

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church
December 21, 2025

The Sunday School Students Present:
God's Love At Christmas

The theme for this year's service comes from the well-loved children's Christmas hymn "God Loves Me Dearly." Originally written in 1852 by a pastor who was working with homeless and disadvantaged children, this hymn delights in the personal nature of our heavenly Father's love—He loves *even me*. Because of our inherited sin and our own sinful choices, we were "in slavery, sin, death, and darkness," but "God's love was working to make me free."

St. John wrote, *"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him."* (1 John 4:9). Jesus was born to *"save his people from their sins"* (Matthew 1:21). Jesus "paid all I owed" through his birth, suffering, death, and resurrection and so "set me free." Because of Jesus, God's Son, coming to save us, everyone can joyfully say, and sing, "God loves me dearly, loves even me."

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Preservice Music

"O Come All Ye Faithful"

"Away In A Manger"

"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"

By Levi S.

By Natalie G.

By Elizabeth G.

Opening Hymn #354 sts.1-3

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant! O
2 God from true God, and Light from Light e - ter - nal,
3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,



come ye, O come_ ye to Beth - le - hem!
born of a vir - gin, to earth he comes!
sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove!

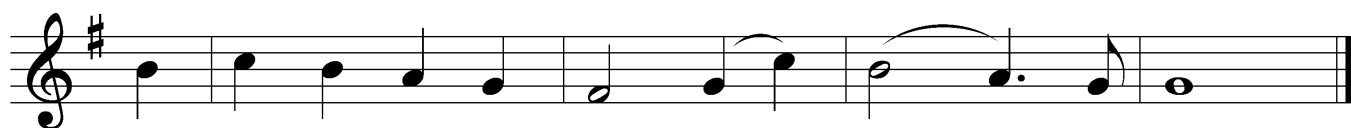


Come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels:
On - ly - be - got - ten Son of God the Fa - ther:
Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est:

Refrain



O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,



O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

Text: John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802–1880, alt.

Tune: John F. Wade, c. 1711–1786, alt. Text and tune: Public domain

Please stand.

Invocation & Opening Sentences (1 John 4:9-10, Matthew 1:21, John 8:36)

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

M: "This is how God showed his love among us:

C: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

M: This is love: not that we loved God,

C: but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

M: Mary "will give birth to a Son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,

C: because he will save his people from their sins."

M: "If the Son sets you free,

C: you will be free indeed."

Prayer

M: O God, you make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Be seated.

Part 1: God Loved Me by Making a Promise

Tucker: God has loved mankind since the beginning. In six days, he created the universe to give us a place to live.

(Display image of Pangaea.)

Pastor: God wasn't stingy, was he? He created everything we would need, plus much more. Then after making such a beautiful home for us, God made Adam. He formed Adam out of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life. Adam was perfect, in body and in soul. God loved Adam and gave him a wife, Eve. God dearly loved Adam and Eve.

(Place image of heart on Pangaea.)

They loved him.

Tucker: The Lord put Adam and Eve in a beautiful garden, where they had plenty of delicious fruit to eat all the time. He even gave them two special trees. The tree of life would keep them alive forever. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil would bring death. Every time Adam and Eve did not eat from that tree they were telling God, "We love you. We trust you." The world was in perfect harmony.

(White rose is revealed.)

Pastor: But an angel named Satan rebelled against God. Satan hated God and hated the people God had made. So Satan sought to trick Adam and Eve into disobeying God too. He lied, “God doesn’t want you to have everything good. He’s withholding good things from you. Eat fruit from the tree God has forbidden. Then you’ll be like God.”

Tucker: Adam and Eve ate. Suddenly, they were terribly ashamed. They hid from each other with fig-leaf clothes. When they heard God coming, they were afraid, and so they hid from him. They didn’t love God. They only loved themselves.
(Cover entire image with black fabric.)

Pastor: That’s how each of us started out, also. Adam and Eve passed their sinfulness on to their children and their children’s children. Our parents started out in sin, and so have we. As St. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2: *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^l and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.* (Ephesians 2:1–3).

Like Adam and Eve, we all were dead in our sins, under Satan’s power. We rebelled against God in many ways. We did not love God, but he still loved us.

The Lord came to Adam and Eve, but not to kill them as they feared. He was coming to tell them how he would rescue them. He still loved them, even though they had not loved him.

