

("O Jesus, Grant Me Hope and Comfort" by J. W. Franck) ♪ My thoughts, desires ♪ ♪ And all my longing ♪ ♪ I dedicate ♪ ♪ O Christ, to Thee ♪ ♪ O come, Thou precious ♪ ♪ Sun most radiant ♪ ♪ Thy beams illumine ♪ ♪ My heart and soul ♪ ♪ O come, Thou precious ♪ ♪ Sun most radiant ♪ ♪ Thy beams illumine ♪ ♪ My heart and soul ♪ ("Gloria") (sings in a foreign language) ("Now Thank We All Our God" by Martin Rinkart) ♪ Now thank we all our God ♪ ♪ With heart and hands and voices ♪ ♪ Who wondrous things has done ♪ ♪ In whom His world rejoices ♪ ♪ Who from our mothers' arms ♪ ♪ Has blessed us on our way ♪ ♪ With countless gifts of love ♪ ♪ And still is ours today ♪ ♪ O may this bounteous God ♪ ♪ Through all our life be near us ♪ ♪ With ever joyful hearts ♪ ♪ And blessed peace to cheer us ♪ ♪ And keep us in his grace ♪ ♪ And guide us when perplexed ♪ ♪ And free us from all ills ♪ ♪ In this world and the next ♪ ♪ All praise and thanks to God ♪ ♪ The Father now be given ♪ ♪ The Son and Spirit blest ♪ ♪ Who reign in highest heaven ♪ ♪ The one eternal God ♪ ♪ Whom heaven and earth adore ♪ ♪ For thus it was, is now ♪ ♪ And shall be evermore ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ("Silent Night" by Joseph Mohr) (sings in a foreign language) ♪ Silent night ♪ ♪ Holy night ♪ ♪ Son of God ♪ ♪ Love's pure light ♪ ♪ Radiant beams from thy holy face ♪ ♪ With the dawn of redeeming grace ♪ ♪ Jesus, Lord, at thy birth ♪ ♪ Jesus, Lord, at thy birth ♪ ♪ Silent night ♪ ♪ Holy night ♪ ♪ Wondrous star ♪ ♪ Lend thy light ♪ ♪ With the angels let us sing ♪ ♪ Alleluia to our King ♪ ♪ Christ the Savior is born ♪ ♪ Christ the Savior is born ♪ ("Ave Maria" by Bach/Gounod) (sings in a foreign language)

- It is always a special Sunday when the North Carolina Boys Choir visits here at Duke Chapel under the direction of Mr. William Graham. They invite you to their concert here in Duke Chapel tomorrow evening. And we welcome them among us for their yearly visit. We're enjoying the decorations in the chapel which are given and installed by James and Eleanore and Eliza Ferguson, and we thank them for their contribution that enriches the lives of many thousands who will visit and worship in this beautiful building during the Christmas season. Our preacher today, is the Dean of our Divinity School, Dean Dennis Campbell. And we welcome him. And now let us continue our worship. ("Beautiful Savior" by Joseph Augustus Seiss) ♪ Beautiful Savior ♪ ♪ Lord of the nations ♪ ♪ Son of God ♪ ♪ And Son of Man ♪ ♪ Glory and honor ♪ ♪ Praise, adoration ♪ ♪ Now and forevermore be Thine ♪ ♪ Now and forevermore ♪ ♪ Now and forevermore be Thine ♪

- Please stand for the greeting. Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Congregants: Worship the Lord with gladness.

- The steadfast love of the Lord endures forever.

