



HANGING OF THE GREENS

**Ascension Lutheran Church
Shelby, North Carolina**

Second Sunday of Advent December 5, 2021

Welcome, All, In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord!

On Christmas Eve, we will celebrate and share in the joy of the coming of the Lord. This morning we adorn our sanctuary in greenery, remembering the One who adorns our lives with His grace and who has promised to come again.

The simple beauty of the season, the familiar melodies, words and symbols remind us of that great miracle when He who made all things came one night as a babe.

This service reminds us that the Christian life is to be an “Advent life,” a life lived preparing and looking forward to the advent, which means the coming, of our Lord.

PRELUDE

Please stand as you are able.

***OPENING DIALOG**

[A] How shall we prepare this house for the birth of Jesus?

[C] With branches of cedar, the tree of excellence and strength.

[A] How shall we prepare this house for the eternal Christ?

[C] With garlands of pine, whose leaves are ever living, ever green.

[A] How shall we prepare this house for the prophet of Galilee?

[C] With limbs of holly, telling of his passion, death and resurrection.

[A] How shall we prepare our hearts for this revelation of God?

[C] By hearing again the words of the prophets and the promises of God.

[A] For in the story of Jesus we see revealed the transforming power of God. We are reminded anew of God’s vision of wholeness, justice and peace for all of creation.

[C] Thanks be to God.

***HYMN #532** **“Gather Us In”**

***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**

[A] Restore us, O God of hosts.

[C] Come, Lord Jesus.

[A] Give us peace and strength in our days.

[C] Come, Christ Jesus.

[A] Be present with us, and we shall be saved.

[C] Come, Lord Jesus, and do not be slow.

***LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

***HYMN #257 "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" Verse 1**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

[A] As we reflect on the foundation of our faith in our lives,
we gather together around the candle of peace.

[R] The home we long for is a home that knows peace—

[A] peace that rests between us and our grief,

[R] peace around our anxiety,

[A] peace between us and our self-criticism,

[R] peace amidst our relationships,

[A] peace at the core of our being,

[R] peace hovering through and in our world.

[A] The home we long for is a home that knows peace.

[R] So today we light the candle of peace—as a reminder and as a prayer.

[A] Let it be so. Amen.

Silence for reflection while the first and second candles are lit. (Pastor)

***HYMN #257 “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” Verse 6**

O Come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near
Disperse the gloomy clouds of nights, and death’s dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

The Hanging of The Greens Begins

Please be seated.

THE WREATHS

The wreath is a popular Christmas decoration with a meaningful design.

The circle represents the endless love of God, His eternity and perfection. He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. The prophet Isaiah tells us there will be no end to the Messiah’s reign. The green wreaths remind us that the new life God gives us will never die. May our wreaths remind us to share the never ending love of Jesus with the world around us. May our love and faithfulness to God be an endless circle and may we be a constant effective witness.

THE POINSETTIAS

As part of our decorating to celebrate the coming of our Lord, we place poinsettias around the altar and in the windows.

Often called the Flower of the Holy Night, the poinsettia is a colorful tropical plant discovered in Mexico in 1828 by Dr. Joel Roberts Poinsett of Charleston, S.C. The star-shaped leaves remind us of the star that led the wise men to Bethlehem. The color represents the blood shed as the Savior gave His life upon the cross. Today we place these adornments from God’s nature in our sanctuary to enhance our place of worship. We honor Christ by offering the beauty of these flowers to Him in memory and in honor of our friends and loved ones.

THE BELLS

Bells are one of the primary sounds of Christmas.

For centuries, bells delivered messages. Their vibrations reach far and catch the attention of those nearby. Bells call people together. They send out good news. For both these reasons, Christmas bells peal to celebrate the birth of Christ our Savior, the greatest of good news for all the world. Listen now to the bells.

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

[P] In our scripture passage for today, Zechariah, a new father, speaks to his newborn son, John the Baptist, for the very first time. I want you to imagine yourself in his shoes ...

What would you say to a newborn sleeping in your arms? What would you want them to know on their very first day? What would feel important?

I imagine that all of you would speak words of love. It's impossible not to speak words of love when you're holding a baby, and yet as we grow up, that skill tends to become harder for us to practice. So let us return to our foundation—to words of love, starting with love for ourselves. Let us pray the prayer of confession together.