God said these words to Satan, but in them is a wonderful promise for us:

All Children: *“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”*
(Genesis 3:15).

Tucker: Satan would be defeated by the offspring of a woman. This was fulfilled when Jesus, born of Mary, died for us on the cross and defeated Satan.
(Remove black fabric. Place image of black cross on red heart.)

Hymn #583 STS. 1-2

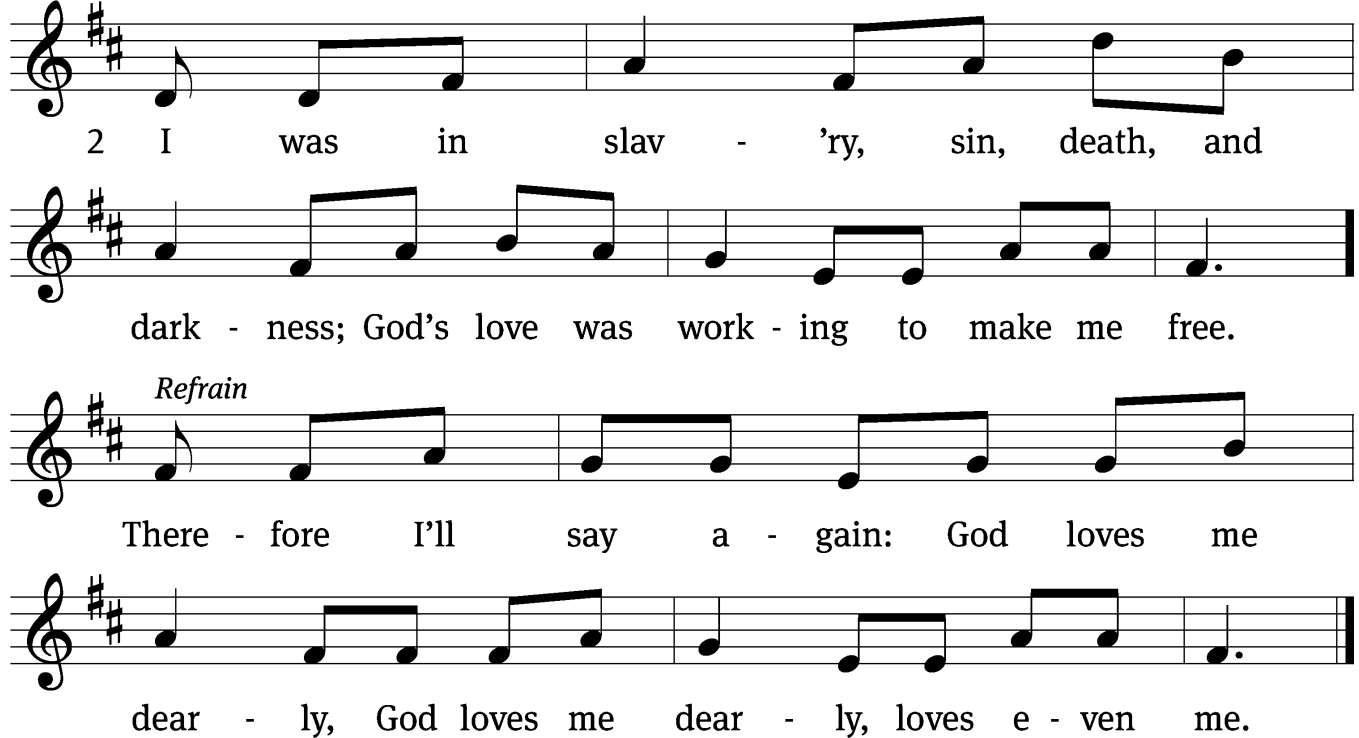
“God Loves Me Dearly”

****Children will sing stanza 1 with refrain, Congregation will sing stanza 2 with refrain.**
(During the introduction, the children stand.)

Children: 1. God loves me dearly, Grants me salvation,
God loves me dearly, Loves even me.

Refrain: Therefore I'll say again: God loves me dearly,
God loves me dearly, Loves even me.

Congregation:



2 I was in slav - 'ry, sin, death, and
dark - ness; God's love was work - ing to make me free.

Refrain
There - fore I'll say a - gain: God loves me
dear - ly, God loves me dear - ly, loves e - ven me.