Congregants: Give thanks. ("Hail to the Lord's Anointed" by James Montgomery) ♪ Hail to the Lord's Anointed ♪ ♪ Great David's greater Son ♪ ♪ Hail in the time appointed ♪ ♪ His reign on earth begun ♪ ♪ He comes to break oppression ♪ ♪ To set the captive free ♪ ♪ To take away transgression ♪ ♪ And rule in equity ♪ ♪ He comes with succor speedy ♪ ♪ To those who suffer wrong ♪ ♪ To help the poor and needy ♪ ♪ And bid the weak be strong ♪ ♪ To give them songs for sighing ♪ ♪ Their darkness turn to light ♪ ♪ Whose souls,

condemned and dying ♪ ♪ Are precious in his sight ♪ ♪ He shall come down like showers ♪ ♪ Upon the fruitful earth ♪ ♪ Love, joy, and hope, like flowers ♪ ♪ Spring in his path to birth ♪ ♪ Before him on the mountains ♪ ♪ Shall peace, the herald, go ♪ ♪ And righteousness, in fountains ♪ ♪ From hill to valley flow ♪ ♪ To him shall prayer unceasing ♪ ♪ And daily vows ascend ♪ ♪ His kingdom still increasing ♪ ♪ A kingdom without end ♪ ♪ The tide of time shall never ♪ ♪ His covenant remove ♪ ♪ His name shall stand forever ♪ ♪ That name to us is love ♪

- Lord God, You taught us that the night is far spent and the day close at hand, grant that we may be ever found watching for the coming of Your Son. Save us from excessive self-concern, pull our gaze away from ourselves and draw us in this hour of worship toward You, eagerly awaiting Your Advent into the world, Your salvation of our souls, amen. Be seated. Let us pray the prayer of illumination. Open our hearts and minds, O God, by the power of your Holy Spirit, so that, as the Word is read and proclaimed, we might be prepared for your Advent among us. Amen. The Old Testament reading is from the Book of Isaiah chapter 35 verses one through 10. The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong; do not fear!" Here is, your God "He will come with vengeance, "And with terrible recompense. "He will come and save you." Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing with joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals, shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it. But it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregants: Thanks be to God.

- The appointed canticle is the Song of Mary. Let us stand and read responsively.

- My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

Congregants: My spirit rejoices in God my Savior, who has looked with favor on me, a lowly servant.

- From this day all generations shall call me blessed:

Congregants: the Almighty has done great things for me and holy is the name of the Lord, whose mercy is on those who fear God from generation to generation.

- The arm of the Lord is strong, and has scattered the proud in their conceit.

Congregants: God has cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly.

- God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich empty away.

Congregants: God has come to the aid of Israel, the chosen servant, remembering the promise of mercy, the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham and his children for ever. ("Gloria") ♪ Glory be to our Creator ♪ ♪ Praise to our Redeemer Lord ♪ ♪ Glory be to our Sustainer ♪ ♪ Ever three and ever one ♪ ♪ As it was in the beginning ♪ ♪ World without end ♪ ♪ Amen ♪

- Be seated.

- The Gospel reading is from St. Matthew chapter 11 verses two through 11. When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, "or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, "the lepers are cleansed, "the deaf hear, "the dead are raised, "and the poor have good news brought to them. "And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? "A reed shaken by the wind? "What then did you go out to see? "Someone dressed in soft robes? "Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal places. "What then did you go out to see? "A prophet? "Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. "This is the one about whom it is written, "'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, "'who will prepare your way before you.' "Truly I tell you, among those born of women "no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; "yet in the kingdom of heaven "even the least is greater than he." This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregants: Thanks be to God. ("In the Bleak Mid-winter" by Harold Darke) ♪ In the bleak mid-winter ♪ ♪ Frosty wind made moan ♪ ♪ Earth stood hard as iron ♪ ♪ Water like a stone ♪ ♪ Snow had fallen, snow on snow ♪ ♪ Snow on snow ♪ ♪ In the bleak mid-winter ♪ ♪ Long ago ♪ ♪ Our God, heaven cannot hold Him ♪ ♪ Nor earth sustain ♪ ♪ Heaven and earth shall flee away ♪ ♪ When He comes to reign ♪ ♪ In the bleak mid-winter ♪ ♪ A stable-place sufficed ♪ ♪ The Lord God Almighty ♪ ♪ Jesus Christ ♪ ♪ Enough for Him, whom Cherubim ♪ ♪ Worship night and day, ♪ ♪ A breastful of milk ♪ ♪ And a mangerful of hay ♪ ♪ Enough for Him, whom Angels ♪ ♪ Fall down before ♪ ♪ The ox and ass and camel ♪ ♪ Which adore ♪ ♪ What can I give Him ♪ ♪ Poor as I am ♪ ♪ If I were a Shepherd ♪ ♪ I would bring a lamb ♪ ♪ If I were a Wise Man ♪ ♪ I would do my part ♪ ♪ Yet what I can I give Him ♪ ♪ Give my heart ♪ ♪ Give ♪ ♪ My heart ♪