[C] Holy God,

When John was Born, Zechariah leaned down and whispered words of love into his ear. We know that you do the same for us, day in and day out, yet we fail to hear it.

We forget that in the beginning we were made good.

We doubt that we could possibly be enough.

We hustle for our self-worth and wear ourselves out aiming for perfection.

We deflect words of praise.

We hide behind shiny first impressions.

Forgive us. Trusting our worth is the hardest job.

Open our ears as you open our hearts,

so that we might rest on the foundation of goodness you have laid for us.

Gratefully we pray, amen.

[P] Family of faith,
No matter how old we get,
God continues to say to us:
“You are loved; you are forgiven.”
That is the foundation of our lives.
That is the truth upon which we build our home.
So breathe deeply. There is grace and peace here.
Join me in proclaiming this good news:

**[C] We are loved. We are forgiven. We are claimed. This is our foundation.
Thanks be to God.
Amen.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

[P] Let us pray.

**[C] Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.**

Please be seated.

FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4

[A] A reading from Malachi.

¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in

righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

[A] The word of the Lord.

[C] **Thanks be to God.**

THE EVERGREENS

The most universal feature of Christmas is the use of evergreens in churches and homes.

Among ancient Romans, evergreens were an emblem of peace, joy and victory. The early Christians placed them in their window to show that Christ had entered the home. Holly and ivy, along with pine and fir, are called evergreens because they never change color. They are ever-green, ever-alive, even in the midst of the coldest winter. They symbolize the unchanging nature of our God, and they remind us of the everlasting life that is ours through Christ Jesus.

THE HOLLY

This morning we place a special garland of holly on our altar.

Holly is symbolic of the burning bush, or of Mary, mother of Jesus, whose being glows with the Holy Spirit. The red berries represent the blood drops from the cruel thorns in the crown of our Lord. We place the holly on the altar in tribute to our Lord and his sacrifice.

SOLO

The Magnificat

Carol Berger

PSALMODY: Luke 1:68-79 (sung)

The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)

⁶⁸Blessed are you, Lord, the | God of Israel,
you have come to your people and | set them free.

⁶⁹You have raised up for us a | mighty Savior,
born of the house of your | servant David.

⁷⁰Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us | from our enemies,

⁷¹from the hands of | all who hate us,
⁷²to show mercy | to our forebears,
and to remember your | holy covenant.
⁷³This was the oath you swore to our | father Abraham:
⁷⁴to set us free from the hands of our | enemies,
free to worship you | without fear,
⁷⁵holy and righteous before you, all the days | of our life.
⁷⁶And you, child, shall be called the prophet of | the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to pre- | pare the way,
⁷⁷to give God's people knowledge | of salvation
by the forgiveness | of their sins.
⁷⁸In the tender compassion | of our God
the dawn from on high shall | break upon us,
⁷⁹to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shad- | ow of death,
and to guide our feet into the | way of peace.

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11

[A] A reading from Philippians.

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

[A] The word of the Lord.

[C] Thanks be to God.

Please stand.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-6

[P] The holy gospel according to Luke, the third chapter.

[C] Glory to you O Lord.

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

⁵Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;

⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

[P] The gospel of our Lord.

[C] Praise to you O Christ.

***PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

[P] God, who speaks a good news language—
we admit, listening has never been our greatest gift.
We are easily distracted, our minds run a million miles a minute.
we doubt your faith in us, and take the easy way out when it comes to hope.
So today we bow our heads and ask for help.
Settle our hearts. Quiet our minds.
Steady our breathing. Help us to rest in you.
Help us to listen for your good news.
Gratefully we pray,
[C] Amen.

Please be seated.

SERMON

The Rev. Christina Auch

Please stand.

***HYMN #244**

“Rejoice, Rejoice Believers”

Please be seated.

THE CHRISMON TREES

Today, the Chrismon trees form the center of our festivities. Glittering with lights and ornaments, they are a part of the meaning of this holy season.

Our Chrismon trees add beauty and dignity to God’s house. The ornaments represent the life of Christ, a reminder that God’s love through Jesus is with us always – not just at Christmas, but all of our lives. Ascension’s Chrismons have been made by the loving hands of many who have entered the Church Triumphant. Let us remember them in our hearts and give thanks for the heritage they have left us.

Please stand.

