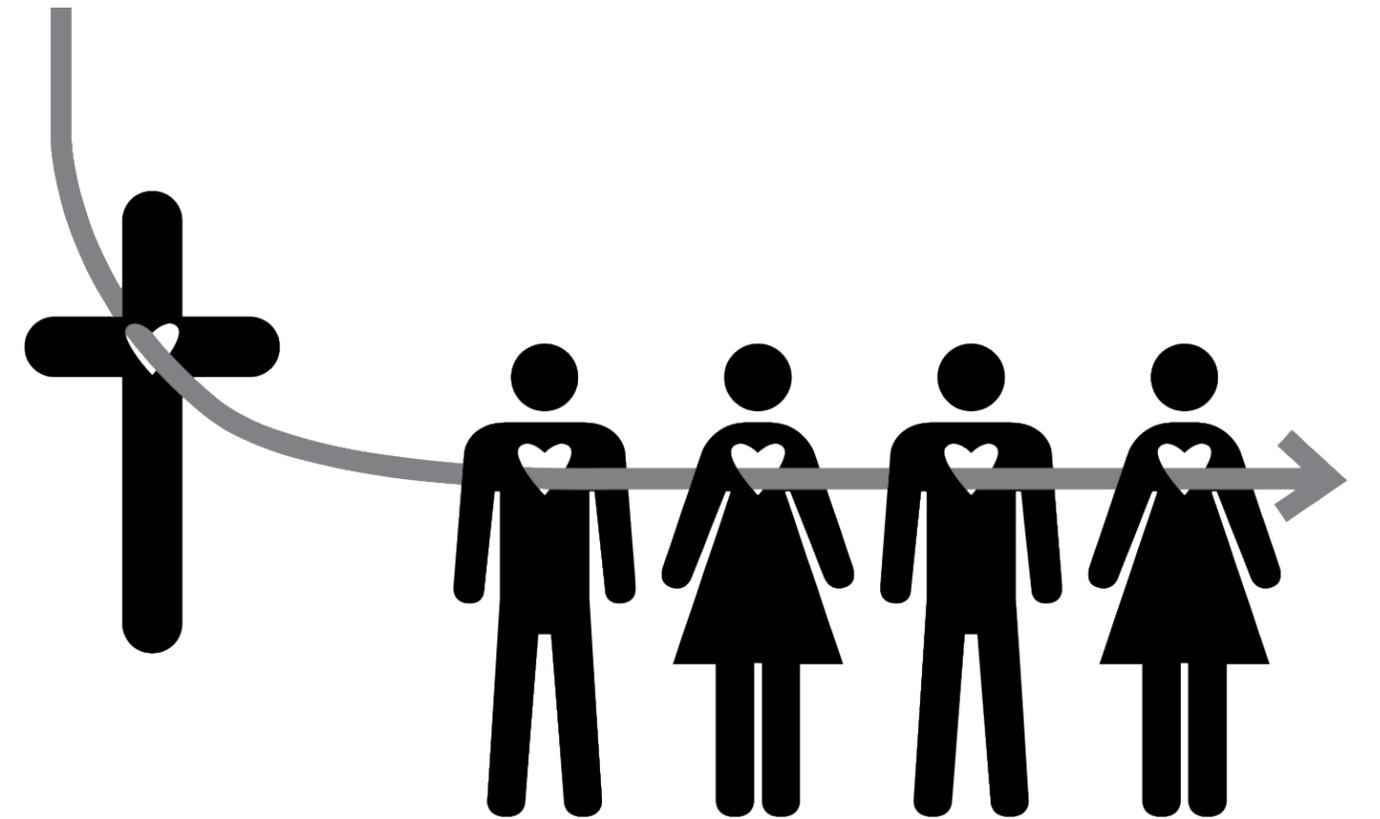
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TODAY, ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

South Atlantic District

Called Worker Spiritual Growth Conference

Opening Service

TODAY, ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

Throughout the Bible the Holy Spirit shares examples of God's people encouraging one another: Jonathan goes to David, Jethro visits Moses, Barnabas, the son of encouragement, visits new Christian congregations. As brothers and sisters in Christ God calls us to encourage one another. Beaten down by our own failures and faults, discouraged by the hardships and difficulties of ministry, what a blessing to give and receive encouragement that points weary eyes to Jesus, to cling firmly to his work and promises until the end, when he will take us home to heaven.

