

# **Third Sunday of Advent**



# Welcome to OSt. Sohn's Rutheran Church



## A Word about Advent from Pastor John

The four Sundays of Advent build week to week, preparing us for the coming of Jesus as a baby at Christmas, in our hearts and our community now, and at the end of time to gather all things to God in love.

The first Sunday (December 1), Jesus speaks of signs in the heavens and distress from roaring waves, then likens these things to the first tender leaves in spring. How might this understanding give peace in troubled times?

The second Sunday (December 8), we hear from John the Baptist, crying out in the wilderness, "prepare the way of the Lord!" What does it mean that the high

will be made low and the low made high, to prepare the way for Jesus?

The third Sunday (December 15), we hear again from John, saying of Jesus, "one comes after me, whose sandals I am unfit to untie." John was a powerful prophet. What does it mean that he knew, Jesus is the one to be exalted?

The fourth Sunday (December 22), Mary, pregnant with Jesus, visits her relative Elizabeth, pregnant with John. Mary sees Elizabeth and herself as the lowly lifted up by God. What might it mean for us to be so lifted up?

An additional invitation to peace: Holden Evening Prayer

Every Wednesday in Advent (December 4, 11, and 18), we gather by candlelight at 6:30pm, to sing the most peace-giving prayers we know. In a season that can often feel hurried and harried, give yourself — and family and friends — the gift of peace. The service is about 30 minutes and will be followed by cookies and cocoa in the fireside room.

Church Council

**Chris Brooks** 

### Ministry Staff

### Senior Pastor

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### Stephen Ministry

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# PREPARING OUR HEARTS

### THIS MORNING'S WORSHIP THEME

Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

### LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

(Please stand in body or spirit.)

PROCESSIONAL HYMN ELW 264

"Prepare the Royal Highway"

9:00 AM Acolyte/Crucifer: Anna Kate McLemore Lector: Chuck Maland Communion Assistants: Mari Brooks Ann Rita Ditmore Ushers: Debbie Sweany Dave Sweany Audio/Visual: Jeff Welch

I I:00 AM Acolyte/Crucifer: Jaylene Jimenez Lector: Misty Anderson Communion Assistant: Thea Peterson Valerie Taylor Usher: Megan Venable Benny Smith Audio/Visual: TBD

> Altar Guild: Before: Clarke Hinkle Between: Jeff Welch Linda Welch After: Alice Garrison



Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. Lutheran Book of Worship Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent. Text © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

The processional cross represents Christ coming into the midst of his people. As the procession begins in the back of the nave, please turn and face the cross as it is carried forward.

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

### A: Amen.

- P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
  (Please kneel, in body or spirit. Silence is kept for reflection.)
- P: God of mercy,
- A: we confess that we have sinned.

We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.

We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

God of might,

we confess that we have sinned.

We have turned away from our neighbors.

We have trusted false promises.

God in our midst,

we confess that we have sinned.

We plead: come to us.

Bring your mercy to birth in us.

P: A righteous branch springs forth:

it is Christ the Lord, our Savior,

in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy.

By the power of the Holy Spirit,

receive the grace and forgiveness of God

through 🕂 Christ Jesus,

whose day draws near.

A: Amen.



### GREETING

- P: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- C: And also with you.

This prayer concerns the theme of the day and prepares us for hearing the readings from scripture.

- PRAYER OF THE DAY
  - P: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
  - C: Amen.

In the Old Testament, Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns with the hope that they will experience God's joy and peace.

### (Please be seated.) THE LESSON

### **PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7**

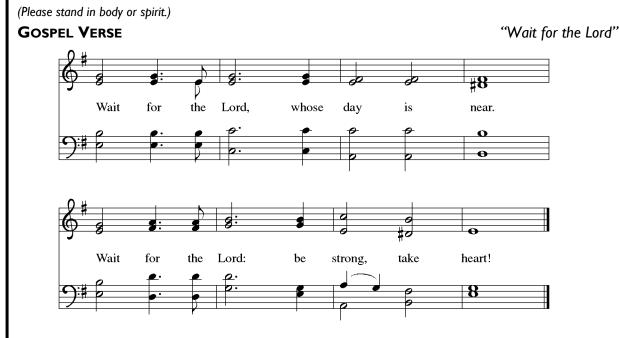
<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

P: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOD'S INVITATION: "Let the Children Come..."