***NICENE CREED**

[P] God has gathered his people into one Church through Christ. Together with sisters and brothers throughout the world, 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.**

Please be seated.

THE LIGHTS

For many years, lights have been a part of Christmas.

The candles in our windows reflect the beauty of the stained glass and in the Advent wreath emphasize this time of anticipation. The lights of our Christmas trees tell us that Jesus is the light of the world. As we accept that light into our lives and share it, our world becomes brighter. Through our offering we acknowledge that we receive the blessings of a generous God who brings light to our darkness so that we, through our gifts, can be light bearers to the world.

THE INCENSE

Use of incense often is associated with Psalm 141:1-2 "I call upon you, LORD; come quickly to me; give ear to my voice when I call to you. Let my prayer be counted as incense before you and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice."

There is an element of our prayers rising to God and even joining with the realms of those in the heavens. The historic use of incense in our Judeo-Christian heritage has been to signify the arrival of someone important. Thus it is also a symbol to worshipers of the coming of God into our midst, a type of preparing for his arrival. Incense was used in the Old Testament in the temple. It has continued to be used within the Christian traditions over the years leading back to the early church.

Incense is not used merely because it is pretty, because it smells sweet, or because we like "high church" but rather because, as a living link with Christians and Jewish antiquity, it assures us that the early Christians believed as we believe, that when we gather together in His Name, God is in our midst, that we do not merely remember a dead Jew but have Communion with a living Christ, that we do not merely long for a heaven that is "up yonder" or "in the sweet by and by," but adore an Eternal Lord who is "right here and now."

Incense adds to our service an atmosphere of mystery. It signifies an invasion of the Eternal into time, of the Infinite All Holy into the midst of His people.

When incense is offered, it should properly awe and impress us with the fact of the imminent entrance of Him who flung the stars into space and who numbers the hairs of our heads, yet whose tender love is concerned with the sparrow's fall, who willed to be laid in a manger and nailed to a cross that you and I might know His love for all eternity.

Understanding its ancient meaning, as purification before the entrance of an important visitor, incense as the Church uses it is eloquent testimony and a vivid dramatization of the Church's most cherished beliefs and vital experiences: God's coming to man, really and actually, in man's worship of God.

Please stand.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

[A] In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

Silence is kept for reflection.

[A] You send messengers into the world to proclaim the day of your coming. Make our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay preachers confident in their preaching, that their words and our lives witness to your grace. Hear us, O God. **[C] Your mercy is great.**

[A] Send your Spirit to all living creatures that are endangered. Provide them with shelter and care, and bring us into right relationship with the earth that you create and call good. Hear us, O God.

[C] Your mercy is great.

[A] Send leaders to our nations, cities, schools, and businesses to work on behalf of those who have lost parents, spouses, and loved ones; immigrants; the imprisoned; those living in poverty; and all who are oppressed. Make

them bold in their commitments to justice and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

[C] Your mercy is great.

[A] Send your servants to care for those who suffer. Use our ministries and our lives to reach out with compassion to those who are hungry, oppressed, lonely, or ill. Grant them healing and wholeness. We pray especially for those we name aloud now or silently in our hearts...