Text: August Rische, 1819–1906; tr. Composite Tune: German Text and tune: Public domain

Recitation

Satan, Satan, cruel foe, *(Pound fist into hand.)*
Eve and all he led to woe. *(Shade eyes, lower head.)*
Yet to the serpent God did say, *(Shake finger as if scolding or hand cupped at ear.)*
“I will rescue them this way”: *(Cross one index finger over the other to make shape of a cross.)*

Jesus, Jesus was his plan; *(Sign language for Jesus.)*
Born of Mary—God and man. *(Hold baby in arms.)*
Though Satan bit—God's Son lay dead; *(Close fingers on thumb quickly.)*
Christ would crush the serpent's head. *(Stomp heel on floor.)*

Father, Father, loves us so! *(Cross arms.)*
Joyful news we gladly know. *(Point index finger at side of forehead.)*
To rescue sinners—me and you— *(Point at self, then congregation.)*
He sent Jesus, Savior true. *(Hold baby in arms or make sign of the cross.)*

Hymn #327 STS.1,2,4

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

**Children sing stanza 1 with refrain, Congregation sings stanzas 2 & 4 with refrain.

Children: 1. O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

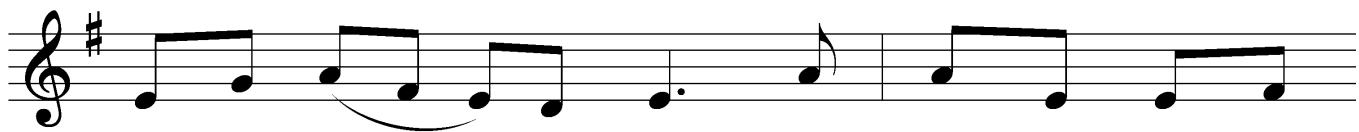
Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

Congregation:



2 O come, O Root of Jes - se, free your own from

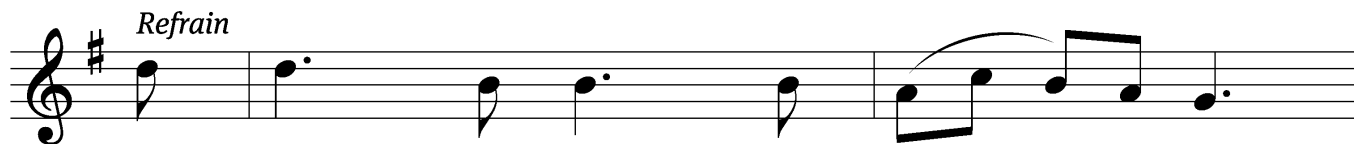
4 O come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen



Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your
wide our heav'n - ly home; make safe the way that



peo - ple save, and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.
leads on high, and close the path to mis - er - y.



Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el



shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent., Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt. Tune: French, 15th cent., alt Text and tune: Public domain

Please stand.

Confession: *Luther's Explanation of the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed*

C: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity,
and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed
me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins,
from death and from the power of the devil.

Be seated.

Part 2: God Loved Me by Sending Jesus

Daniel: God promised Adam and Eve that a Savior would be born. For a long time, God's people waited. Many people did not believe a Savior would ever come, but always there were some who believed. During the flood, only Noah and his family, eight people in all, believed and waited. *"⁴But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship."* (Galatians 4:4–5).

Recitation

Luke 1:26–35; 2:1–7

Lily: The Son of God became a man in this way. *"²⁶ God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said,"*

" 'Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.'"

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.' " (Luke 1:26–35).

(Angel Gabriel and Mary depart.)(Anna & Maddie)

Elizabeth: Nine months later, Jesus was born. St. Luke tells us: *"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.*

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child."

(Mary and Joseph) (Maddie & Leo)

"⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,"

All Children: *"⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them."* (Luke 2:1–7).

Choir Anthem

“A Manger So Far from Home”

Words & Music by: Patricia Mock Arranged by: Faye Lopez © 2022 Lorenz Publishing Company, a division of the Lorenz Corporation. All rights reserved.

In a manger so far from home. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head; the stars in the sky looked down where He lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay. Away, away, away from the heavens. Away, away from His glorious throne, to the joy of a mother and angel song, in a manger so far from home. The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes. I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky, and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, and fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there. Away, away, away from the heavens. Away, away from His glorious throne, joy of a mother and angel song, in a manger so far from home. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, in a manger so far from home.