Matthew 19:14



Text: Taizé Community Music: WAIT FOR THE LORD, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994 Text and music © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent, 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800,442,3358. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

### HOLY GOSPEL

### Luke 3:7-18

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<sup>15</sup> As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup> John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

<sup>18</sup>So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

In the Gospel lesson: John the Baptist heralds the mighty one who is coming. John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

P:

The Gospel of the Lord.

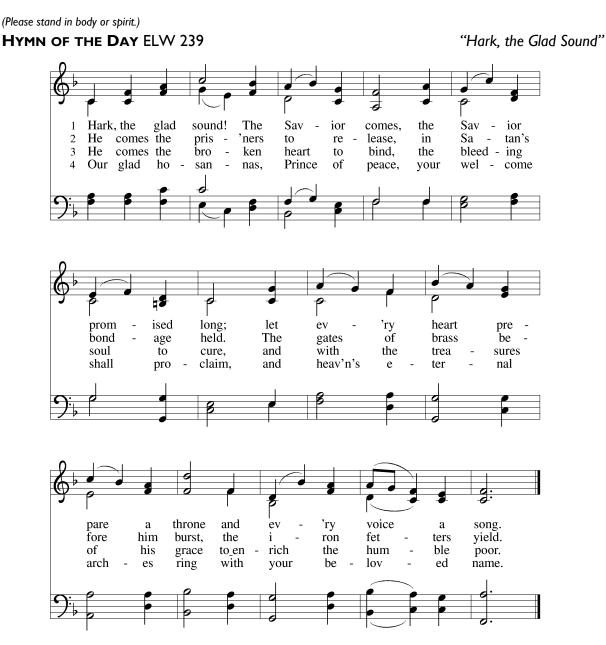
C: Thanks be to God.

### The meditation interprets the meaning of God's word for our lives today.

(Please be seated.)

### **MEDITATION**





Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751 Music: CHESTERFIELD, Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820 We respond to God's almighty acts as we confess our faith in the Words of the Creed.

This ecumenical creed is the most widely accepted creed in the Christian faith and it is an essential part of the doctrine and liturgy of Lutheran churches. Historically, it has been used at Holy Communion on Sundays and major feasts.

This reference to the holy catholic church is to the church universal.

### NICENE CREED ELW p.104

C: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

> We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

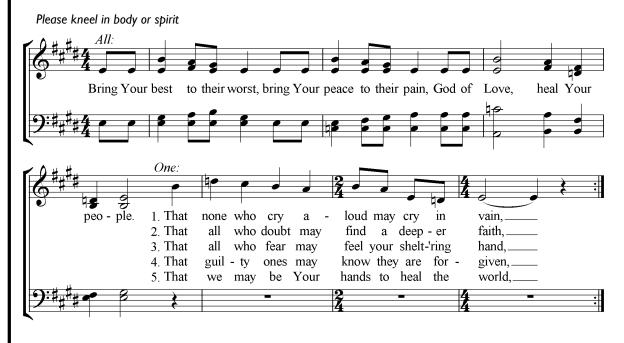
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

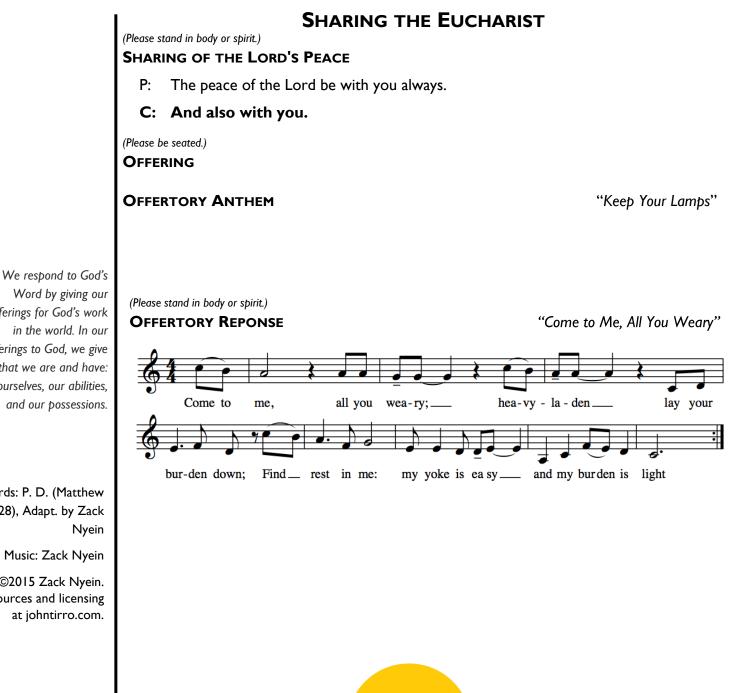
With this prayer, we express our concern for the whole Church, for the nations of the world, for people in their various needs, and for our own congregation.