Kathy Backof (Donna Lilly's dear friend), **Martha** Beam (Eleanor Hendrick's friend), **Daniel** Botts (Ladley and Jane Burn's grandson), **Cody** Bryant (Bob Bryant's grandson), **Kathy** Callahan (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Mike** Callahan (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Chuck** Cook (Fred and Nancy DeBell's cousin), **Edna** Cooper (Bill Bridges' Aunt), **Phil** Costello (Donna Lilly's friend), **Sonya** Cress (Jenny White's friend), **The Davenport Family** (Dave and Priscilla Williams' friends), **Charles and Mary** Degree (Karen Long's friends), **Saher** Degree (Gail Sherman's friend), **Tim** Farmer (Pastor Christina and Jamie's friend), **Ashton** Fields (Carol Berger's friend), **Avan** Fields (Carol Berger's friend), **Carol Ann** Forgas (Bill Bridges' friend), **Mike** Greene (Gail Sherman's friend), **Rev. Carl** Greenawald (DeBell's friends), **Wayne** Hector (Jim Wilson's friend), **Judy** Houser (Jennie and Dave Lambert's friend), **Joe** Hutchinson (William Coyne's friend), **Debbie** Irvin (Bill Bridges' friend), **Patti** Jenkins (Priscilla Williams' friend), **Kay** Johnson (Eleanor Hendrick's cousin), **Steve** Jolly (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Mark** Kent (Majorie Olsen's son), **Rachel** Kidwell (Dave William's niece), **Bob and Mary** Cook Koontz (Dale Guffey's parents), **Jim** Lilly (Dick and Donna Lilly's son), **Matt** Lilly (Dick and Donna Lilly's son), **Roberto** Lopez (William Coyne's friend), **Sonya and Gerald** Lovelace (Bill Bridges' friend), **Brenda** Lowery (Gail Sherman's friend), **Eva** McCombs (Sandra Waldrop's mother), **Janice** McGoven (Eleanor Hendricks' sister), **Sheri Dawn** Mack (Relative of Karen Hubbard), **Ed** Marler (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Gay** Helms Melton (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Mary Bell** Moore (Lacy's neighbor and the Hubbard's and Johnson's granddaughter), **Pat** Mullen (Johanna Gillespie's friend), **Wanda** Mullinax (Edith Kelly's niece), **Teresa** Olsen (Marjorie Olsen's daughter-in-law), **Jeanne** Patterson (Karen Long's cousin), **Bob** Patzer (Carol Berger's brother-in-law), **Linda** Patzer (Carol

Berger's sister), **Gerard** Peruzzi (Carol Berger's brother), **Margaret** Peruzzi (Carol Berger's mother), **Liz and Ron** Dal Poggetto (Judy Bridges' friends), **John** Reid (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Beth** Rhyne (Ladley and Jane Burn's friend), **Sue** Rippy (Donna and Dick Lilly's neighbor), **Fred** Ryan (Fred and Nancy DeBell's cousin in law), **Evan** Sealey (Eleanor Hendrick's friend), **Candace** Siddlow (Courtney Richard's mother), **Floyd** Tate, Jr. (John Lilly's friend), **Jean and Jim** Tesseneer (Bill Bridges friend), **Beth** Thomas (Carol Berger's daughter), **David** Tucker (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **David** Waldrop (Sandra Waldrop's husband), **Edith** Walker (Allen and Lisa Philbeck's friend's mother), **Freda Walker** (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Molly and Darryl** Waterstraat (Karen Hubbard's friends), **Alfie** Welch (Renee Buchanan's brother), **Christopher** Willever (David Williams' grandson), **Mary Ann** Woolley (Sandra Waldrop's aunt).

Members: **Dean** Davis, **Lin** Washburn, **Dot** Paul, **Bob** Bryant, **William** Coyne, **Jim** Wilson, **Bobbie** Johnson, **Gerald** Washburn, **Ann** Sipe, **Marjorie** Olsen and **Scott** Stone.

In Undergraduate College: **Emma** Auch, **Brooke** Buchanan, **Samantha** Hoffman, **Jacob** Stone, **Catherine** Lilly, **Matthew** Lilly.

[A] Hear us, O God.

[C] Your mercy is great.

[A] Send prophets to speak difficult truths, even when they are poorly received. Embolden those who ask hard questions and challenge accepted ways. Instill in youth and elders alike a passion for pointing to Jesus in all things. Hear us, O God.

[C] Your mercy is great.

[A] We remember your saints, both those publicly celebrated and those more humbly remembered. Confident that your work will be completed, we live in faith until the day of your coming. Hear us, O God.

[C] Your mercy is great.

[A] God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.
[C] Amen.

THE PEACE OF CHRIST (We are not “passing” the peace in any physical way. Online you are invited to share a greeting of peace in the comments.)

[P] The peace of Christ be with you always.
[C] And also with you.

CALL TO OFFERING

[P] Zechariah gave one of the greatest gifts he could give to his son. He gave him a foundation of love—words of purpose, pride, love, and belonging.

So, in turn, remembering that joyful day, we try to make a similar impact by giving what we can. And we pray that the gifts we give now—our time, our money, our talents—will be infused by the Spirit to make a more purposeful world of love and belonging that we can be proud of.

So let us give now. Let this be the foundation—the very start—of a better world.