The name of the triune God and the sign of the cross remind worshipers of their baptisms.

God's people long to gather together for strength from God and for mutual encouragement. This Advent gathering rite urges us to wake from our spiritual slumber and prepare for the day of our Lord's return.

PLEASE STAND

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son (†) and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Refrain: Cantor

Refrain: Congregation (and subsequent refrains)

Refrain

A-wake, a-wake, a-wake, O sleep-er! A-wake, a-rise, a-rise, pre-prepare the way; for he shall come, the Lord of glo-ry, to bring the day that God has made.

Rise from the darkness; wake from the night. Welcome the splendor of day. Live as God's children; live in the light. Go, prepare God's way.

Refrain.

Come let us go to the house of the Lord; all people together give praise. Learn from the one who is justice and truth; follow in God's ways.

Refrain.

Who can foretell the return of the Lord? Who knows the day or the hour? Ready your hearts for the One who is love, coming in his pow'r.

Refrain.

PLEASE STAND

SONG OF SIMEON *Nunc Dimittis*

1 O Lord, now let your serv-ant De-part in peace,
2 All glo-ry to the Fa-ther, All glo-ry to
as-sured: For I have seen your prom-ised In-
the Son, All glo-ry to the Spir-it, For-
car-nate, sav-ing Word— A Light that will en-
ev-er three in one; For as in the be-
light-en All gloom where Gen-tiles dwell; The bril-liant,
gin-ning, Is now, shall ev-er be, God's tri-une
crown-ing glo-ry Of those in Is-ra-el!
name re-sound-ing Through all e-ter-ni-ty.

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that you have given us to eat and to drink in this sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and (†) give you peace.

Amen.

PLEASE BE SEATED

The blessing of Aaron has been spoken over God's people for over 3,500 years. The Lord said, "So they will put my name on [them], and I will bless them them" [Numbers 6:27].)

The Scriptures teach that the celebration of the Lord's Supper connects us intimately with Christ and with one another as Christians who are united around a common confession of faith.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

CHOIR ANTHEM Oh, How Good It Is

HYMN #740 Draw Near

The choir will sing the stanzas of the hymn, the congregation will join in singing the refrain;

Refrain



Draw near, draw near! Take the bod - y



of your Lord. Draw near, draw near!



Drink the blood for you out-poured!

To verses | *Last time*



Verses



- 1 Draw near and take the bod - y of your Lord,
- 2 Christ our Re - deem - er, God's e - ter - nal Son,
- 3 Let us ap - proach with faith - ful hearts sin - cere
- 4 With heav'n - ly bread he makes the hun - gry whole,



And drink the ho - ly blood for you out-poured.
 Has by his cross and blood the vic - t'ry won.
 And take the pledg - es of sal - va - tion here.
 Gives liv - ing wa - ters to the thirst - ing soul.



Saved by his bod - y and his ho - ly blood, With
 He gave his life for great - est and for least, Him -
 Christ, who in this life all the saints de - fends, Gives
 Lord of the na - tions, to whom all must bow, In

To Refrain



souls re - freshed we give our thanks to God.
 self the of - f'ring and him - self the Priest.
 all be - liev - ers life that nev - er ends.
 this great feast of love be with us now.

CONFESSION

Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us

Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.

For faithless worrying and selfish pride,

For sins of habit and sins of choice,

For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,

You should cast me away from your presence forever.

O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.

LORD, HAVE MERCY *Kyrie*

Cantor: You came to call us from darkness into light:



Cantor *All*
 Lord have mer - cy; Lord have mer - cy.

Cantor: You came to visit your people with peace:



Cantor *All*
 Christ have mer - cy; Christ have mer - cy.

Cantor: You will return and our joy will be full:



Cantor *All*
 Lord have mer - cy; Lord have mer - cy.

ABSOLUTION

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant:

I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son (†) and of the Holy Spirit.



All
 A - men, a - men.

Refrain.

Kyrie is the Greek word for Lord. The expression "Lord, have mercy" is one of the oldest worship responses in the Christian church

The use of the keys is that special power and right which Christ gave to his church on earth: to forgive the sins of penitent sinners" [The Small Catechism, First: What is the use of the keys?]. See John 20:21-23.