Recitation

Luke 2:8–14

Levi: *“⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.”*

(Shepherds) (Tyler & Cameron)

Evan: *“⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.”*

(Angel)

“¹⁰ But the angel said to them,

Daniel: *“ ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’ ”*

“Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

All Children: *“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*

Please stand.

Hymn #346 STS 1-3

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

****Children sing stanza 1 with refrain, Congregation sings stanzas 2 & 3 with refrain.**

Children

1. Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

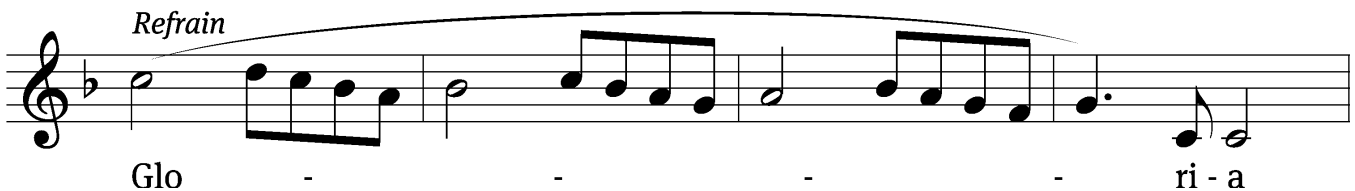
Congregation:



- 2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
- 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



What the glad - some ti - dings be which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.



Glo - - - - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo - - -



- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

Text: French; tr. The Crown of Jesus, Part 2, 1862, alt. Tune: French Text and tune: Public domain

Be seated.

Recitation

Luke 2:15–20

Natalie: ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.”

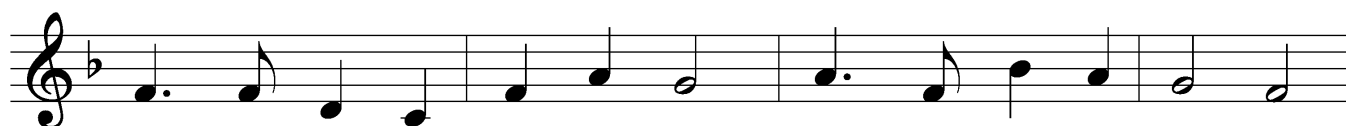
²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.”

Congregation Sings Hymn #352

“Joy Has Dawned”



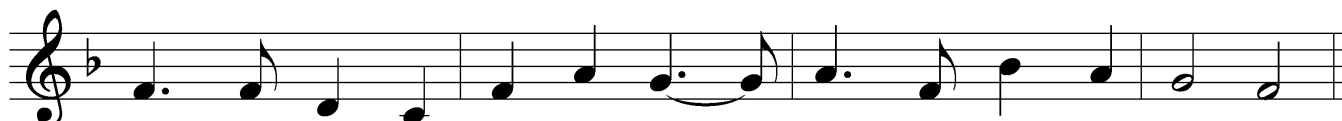
1 Joy has dawned up - on the world, prom - ised from cre - a - tion—
2 Sounds of won - der fill the sky with the songs of an - gels
3 Shep - herds bow be - fore the Lamb, gaz - ing at the glo - ry.
4 Son of Ad - am, Son of heav’n, giv - en as a ran - som;



God’s sal - va - tion now un - furled, hope for ev - ’ry na - tion.
as the might - y Prince of life shel - ters in a sta - ble.
Gifts of men from dis - tant lands proph - e - sy the sto - ry:
rec - on - cil - ing God and man, Christ, our might - y cham - pion!



Not with fan-fares from a - bove, not with scenes of glo - ry,
Hands that set each star in place, shaped the earth in dark - ness,
gold— a king is born to - day; in - cense—God is with us;
What a Sav - ior! What a friend! What a glo - rious mys - t’ry!



but a hum - ble gift of love— Je - sus born of Mar - y.
cling now to a moth - er’s breast, _ vul - n’ra - ble and help - less.
myrrh— his death will make a way, and by his blood he’ll win us.
Once a babe in Beth - le - hem, _ now the Lord of his - t’ry.

Text & Tune: Keith Getty, b. 1974; Stuart Townend, b. 1963 Text and tune: © 2005 Thankyou Music, admin.
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Part 3: God Loved Me by Dying and Rising for Me

Lily: Jesus loved us, so he came to save us. Those perfect little hands and feet would one day be pierced by nails to pay our debt of sin and die on the cross. That's why he was named Jesus, as the angel said, "*because he will save his people from their sins.*" (Matthew 1:21).