### Those Remembered in Prayer:

Michael Adams, David & Linda Cash, Pat & Charlsie Counts, Hugh Denton, Jim Friedrich, Al Gill, Lynda Hinkle, Jean Keener, Dick & Pat Krogmann, Stan Leib, Don McWilliams, Nicki Nye, Nancy O'Callaghan, Frances Ratliff, Don Ray, Pam Shealy, Keith Solt, Norm Sorensen, Barbara Teague, Will Trout Tom Wainner, Maxine Whistler, Bill Wing, Ron & Jeanette Woodward, our seminarians: Jordan Baker, Caitlynne Fox, and Joe Ley, the students, staff, & mentors at Christenberry Elementary school, synod partners in Guatemala, and all those affected by the devastation of Hurricane Helene



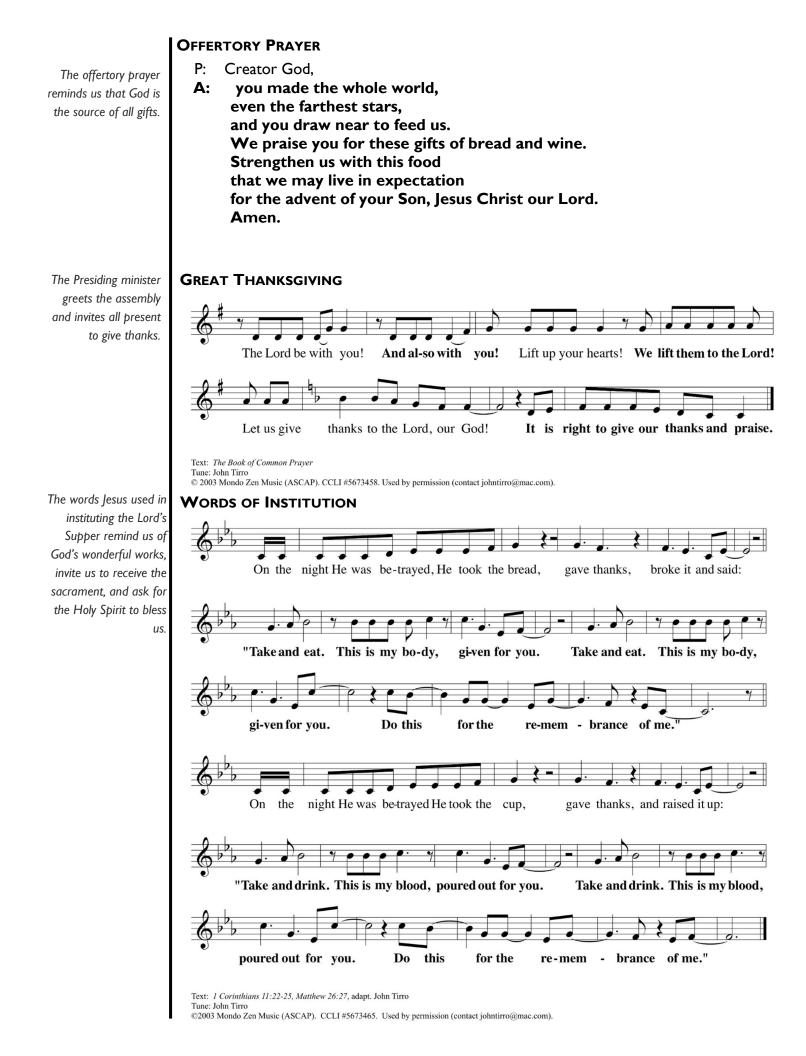


Word by giving our offerings for God's work in the world. In our offerings to God, we give all that we are and have: ourselves, our abilities, and our possessions.