*Make a one time or recurring gift using **the website** or **the GivePlus app** on iPhone or Android. You can give using ACH (bank account), Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.*

*Or **text 844-906-2283** and enter the amount you wish to donate.² Click the registration link and enter your payment information.³ Receive a verification text as well as an email receipt. For future giving, simply send a text to the same number with the amount you wish to give, and your donation will process automatically.*

*Or **mail your regular tithe or offering** to PO Box 266, Shelby, NC 28151.*

Please stand.

***OFFERTORY HYMN #884** **“Doxology”**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

***OFFERING PRAYER**

[A] Let us pray.

Holy God,

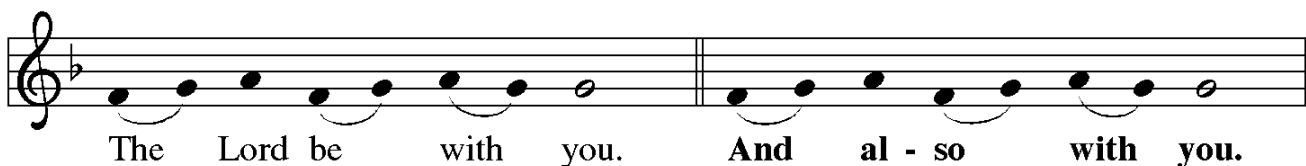
You are our home.

You and your goodness are the place we return to, the place we long to lay our head. So today as we offer you these gifts, we pray that you would take this offering and turn it into ministry. Use these gifts to transform the world we live in to better reflect the home you have envisioned for us—a home of peace, a home built on the foundation of love.

Gratefully we pray,

[C] Amen.

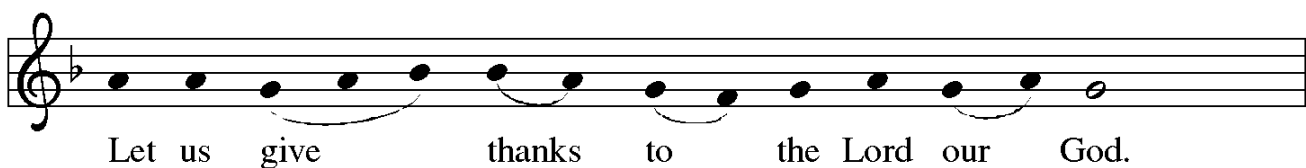
***GREAT THANKSGIVING**



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



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



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give our thanks and praise.