Elizabeth: St. John wrote, reflecting on what Jesus had done: "*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.*" (1 John 3:16). St. Paul tells us, "*God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*" (Romans 5:8). Jesus Himself said, "*Greater love has no one than this, to lay down one's own life for one's friends*" (John 15:13).

St. John tells us that Jesus came and died for us that we might live forever: ⁹*This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.* ¹⁰*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*" (1 John 4:9–10).

Confession: *Luther's Explanation of the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed*

M: With what did Jesus redeem you?

C: **Not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.**

Hymn #583 STS. 3-4

"God Loves Me Dearly"

****Children will sing stanza 3 with refrain, Congregation will sing stanza 4 with refrain.**

Children: 3. He sent forth Jesus, My dear Redeemer,
He sent forth Jesus And set me free.

Refrain: Therefore I'll say again: God loves me dearly,
God loves me dearly, Loves even me.

Congregation:

4 Je - sus, my Sav - ior, him - self did
of - fer; Je - sus, my Sav - ior, paid all I owed.

Refrain printed on the next page.



Text: August Rische, 1819–1906; tr. Composite Tune: German Text and tune: Public domain

Part 4: God Loves Me by Giving Me Life Forever

Tucker: God gave Jesus' new life to me in my Baptism. St. Paul tells us, *"⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his."* (Romans 6:4–5).

Pastor: God has still more promises for us. Because Jesus came, paid for all our sins, and rose from dead, all who believe in Him will rise from the dead too. Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die."* (John 11:25–26). Christians' bodies will die, if Jesus doesn't return first. But when Jesus returns, their bodies will rise from the dead. They will be made whole and good. Though our bodies will die, souls that trust in Jesus will never die. So believers will praise Jesus, our Savior, forever. As Psalm 146 declares, *"I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live."* (v. 2).

Evan: Jesus has opened the way back to the tree of life, back to paradise, back to complete harmony and love with God. In Christ, we will praise God forever.
(Add gold ring around entire image.)

Congregation Hymn #583 STS. 5

"God Loves Me Dearly"

5 Now I will praise you, O Love e -
ter - nal; now I will praise you all my life long.
Refrain
There - fore I'll say a - gain: God loves me
dear - ly, God loves me dear - ly, loves e - ven me.

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff starts with a '5' and the lyrics 'Now I will praise you, O Love e -'. The second staff continues with 'ter - nal; now I will praise you all my life long.' The third staff is marked 'Refrain' and has the lyrics 'There - fore I'll say a - gain: God loves me'. The fourth staff continues the refrain with 'dear - ly, God loves me dear - ly, loves e - ven me.'

Text: August Rische, 1819–1906; tr. Composite Tune: German Text and tune: Public domain

Confession: *Luther's Explanation of the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed*

M: Why did Jesus redeem you?

C: That I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.

Friendship Register is available by the entrances. If you are watching on-line please go to the description link and sign in.

Freewill Offering The offering plate is located by the back entrance. You may also give electronically via our website: immanuelfindlay.org or the App: GivePlus.

Prayer

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have safely brought us to the beginning of this day. Defend us in the same with your mighty power and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings, being ordered by your governance, may be righteous in your sight; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C. Amen.

M: Taught by our Lord and trusting his promises, we are bold to pray:

Lord's Prayer

C: 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.

Blessing

M: 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.

C: Amen.

Congregation sings Closing Hymn #353

"Joy to the World"



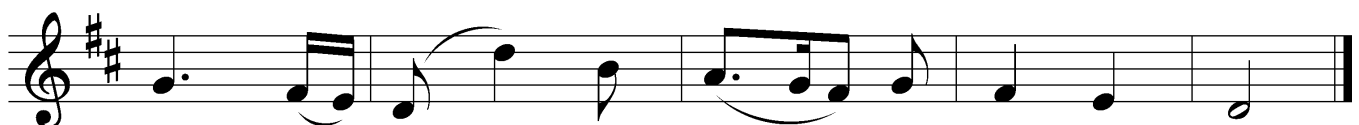
1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let men their
3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her King; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748 Tune: George Frideric Handel, 1685-1759, adapt.

Text and tune: Public domain