Words: P. D. (Matthew 11:28), Adapt. by Zack Nyein

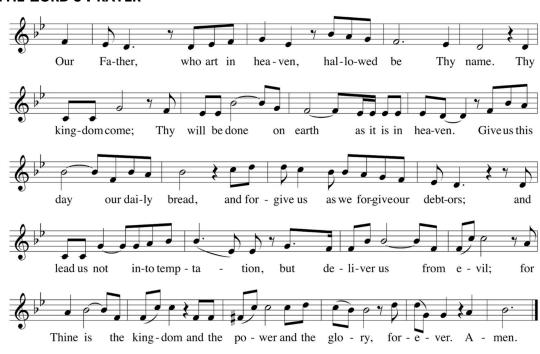
Music: Zack Nyein

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# This prayer is based on **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:24.



Text: adapt. John Tirro Tune: John Tirro

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### (Please be seated.)

### COMMUNION

Regarding the gift of Holy Communion, all are welcome! This is God's table, and there is a place for each of God's beloved. Gluten-free wafers are in the small silver box on the baptismal font.

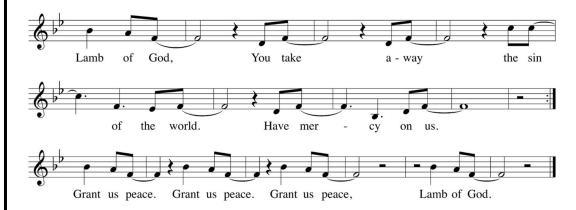
An usher will direct you down the center aisle to the chancel stairs where you may:

- Receive Holy Communion by intinction, taking the bread, dipping it in the wine, and consuming them together
- Receive Holy Communion by the common cup, first eating the bread and then drinking from the silver chalice
- Receive a blessing by placing your hands across your chest and embracing God's love for you

You will return to your seat by the side aisle.

Again, all are welcome at God's table; come and see that the Lord is good.

### LAMB OF GOD



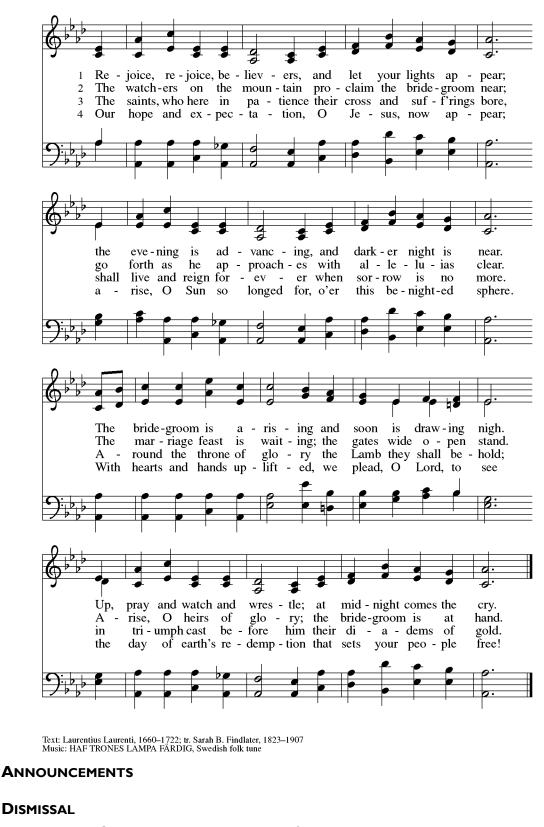
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# SENDING GOD'S PEOPLE

"Rejoice, Rejoice Believers"

As the cross is carried out into the world, we visually and spiritually follow the cross as we are led to love and serve the Lord. SENDING HYMN ELW 244



- P: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.
- C: Thanks be to God.