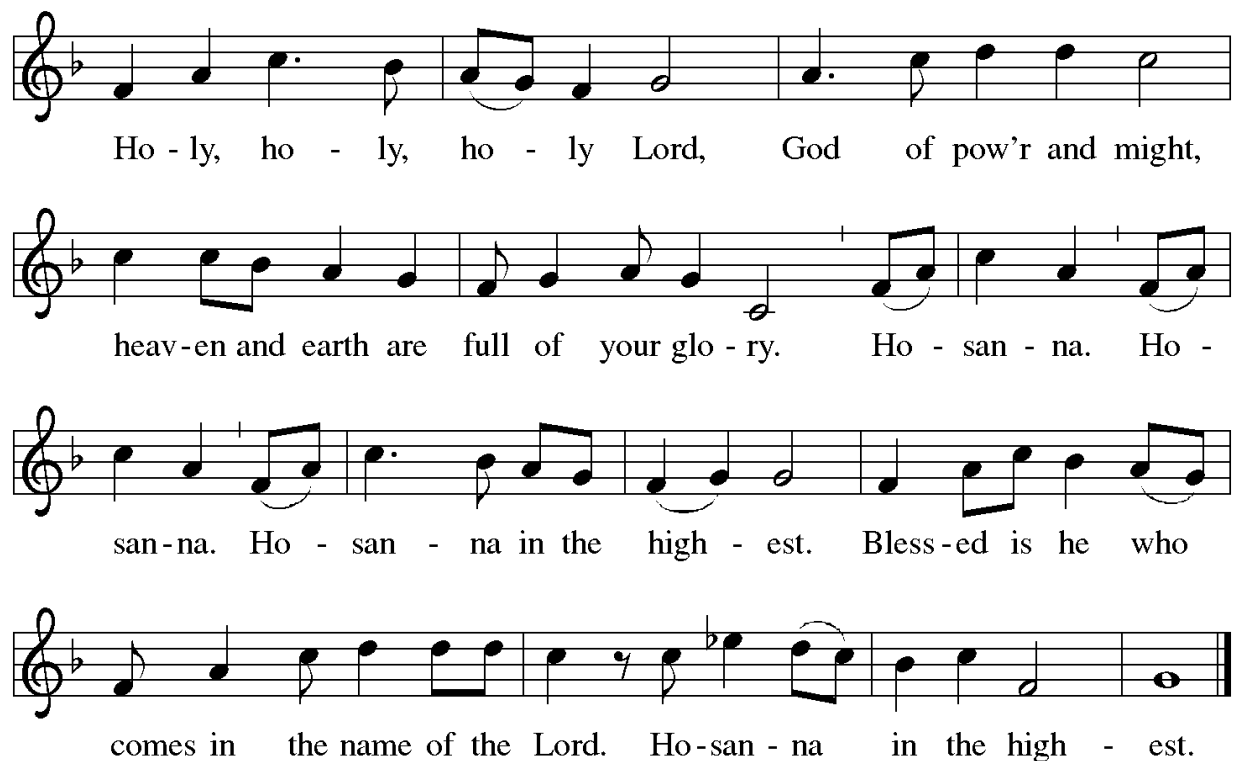
***PREFACE**

[P] Blessed are you, O God, ruler of the universe!

You draw your people to you
with the promise of salvation.

In your goodness,
every promise you make is fulfilled.

You delivered your people from bondage and exile,
bringing them home and renewing their song.
When your creation was captive to sin,
you sent Christ to restore the whole world.
In your love and by your Spirit,
you have invited us in and welcomed us home
and so we thank you with the faithful of every time and place.



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.

Gathering God, as grain is collected from the fields,
in Christ, you draw us to yourself;
and as grapes are brought together in one cup,
in this holy meal, you make us one family.
Send your Spirit upon your church
that we may welcome the lost and the lonely,
into the household of Christ,
who at supper with his disciples, took bread, gave thanks,
broke the bread, and gave it to them saying,
“This is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

After supper he took the cup
and he gave it to them saying,
“This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

Great is the mystery of faith.

**[C] Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

God of justice,
you have promised to make your home among us:
come quickly to those who wait for you.
Raise up every head that is bent low in sin.
Lift up every heart that is bowed down in shame.
Uphold every soul that is made heavy by oppression.
Inspire every weary throat to sing of the day when justice and mercy
will find their home in you.

Even so, come Lord Jesus.

[C] Amen.

***LORD'S PRAYER**

[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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

[P] Bread of Life, be Light in our darkness.

[C] Christ is the Light of the world.

Cup of Salvation, be Strength for our journey.

[C] Christ is the Hope of the world.

The gifts of God

[C] for the people of God.

Let us come for all things are now ready.

Please be seated.

DISTRIBUTION

[P] This is the body and blood of Christ, given and shed for you.

[C] Amen.

Please remain seated.

If you are not communing, please receive this blessing for you:

“Jesus loves you and keeps you all the days of your life.”

“LAMB OF GOD”



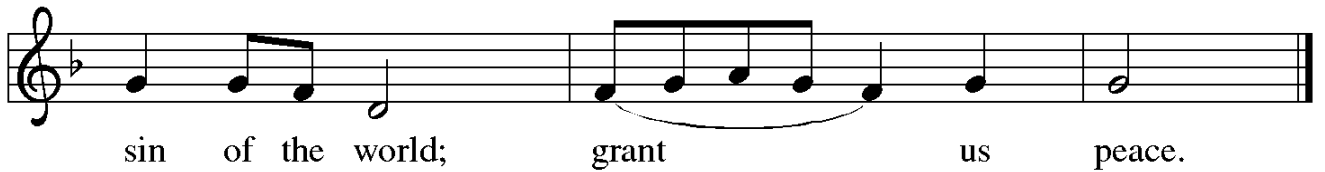
Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the



world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the



Please stand.

***POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

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

[C] Amen.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

[A] Let us pray.

Most High God, you have come among us at this table.

By the Spirit’s power, form us to be bearers of your word,
 sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all,
 through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.

[C] Amen.

***BLESSING**

[P] As you leave *this* service, *your* service begins:

Comfort the homesick.

Open your doors to others.

Seek sanctuary.

Be brave enough to go home by another way.

And remember that here in God’s house,
 all are welcomed—so come back soon.

[C] Amen.