- The Epistle lesson for this morning, the third Sunday in Advent, is taken from Paul's letter to the church at Rome, in the 13th chapter, verses 11 through 14. Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now, than when we first believed. The night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires. This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregants: Thanks be to God.

- Let us pray. O Almighty God who has taught us that the night is far spent and the day is at hand, grant that we may ever be found watching for the coming of thy Son. Save us from undue love of the world, that we may wait with patient hope for the day of the Lord. And so abide in Him, that when He shall appear we may not be ashamed through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice. The Lord is near. In the Christian calendar this is the third Sunday of Advent. Now it's not easy to preach in Advent. Our society and even most churches have made the four or five weeks before Christmas into Christmas. It seems as though Christmas music has been playing forever, decorations are everywhere and Christmas parties and celebrations are often over a week or more before the actual holiday. Now we're not going to change this. Most of us, probably all of us here this morning participate in it, and we enjoy it. Yet despite the popular culture, and despite even the practices of many churches, if we pay any attention at all to the long tradition of the church, we encounter an insistence that we wait. We are ready for the celebration and the presents of Christmas but the Advent Scripture lessons make us wait and wake up. Waiting is a major theme of this Advent season. Christians are admonished to be patient and wait for the coming of the Lord. Now I, myself find patience to be a difficult virtue. Those of you who know me know that's true. Some years ago, William Bevan who was then provost of the university urged me on one matter to be patient. So I prayed, "Lord, give me patience "and please hurry." (congregation laughs) Our modern technological society puts a high premium on speed, not on waiting. We recently put a new local area network into the Divinity School to accommodate faster and more powerful computers. One of the central sales claims that the sales people put before me as we were looking at these, for both computer hardware and software was the speed with which we could do things. Fast food, overnight mail delivery, instant communication by fax or email, all of these are taken for granted and celebrated by us as evidence of progress. But Advent calls us to wait, to watch and to prepare for the coming of the Lord. Waiting for the coming of the Lord requires of us a complex double focus. On the one hand we are waiting for Christmas, for the first Advent. On the other hand, we know that historically the first Advent is behind us, and we also look forward. We are waiting for the future coming of the Lord, the second Advent. And in the meantime, we are called to live in the present in our own time, in light of both the first and the second Advent. In the Scripture lesson that I just read this morning Paul captures the Advent themes: "You know what hour it is, how it is full time now "for you to wake from sleep. "For salvation is nearer to us now "than when we first believed; "the night is far gone, "the day is at hand." Here we get the sense of urgency, of watching, of waiting. We also get the clear affirmation of movement. There is forward movement toward a goal just as the night moves on toward the dawn. This movement is symbolized by this use by Paul of the night: "The night is far gone, the day is at hand." That symbolism of night and day suggests that there is movement away from darkness and evil toward the promise of good and light. The time in which we live is between the times. It is after the crucial event of Jesus Christ coming into the world, living, dying, and rising. But still we know the kingdom of God has not fully come. That's obvious to us all. We are living between the time of Jesus' earthly life and ministry and the full realization of God's intention for us. In our celebration of Advent we certainly are waiting for Christmas. And we make the historical affirmation that God did act. When the time had fully come, Jesus was born into the world. He lived among women and men like you and me, he died, and he was resurrected from the dead. In him life was fully affirmed, and in him death was fully overcome. God acted in