This greeting has deep roots in Christian worship and marks the beginning of the Word section and the Sacrament section of the service

SALUTATION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Protect us by your strength and save us from the threatening dangers of our sins; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

PLEASE BE SEATED



WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my (†) body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my (†) blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

LAMB OF GOD *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 your peace. A - men.

PLEASE BE SEATED

As he speaks the Words of Institution, the minister both proclaims the words of Jesus to the congregation and sets apart the bread and wine for the Lord's use. The sign of the cross reminds us of Christ's death.

(Jesus is God's Lamb [Agnus Dei], who was offered as a sacrifice for sin once for all.)

Jesus took bread
and gave thanks
[Matthew 26:26].

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Blessed Lord, we praise you because you have fulfilled what you promised through your holy prophets of long ago and have sent your Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem us.

We give you sincere and humble thanks for your Son's gracious advent:

He has come near to us in human flesh, redeeming the world from darkness;
He comes near to us in Word and sacrament, giving us life and light;
He will come near in glory, banishing forever the shadows of night.

As we receive his body and blood, once given and poured out for us, lift up our hearts to the day when we will see our Redeemer face-to-face. Then we will need no light, nor lamp, nor sun, for the Lord will be our light.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Come, Lord Jesus.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and forever.

Amen.



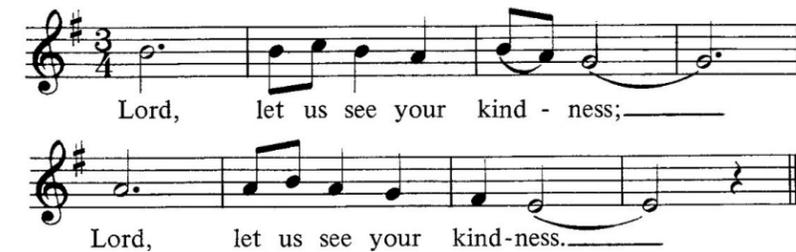
FIRST READING 2 Chronicles 32:1-8

32 After all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah. He laid siege to the fortified cities, thinking to conquer them for himself. ² When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem, ³ he consulted with his officials and military staff about blocking off the water from the springs outside the city, and they helped him. ⁴ A large force of men assembled, and they blocked all the springs and the stream that flowed through the land. "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find plenty of water?" they said. ⁵ Then he worked hard repairing all the broken sections of the wall and building towers on it. He built another wall outside that one and reinforced the supporting terraces of the City of David. He also made large numbers of weapons and shields.

⁶ He appointed military officers over the people and assembled them before him in the square at the city gate and encouraged them with these words: ⁷ "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. ⁸ With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.

Hezekiah
encourages the
people with God's
promises: look for
the LORD to come
with divine
retribution on his
enemies

PSALM OF THE DAY Psalm 85



The choir will introduce the refrain and sing the verses.
The congregation is invited to join in singing the refrain as indicated.

Choir: Refrain.

Congregation: Refrain.

Let us hear what our God proclaims: Peace to the people of God,
salvation is near to the ones who fear him. **Refrain.**

Kindness and truth, justice and peace; truth shall spring up as the water from the earth,
justice shall rain from the heavens. **Refrain.**

The Lord will come and you shall know his love, justice shall walk in his pathways,
salvation the gift that he brings. **Refrain.**

We are to encourage one another as we wait for our Savior's return.

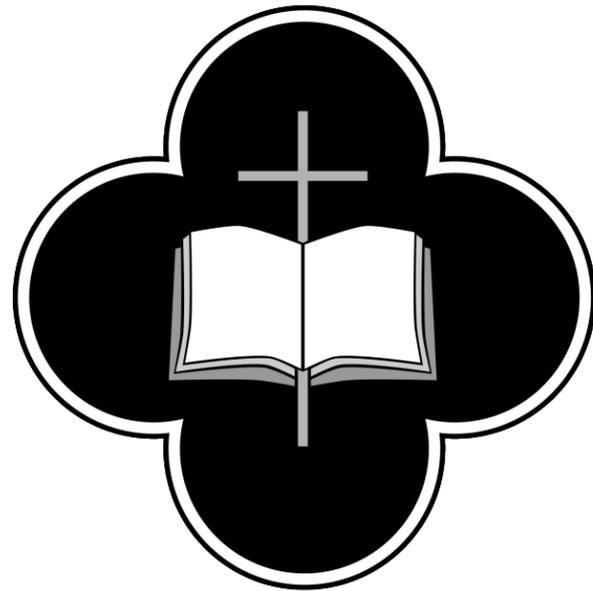
SECOND READING Hebrews 3:12-15

¹² See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. ¹⁵ As has just been said:

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts
as you did in the rebellion.”