***HYMN #267 “Joy to the World”**

***DISMISSAL**

[P] In the name of our Foundation—God, Spirit, and Son—
 † go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

[C] Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

The Chrismons Proclaiming our Lord Jesus Christ

As we await the birth of Jesus during Advent and celebrate this wondrous gift from God at Christmas, beautiful trees flank our altar.

Ornaments, lovingly made by members of the congregation over many years, decorate each tree. These ornaments are known as Chrismons (CHRIST-MONograms). They are symbols from Christian history that refer to our Lord Jesus Christ. Their meaning is rooted in Scripture.

The earliest Christians used these symbols on doors, buildings, utensils, jewelry, catacombs and on other places and objects to reveal their faith. The symbols were always created in gold and white to communicate majesty and purity.

The Chrismon Tree originated at Lutheran Church of the Ascension in Danville, Va., in 1957, and in the half-century since has been widely adopted by many denominations around the world.

Here is a description of some Chrismons found on our trees:

Anchor Cross – Known as the Cross of Hope. The child, Jesus, is the hope of the world. Christ is our anchor

Latin Cross – The cross upon which Christ was crucified.

Greek Cross – The symbol for Christ used by early Greek artists.

Cross over the World – Christ reigns over the entire world.

IHS – The first three letters of “Jesus” in Greek.

Crown – The kingship of Christ; his victory over sin and death.

Fish – One of the most ancient symbols for Jesus. The Greek word for “fish” is an acrostic on the first letters of “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior”

Butterfly – Symbol of Jesus’ resurrection.

Rose – The nativity of our Lord and Jesus’ human mother Mary.

Stars – Formed by crosses set at various angles, symbolizing the close relationship between the birth and death of Jesus. Five-pointed star Epiphany Star; six-pointed star – Creator’s Star; seven-pointed star seven gifts of the Spirit; eight-pointed star – man’s regeneration through baptism.

Circle – The symbol of eternity, our eternal life with God in His kingdom.

Intertwined Circles – The trinity, the triune God.

Alpha and Omega –The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet and a symbol of divinity. God is before and after all.

Shell – The symbol of Holy Baptism.

Wheat and Grapes – The symbols of bread and wine: the body and blood of Jesus.

The Chrismon trees in our sanctuary are given by Gail and Dale McKillop to the Glory of God and in honor of their children and grandchildren – Colin and Will, children of Jordan and Suzanne McKillop, and Mollie and Hannah, children of Ian and Kristen McKillop.

The large wreaths in our sanctuary are given by J.L. Setzer, Lisa, Rick and Jenna Washburn to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Frankie Setzer and their dear friends Maryland and Buck Dover.

The new greenery adorning our columbarium has been given by the Lacy and Smolzer families to the Glory of God and in memory of all Ascension saints who have entered the Church Triumphant throughout the past 98 years.

The candles in the sanctuary windows are given by Carol and Charlie Berger to the Glory of God and in loving memory of family members who have joined the Church Triumphant.

The greenery around the processional cross and torches is given by the Hanging of the Greens team to the Glory of God and in loving memory of our beloved team member Otto Olsen.

The wreaths on the front of the church are given by Lin and D.P. Washburn to the Glory of God and in celebration of the birth of our Savior.

The greenery in the prayer garden is given by Lisa and Allen Philbeck to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Hanging of the Greens team members Elizabeth Drum and Bruce Long.

POINSETTIAS

In Memory of:

Marvin Allen
Marty Allen
John Backof
Family we have lost
Dennis Bowen
Henry and Pauline Bridges
Harold and Joann Cook
Brady Kelly
Brady Kelly, Jr.
Gary Kelly
Judy and Al Lambert
Azilee and Paul London
Lola Ritchie
Lola Ritchie
Ruth and Manie Wilkie
Frankie Wilson

In Honor of:

Bill Bridges Family
The Lilly Children, Grand and
Great Grand Children
Margaret Peruzzi

Given by:

JoAn Allen
JoAn Allen
Dick and Donna Lilly
Carol and Charles Berger
Sandra Waldrop
Bill Bridges
Daryl and Rose Cook
Edith Kelly
Edith Kelly
Edith Kelly
Dave and Jennie Lambert
Dave and Jennie Lambert
Daryl and Rose Cook
William Coyne
Ludy Wilkie
William Coyne