the particular historic reality of Jesus of Nazareth. We do well, I think as Christians, to avoid the sentimentality of Christmas that fits so well with the popular culture. We need to face squarely the extraordinary nature of the coming of God in human form. This is what we theologians call the mystery of the incarnation. For many this has always been a scandal. It's a scandal to think that God would come in human likeness, as a Jewish baby in ancient Palestine. Moreover, God chose to come in humble circumstances, being born to a lowly maiden, who was married to a carpenter. As we read this morning in the Canticle of Mary: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, "my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, "who has looked with favor on me, a lowly servant" The birth itself points to humility. "And this will be a sign for you: "You will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths "and lying in a manger" The great Reformation theologian Martin Luther used the phrase: "Our God in the straw. "They were looking for a king, "to slay their foes and raise them high, "but God came as a baby lying in a manger." God's action reverses the expectations and conventions of this world. Reversal and surprise are part of Advent and Christmas. When our daughter Margaret was three we lived in London. While there we bought my father-in-law a pipe for Christmas. Two days before Christmas, just after we had gotten home, Margaret said to him, "Granddad, we got you a pipe for Christmas." I said, "Margaret, "that was supposed to be a surprise for him." She smiled and she said, "He'll forget by Christmas." (congregation laughs) Once we experience the first Advent, things can never be the same again. We cannot forget God's initiative broke through the hopes and expectations of men and women in a way that we could never have imagined. In Advent and Christmas we affirm again that God acted in history in surprising ways that we human beings did not expect. The themes and scripture lessons of this Advent season also point to God's future. Advent is not only a time of remembering that God did act, but also a time to remember that God will act. Christian faith proclaims that the life of this world is not cyclical, but that it is processional. All creation is moving toward a goal, a purposeful movement toward a goal And that goal is full life in Jesus Christ the fulfillment of promise in God's kingdom. "For salvation is nearer to us now "than when we first believed; "the night is far gone, "the day is at hand." This second sense of Advent reminds us that we are watching and waiting for the coming of the day of the Lord. His Advent is ever imminent, because He is history's Lord. Now Christians can make mistakes with this theme of the second Advent. We all know individuals and groups who want to play with specific times and places for this fulfillment. Also you can find extravagant predictions about what the end times will be like, and about who will be in and who will be out. As we move toward the year 2000, just a few years to go, there will be popular and lucrative articles and books making all sorts of apocalyptic claims. But I think we need to remember God's reversals and surprises that we learned about in considering the first Advent. We need to be prepared perhaps to be surprised. One of my favorite stories is about the Methodist preacher and bus driver, who died on the same day. And they got to the gates of heaven and St. Peter met them and after figuring out who they were he opened the gate for the bus driver and said to the Methodist preacher, "There's no place for you here." He said, "Wait a minute!" He said, "There must be a mistake. "I've been a Methodist preacher for 42 years." St. Peter said, "Yes, sir "there's a place for the bus driver "but not a place for you." Peter went on to say, "When you preached the people slept. "But when he drove the bus, the people prayed." (congregation laughs) He was surprised you see. And you be careful about people who make claims about who will be in and who will be out. I think humility and modesty are appropriate attitudes for Christians. The scriptures warn us that it's not for us to know or to speculate about the time or place of the second Advent. In Matthew 24 Jesus says, "But about that day and hour no one knows, "neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, "but only the Father." We are to watch and to wait. What then can we know? We know from the evidence of

history, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that the future is God's future, and that all things work together for good for those who are in Christ. Paul writes, "I consider the sufferings of this present time "not worth comparing "with the glory that is to be revealed to us. "We know that in everything "God works for good with those who love him, "who are called according to his purpose." Christian hope is not blind hope or wishful thinking. Christian hope is based on the sure and certain knowledge of the risen Lord. He is the Lord of all history, and for that reason we are not afraid. "The night is far gone, "the day is at hand." God will act in our future. C.S. Lewis, in his book "Mere Christianity" wrote: "But I wonder whether people "who ask God to intervene openly and directly in our world "quite realize what it will be like when he does. "When that happens it is the end of the world. "When the author walks on the stage the play is over. "It will be too late to choose your side. "There is no use saying you choose to lie down "when it has become impossible to stand up." Lewis suggests that now is the time to come to terms with the fact that God did act in history in the first Advent, and that God will act in the future. So as we celebrate Advent this year we also proclaim that God is acting now. We stand now between memory and hope. Christians live after the resurrection and before the end of time. And because of this reality, we are called to live life appropriately in the present. As Paul wrote to the Romans: "Let us then cast off the works of darkness "and put on the armor of light; "let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day." You and I are given this time in which to live. Now I know people who live in the past. You probably do too. They're always complaining that things are not as good they used to be. And I also know people who live in the future. They can do only thinking about what they will do when such and such happens or when this is right. Neither alternative is a faithful response. Barbara DeAngelis, in a recent book called "Real Moments", writes about the importance of fulfillment in life now, not when you have more money, or find the right partner, or achieve your perfect weight. It's about one's quest for happiness: "First I was dying to finish high school and start college. "And then I was dying to finish college and start working. "And then I was dying for my children "to grow old enough for school, "so that I could return to work. "And then I was dying to retire. "And now, I am dying "and suddenly I realize I forgot to live." At the end of the year 1942, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the great German theologian who died as a martyr for his faith when he was 39 at the hands of the Nazis, wrote an essay entitled "After 10 Years". He wrote it and he sent it to a few friends as a Christmas present. One section of the essay is entitled "Present and Future". Bonhoeffer wrote this: "We used to think "that one of the inalienable rights of man "was that he should be able to plan "both his professional and his private life. "That is a thing of the past. "The force of circumstances has brought us into a situation "where we have to give up being anxious about tomorrow. "But it makes all the difference "whether we accept this willingly and in faith, "or under continual constraint. "For most people, "the compulsory abandonment of planning for the future "means that they are forced back into living "just for the moment, "irresponsibly, frivolously, or resignedly; "some few dream longingly of better times to come, "and try to forget the present. "We find both these courses equally impossible, "and there remains for us only the very narrow way, "often extremely difficult to find, "of living every day as if it were our last, "and yet living in faith and responsibility "as though there would be a great future. "Thinking and acting for the sake of the coming generation, "but being ready to go any day "without fear or anxiety. "That, in practice, "is the spirit in which we are forced to live" What a great statement. He expresses in that statement what I'm trying to say about Advent. Between Christian memory and hope, we live in the now. Because of Christian memory and hope, we cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; we conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day. This week I was at a luncheon with Dr. Robert Korstad of the Sanford Institute of Public Policy here at Duke. And Bob told us at that luncheon about giving

his undergraduate ethics class an assignment to write a brief first-person account of a specific incident in their lives and then reflect on it ethically. He said that, for the most part, the students were unable to do the assignment. They didn't even have an idea about how deal with the question. They couldn't bring it together. There were a few exceptions. Those who were the exceptions he said, were persons who had suffered loss, who had experienced severe set backs, had serious medical problems, or who had experienced sustained involvement in significant service projects. On the other hand, the people in the class who had predictable, comfortable lives in which everything had gone pretty well toward their own self-interest seemed to lack tough-minded encounter with what is really important and valuable. Our response should result in attention to what's really important, what are our priorities. Christian commitment propels us beyond ourselves into service and giving. Christ wakes us up to the needs of people around us, and challenges us never to be satisfied with easy answers about the problems of a society in which all across the nation are monumental buildings are new jails and ball parks. We live in a society that urgently needs larger vision and renewed Christian commitment and service. Maybe we like to avoid Advent and rush on to Christmas because Advent makes us wait, and calls us to wake up. Now, before it is too late, is the time to choose your side. Now is the time for us to think about what is really important, what is really worthwhile, how we can serve others, and how we can provide for succeeding generations, even while we live fully in the now. "You know that the hour is now, "how it is full time "for you to wake from sleep. "For salvation is nearer to us now "than when we first believed; "the night is far gone, "the day is at hand." Amen. ("Song of Mary" by Miriam Therese Winter) ♪ My soul gives glory to my God ♪ ♪ My heart pours out its praise ♪ ♪ God lifted up my lowliness ♪ ♪ In many marvelous ways ♪ ♪ My God has done great things for me ♪ ♪ Yes, holy is this Name ♪ ♪ All people will declare me blessed ♪ ♪ And blessings they shall claim ♪ ♪ From age to age to all who fear ♪ ♪ Such mercy love imparts ♪ ♪ Dispensing justice far and near ♪ ♪ Dismissing selfish hearts ♪ ♪ Love casts the mighty from their thrones ♪ ♪ Promotes the insecure ♪ ♪ Leaves hungry spirits satisfied ♪ ♪ The rich seem suddenly poor ♪ ♪ Praise God, whose loving covenant ♪ ♪ Supports those in distress ♪ ♪ Remembering past promises ♪ ♪ With present faithfulness ♪