VERSE OF THE DAY Revelation 22:20

He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.



THE SACRAMENT

PREFACE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is good and right so to do.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who comes with his Father to make his home in human hearts, working repentance and faith by his Spirit until he comes again. Therefore with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY Sanctus

1 O ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of pow'r and
2 Ho - san - na in the high - est! How tru - ly blest is
might, Your glo - ry, earth and heav - en In
he Who in God's name is com - ing To
count - less ways re - cite. Ho - san - na! Come and
set his peo - ple free! He comes to bring sal -
save us, Lord God of hosts on high, And
va - tion And with his blood out - poured, De -
in your grace and mer - cy Re - ceive our fer - vent cry.
liv - er us from bond - age— Ho - san - na, might - y Lord!

The words of the Preface mark the beginning of the Sacrament section of the service and lift the worshipers' hearts in praise. The opening sentences are among the oldest in the Christian liturgy

Sanctus means "holy." Used possibly as early as the second century, this canticle was in wide use among Christians in worship by the fourteenth century.

PLEASE STAND

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Eternal Father, throughout the centuries you repeated and affirmed your promise to send the offspring of the woman to crush the serpent's head. Through your prophets of old, you continually directed the eyes of your people to the advent of their Savior.

We praise you, O Lord, for keeping your promise and sending your Son to destroy the works of the devil.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our King, use your mighty Word to shatter our pride and to rouse us from spiritual slumber and apathy.

Move us to take to heart the words of John: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

You sent your Son to redeem us from sin. Let this good news be our joy and strength. Use it to cheer the lonely, encourage the fearful, and give hope to the despairing. In these days before Christmas, spare us from the stress of deadlines and the frenzy of commercialism.

Fill our lives with the message of your peace and the music of your grace.

Direct our eyes not only to the manger but also to the skies, where we will see your Son coming again, not as a lowly child but as the Lord of lords.

Lift up our hearts in joyful anticipation of that day.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

Come quickly, Lord Jesus, in your grace, in your power, and in your glory.

Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

PLEASE STAND

GOSPEL John 14:1-7

The Gospel according to St. John, chapter 14.

Glory be to you, O Lord.

14 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going."

⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

⁶Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ.

PLEASE BE SEATED

Jesus encourages his disciples as they await his second and final coming

The Hymn of the Day is assigned to this day because of its rich content and connection to the day's Gospel

HYMN OF THE DAY #759 Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled

The choir will sing the stanzas of the hymn, the congregation will join in singing the refrain

Refrain

Do not let your hearts be trou-bled; have faith in God and faith in me. I will go forth to pre-pare a place for you; then I'll come back to take you with me, that where I am, you may al-so be.

- 1 In God's house there are many places For you alone to dwell in safety.
You know the way to where I'll lead you; If you are lost, I will show the way.

Refrain

- 2 I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; Only through me can you know what I know.
If you knew me, you would know the Father; If you see me, you see your God.

Refrain

- 3 The words I speak are not only of myself; It is your God who lives within me.
If you believe that your God and I are one, I will provide when you call my name.

Refrain

Text: John 14:1-3,6-7,10-14; alt. David Haas, b. 1957
Tune: DO NOT LET YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED (88 11 99 99 99)
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SERMON Hebrews 3:12-15

¹² See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. ¹⁵ As has just been said:

"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts
as you did in the rebellion."

PLEASE STAND

NICENE CREED

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 fully 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 in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Christian* 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.

PLEASE BE SEATED

OFFERING

Public confession is faith's response to God's saving Word. Christians composed the Nicene Creed in the fourth century to defend the Bible's teachings that both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are true God, equal to the Father in one eternal, undivided Trinity.

(*The original text here reads "catholic," a word meaning "universal." The Church consists of all believers in heaven and on earth, of every time in history.)

Moved by God's love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him.)