Given by:

Bill Bridges

Dick and Donna Lilly
Carol and Charles Berger

GREENERY

In Memory of:

The Rev. Albert J. Bell
Dorothy M. Bell
John and Anna Burn
Don Galloway
Roy and Alice Gray
Bonnie Fisher Johnson
C.P. Johnson, MD
Tony Jordan
Ruth and Manie Wilkie

In Honor of:

The Hanging of the Greens Team
Lee Barry
Greg Blalock
The Burn Children and Grandchildren
Debby Chaffin
Jennie and Dave Lambert
Donna and Dick Lilly
Dot Paul
J.L. Setzer
My Loving Family

Given by:

Gordon and Bobby Johnson
Gordon and Bobby Johnson
Jane and Ladley Burn
Chris and Vicky Galloway
Jane and Ladley Burn
Gordon and Bobby Johnson
Gordon and Bobby Johnson
Chris and Vicky Galloway
Ludy Wilkie

Given by:

Dave and Jennie Lambert
Anonymous
Anonymous
Jane and Ladley Burn
Anonymous
Edith Kelly
Chris and Vicky Galloway
Anonymous
Anonymous
Karen Long

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Holy Communion When you are worshiping at home, you are encouraged to set up a temporary altar called a tabernacle at home. Find a small table or bench, place on it a nice plate and a cup or goblet. Find a slice or loaf of bread and use either wine or grape juice in the cup. When the time comes for communion, lift the bread and wine with the pastor, giving thanks to God for the gift of communion that offers us forgiveness, community, and new life in Christ.

In person Bible study, led by Pastor Christina, is meeting in the classroom across from the office on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. We are using Augsburg Fortress quarterly materials.

Prayer Concerns: Please call or email the office or text Pastor Christina at 704-472-7783 to update prayer requests. You may leave a voicemail but please provide the spelling of any names, and your relationship to the person being prayed for.

Please continue your tithes and offerings. Make a one time or recurring gift using **the website** or **the Vanco Mobile app** on iPhone or Android. You can give using ACH (bank account), Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.

Or **text 844-906-2283** and enter the amount you wish to donate. Then click the registration link and enter your payment information. You will receive a verification text as well as an email receipt.

Or **mail your regular tithe or offering** to PO Box 266, Shelby, NC 28151.

A LOOK AHEAD

Tuesday, December 7

7:00 p.m. - Congregation Council Meeting (Zoom)

Thursday, December 9

9:00 p.m. Thursday Night Prayer (Facebook & Zoom)

Sunday, December 12 — Third Sunday of Advent

9:30 a.m. Bible Study

10:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion
(also on Facebook & Zoom)

Thursday, December 16

9:00 p.m. Thursday Night Prayer (Facebook & Zoom)

Sunday, December 19 — Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:30 a.m. Bible Study

10:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion
after worship Christmas potluck & fellowship (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, December 21

7:00 p.m. Longest Night Service

Thursday, December 23

9:00 p.m. Thursday Night Prayer (Facebook & Zoom)

Friday, December 24 — 7:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday, December 26 – First Sunday of Christmas

No Bible Study

10:30 a.m. Lessons and Carols

December 27-28 – Church offices are closed

Thursday, December 30

9:00 p.m. Thursday Night Prayer (Facebook & Zoom)

Assisting December 5, 2021 – Hanging of the Greens

Presiding Minister: The Rev. Christina Auch, Pastor
Organist: Steve White
Assisting Minister: Lisa Philbeck
Reader(s) Gail McKillop, Kelly Smolzer
Ushers: Daryl Cook and Ludy Wilkie
Soloist: Carol Berger

Assisting December 12, 2021

Presiding Minister: The Rev. Christina Auch, Pastor
Organist: Steve White
Assisting Minister: Sandra Waldrop
Ushers: Greg Blalock and Mike Hubbard

Ascension Lutheran Church

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Ascensionlutheranshelby.com

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704-487-5679

The Rev. Christina Auch, Pastor 704-472-7783

Debby Chaffin, Secretary

Steve White and Cathy Hubbard, Organists

Rose Cook, Financial Secretary

Ludy Wilkie, Council President 704-487-4269

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| sanctifiedart.org. Communion Liturgy: Advent 2021, Year C written by Pastor Sarah Van
Zetten Bruins*