- The Lord be with you.

Congregants: And also with you.

- Let us pray. Be seated. Holy God, we marvel at the mystery of your incarnation among us. The message of the angels, the song of Mary, the birth of the babe at Bethlehem. Give us grace to see all the ways in which You stand beside us. And share our pain and sorrow and celebrate our joy. Oh incarnate One, Lord hear our prayer. Because you came among us dispersed the gloom of night and dawned in our darkness. we know that you care. Therefore for all those who this joyous season are sad, we pray. We pray for mourners, we pray for the sick, for those whose families are divided. We pray for misunderstood youth and for little children who are in fear. Dayspring on high, Lord, hear our prayer. Lord, you deemed it good to be born among a people in an occupied land, amid war and strife. Therefore we pray for all those who suffer from war and civil unrest. Especially do we pray for the people of Bosnia and Serbia and Herzegovina. And those who have gone there to keep the peace. We pray for the peace process in Northern Ireland and in the Near East. Prince of Peace, Lord, hear our prayer. Because You have come to us, we come to You, bringing all those problems of our lives which seem so insoluble, offering up to you our fears which seem so great. All

those matters which perplex us so deeply that we know not what to ask or to pray. And yet you know. Grant us that peace which only you can give. Give us what we need despite what we think we want. Make us more than we could be had we been left to ourselves. Oh wisdom from on high, Lord, hear our prayer. Amen. And now let us offer ourselves and our gifts to the God who has offered so much to us. ("Praise Him" by J. M. Diack and J. S. Bach) ♪ Praise Him ♪ ♪ Praise the great Creator ♪ ♪ Praise Him ♪ ♪ Praise the great Creator ♪ ♪ For His goodness ♪ ♪ For His bounty ♪ ♪ Showered upon us throughout the year ♪ ♪ Praise Him ♪ ♪ Praise the great Creator ♪ ♪ Praise Him ♪ ♪ Praise the great Creator ♪ ♪ For His goodness ♪ ♪ For His bounty ♪ ♪ Showered upon us throughout the year ♪ ♪ Praise Him, snow and wind and rain ♪ ♪ Praise Him, buds and blossoms fair ♪ ♪ Fruits and fields of golden grain ♪ ♪ Beasts of earth and birds of air ♪ ♪ Praise the Lord, ye heavens adore Him ♪ ♪ Praise Him, angels in the heights ♪ ♪ Sun and moon rejoice before Him ♪ ♪ Praise Him all ye stars of light ♪ ♪ Sun and moon rejoice before Him ♪ ♪ Praise Him all ye stars of light ♪ ♪ Praise Him ♪ ♪ Praise the great Creator ♪ ♪ Praise Him ♪ ♪ Praise the great Creator ♪ ♪ For His goodness ♪ ♪ For His Bounty ♪ ♪ Showered upon us throughout the year ♪ ♪ Praise Him ♪ ♪ Praise the great Creator ♪ ♪ Praise Him ♪ ♪ Praise the great Creator ♪ ♪ For His goodness ♪ ♪ For His Bounty ♪ ♪ Showered upon us throughout the year ♪ ("What Sweeter Music" by John Rutter) ♪ What sweeter music can we bring ♪ ♪ Than a carol, for to sing ♪ ♪ The birth of this our heavenly King ♪ ♪ Awake the voice ♪ ♪ Awake the string ♪ ♪ Dark and dull night, fly hence away ♪ ♪ And give the honor to this day ♪ ♪ That sees December turned to May ♪ ♪ That sees December turned to May ♪ ♪ Why does the chilling winter's morn ♪ ♪ Smile like a field beset with corn ♪ ♪ Or smell like a meadow newly-shorn ♪ ♪ Thus, on the sudden come and see ♪ ♪ The cause, why things thus fragrant be ♪ ♪ 'Tis He is born, whose quickening birth ♪ ♪ Gives life and luster, public mirth ♪ ♪ To heaven, and the under-earth ♪ ♪ We see him come, and know him ours ♪ ♪ Who, with his sunshine and his showers ♪ ♪ Turns all the patient ground to flowers ♪ ♪ Turns all the patient ground to flowers ♪ ♪ The darling of the world is come ♪ ♪ And fit it is, we find a room ♪ ♪ To welcome him ♪ ♪ To welcome him ♪ ♪ The nobler part ♪ ♪ Of all the house here ♪ ♪ Is the heart ♪ ♪ Which we will give Him; and bequeath ♪ ♪ This holly ♪ ♪ And this ivy wreath ♪ ♪ To do him honor, who's our King ♪ ♪ And Lord of all this reveling ♪ ♪ What sweeter music can we bring ♪ ♪ Than a carol for to sing ♪ ♪ The birth of this our heavenly King ♪ ♪ The birth of this ♪ ♪ Our heavenly King ♪ ("Doxology" by Thomas Ken) ♪ Praise God, from whom all blessings flow ♪ ♪ Praise Him, all creatures here below ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Praise Him above, ye heavenly host ♪ ♪ Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪

- Praise the great creator, for His goodness, for His bounty showered upon us still throughout the year. Praise Him snow and wind and rain, praise Him buds and blossoms fair, fields of golden grain, beasts of the earth, birds of the air. Praise the Lord for all of Your gifts to us. We offer ourselves and these gifts as our joyful praise to You praying as we have been taught. Our Father,

Congregants: 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. Amen. ("Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending" by Charles Wesley) ♪ Lo! he comes with clouds descending ♪ ♪ Once for favored sinners slain ♪ ♪ Thousand, thousand saints attending ♪ ♪ Swell the triumph of his train ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ God appears on earth to reign ♪ ♪ Every eye shall now behold Him ♪ ♪ Robed in dreadful majesty ♪ ♪ Those who set at naught and sold him ♪ ♪ Pierced,



and nailed him to the tree ♪♪ Deeply wailing ♪♪ Deeply wailing ♪♪ Deeply wailing ♪♪ Shall the true Messiah  
see ♪♪ The dear tokens of his passion ♪♪ Still his dazzling body bears ♪♪ Cause of endless exultation ♪♪ To  
his ransomed worshipers ♪♪ With what rapture ♪♪ With what rapture ♪♪ With what rapture ♪♪ Gaze we on  
those glorious scar ♪♪ Yea, Amen! Let all adore thee ♪♪ High on thy eternal throne ♪♪ Savior, take the  
power and glory ♪♪ Claim the kingdom for thine own ♪♪ Hallelujah ♪♪ Hallelujah ♪♪ Hallelujah ♪♪  
Everlasting God, come down ♪

- The grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with  
you now and always. ("The Lord Bless You and Keep You" by John Rutter) ♪ The Lord bless you and keep you  
♪ The Lord make His face to shine upon you ♪ To shine upon you and be gracious ♪ And be gracious  
unto you ♪ The Lord bless you and keep you ♪ The Lord make His face to shine upon you ♪ To shine  
upon you and be gracious ♪ And be gracious unto you ♪ The Lord lift up the light ♪ Of His countenance  
upon you ♪ The Lord lift up the light ♪ Of His countenance upon you ♪ And give you peace ♪ And give  
you peace ♪ And give you peace ♪ And give you peace ♪ Amen ♪ Amen ♪ Amen ♪ Amen ♪ Amen ♪  
♪ Amen ♪ Amen ♪ Amen ♪ (pipe organ music)