# THE SJLC MINUTE ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

# SJLC CALENDAR

Dec. 15 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

\*Nursery \*Children ... Music, Lesson, Snack, and Craft \*Youth ... Games and Spiritual Gains \*Parents ... Coffee and Conversation \*Adults ... Bible Study Nativity Pageant \*Denotes off site location

- Dec. 18 Holden Evening Prayer and Tasty Treats
- Dec. 19 Homeless Service of Remembrance

Dec. 22 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent \*Nursery \*Children ... Music, Lesson, Snack, and Craft \*Youth ... Games and Spiritual Gains \*Parents ... Coffee and Conversation \*Adults ... Bible Study



# Red poinsettias will be used to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas Eve worship.

The Altar Guild is providing the opportunity for you to contribute one or more plants in honor or in memory of someone special. Each plant will cost \$14.00. We have purchased 30 plants this year. If you would like to purchase a poinsettia, please fill out an envelope found in each pew. Your gift will be noted in the Poinsettia Bulletin.





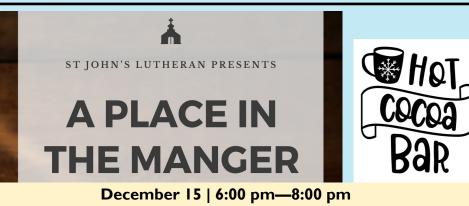
### Adult Faith Formation

These next two weeks in Adult Faith Formation we'll be getting into the holiday season by focusing on the music of Advent and Christmas. We'll have two guest musicians visit us. Pastor John will lead us this coming Sunday (December 15), and Deb Sousa will lead us on December 22, at least until she has to leave to

E E M BE R

practice the choir before the second service. We're so fortunate to have two talented musicians as congregational leaders, and we're looking forward to what they'll have to offer us on the  $15^{th}$  and the  $22^{nd}$ .

As usual **we'll start at 10:10.** We hope you'll join us for coffee and—probably—some Christmas cookies.



Please join us for a community nativity pageant presented by the children and youth of area Lutheran churches. Little ones are encouraged to attend for walk-on roles.

All are welcome to enjoy an evening of wonder in our beautiful candlelit sanctuary followed by a time of

fellowship with a gourmet hot cocoa bar. If you would like to attend the nativity pageant but need transportation,

please call Toni in the church office at 865.523.3330,

and we will make arrangements for you.

### DECEMBER 18 6:30 PM WORSHIP 7:15 FELLOWSHIP HOSTED BY TLC

Join us for the glow of candlelight and gentle music of Holden Evening Prayer, the most restful liturgy of the year. We will consider the theme "Fear Not" from the perspective those who experienced that silent night:



Joseph, son of David; and the chosen people of God. Please join us!

Tender Lovin' Cookin' will provide hot drinks and yummy treats for a time of fellowship following each service.

Homeless Service of Remembrance

# Thursday, December 19

6:00 pm - Candlelight Walk begins at VMC 6:30 pm - Memorial Service at St. John's 7:15 pm - Reception in Fellowship Hall

If you want to help or have any questions, please reach out to Nancy Friedrich at nancy.o.friedrich@gmail.com. Please save the date for 2025 St. John's Leadership Summit on Friday, January 10 and Saturday, January 11.



We will welcome Dr. Amy Sander Montanez as we consider leadership through the lens of hope. We look forward to learning together with Church Council members, Team leaders and members, and other interested individuals!

Peace and Love,

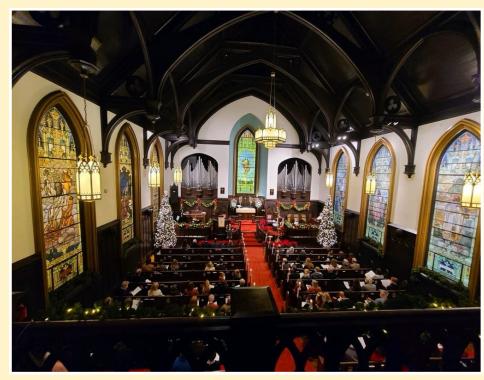
Pastor Amy

# Dove Tree 2024

The Dove Tree dates to remember: Sunday, December 15: Dove Tree gifts need to be returned to St. John's. Gifts may be wrapped or unwrapped, but please be sure to attach the dove with the child's name to the bag of gifts. Tuesday, December 17: Dove Tree gift distributed at St. John's. If you need further information, contact Ruth Crowley at (865) 405-3727. Thank you for sharing Advent love with a child this holiday season!



# Christmas Eve At St. John's



4:00 pm

Family Christmas Eve Worship with Candlelight and Communion

5:30 pm and 8:30 pm Candlelight Communion Worship

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!""