



All Saints Lutheran Church

Holy Innocents, Martyrs

December 28, 2025

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

“A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children” (Jer. 31:15). Herod rages and sends to kill all boys two years and younger (Matt. 2:16), desperate to destroy the newborn King of kings. The Church remembers these innocent victims as martyrs. They died for the One who came to die for them. This dark commemoration bears witness to the cruelty of sinful men and the world’s hatred of Christ who has sanctified our fragile life even from His conception and birth. But the boy who escaped Bethlehem’s bloody streets unscathed went on to face thorns, nails, and spear for them and for us. He is the Lamb whose name is written with the Father’s name on the foreheads of His baptized saints (Rev. 14:1). By His death He has redeemed an inheritance for Himself and brought peace at last by His blood. On the fourth day of Christmas, we sing “the new song” of the Lamb, of Christ the true martyr, whose death testifies that our redemption is won. We “follow the Lamb wherever He goes” (Rev. 14:4), for He will bring our tears to an end.

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Rev. Jeffrey Ware, Pastor
Joshua Pauling, Vicar
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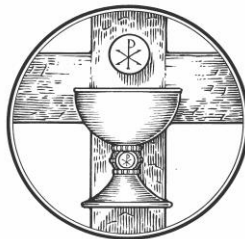
Communion at All Saints

The Lord's Supper is celebrated at this congregation in the confession and glad confidence that, as He says, our Lord gives into our mouths not only bread and wine but His very body and blood to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sins and to strengthen our union with Him and with one another. It is important, therefore, that those who come to the Lord's Table trust His words, repent of all sin, and set aside any refusal to forgive and love as He forgives and loves us, that they may show forth His death until He comes. Scripture also teaches that Holy Communion is a confession of faith. Those who receive the sacrament together show forth their unity in Christ, that is, a unity of heart and mind accomplished when all who commune together believe the same doctrine and are at peace with one another.

Scripture teaches that those who eat and drink our Lord's body and blood unworthily do so to their great harm and that Holy Communion is a confession of the faith which is confessed at this altar. Therefore, we, along with the historic Christian church, practice *Closed Communion*. Any who are not communicant members of All Saints, or another congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, are asked to speak with the pastor before receiving the Lord's Supper. Those not receiving communion are invited to come forward during communion to receive a blessing. Simply cross your arms over your chest and bow your head, and the pastor will give you a blessing; and know that we would love to share more with you about our teaching and practice.

Prayers of preparation and thanksgiving for receiving the Lord's Supper are found in the LSB hymnal on p. 308.

For further study, see Matthew 5:23ff; 10:32ff; 18:15–35; 26:26–29; John 17:20–23; 1 Corinthians 11:17–34.





Divine Service 3

Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Confession and Absolution

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

661 The Son of God Goes Forth to War



1 The Son of God goes forth to war A king - ly crown to gain.
2 The mar - tyr first, whose ea - gle eye Could pierce be - yond the grave,
3 A glo - rious band, the cho - sen few, On whom the Spir - it came,
4 A no - ble ar - my, men and boys, The ma - tron and the maid,



His blood - red ban - ner streams a - far; Who fol - lows in His train?
Who saw his mas - ter in the sky And called on Him to save.
Twelve val - iant saints—their hope they knew And mocked the cross and flame.
A - round the Sav - ior's throne re - joice, In robes of light ar - rayed.



Who best can drink His cup of woe, Tri - um - phant o - ver pain,
Like Him, with par - don on His tongue In midst of mor - tal pain,
They met the ty - rant's bran - dished steel, The li - on's gor - y mane;
They climbed the steep as - cent of heav'n Through per - il, toil, and pain.



Who pa - tient bears his cross be - low— He fol - lows in His train.
He prayed for those who did the wrong— Who fol - lows in his train?
They bowed their necks their death to feel— Who fol - lows in their train?
O God, to us may grace be giv'n To fol - low in their train!

Text: Reginald Heber, 1783–1826, alt.
Tune: Henry S. Cutler, 1824–1902
Text and tune: Public domain

Service of the Word

Introit

Psalm 31:1, 3, 5; antiphon: Revelation 7:14b



These are the ones coming out of the great tribu - | lation.*

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood | of the Lamb.

In you, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be | put to shame;*
in your righteousness de - | liver me.

For you are my rock and my | fortress;*
and for your name's sake you lead me and | guide me.

Into your hand I commit my | spirit;*
you have redeemed me, O LORD, | faithful God.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
 and to the Holy | Spirit;
 as it was in the be- | ginning,*
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

These are the ones coming out of the great tribu- | lation.*

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood | of the Lamb.

Kyrie




♩ Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -

 on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

Gloria in Excelsis




♩ Glory be to God on high: **♩** and on earth peace, good - will toward

 men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we wor - ship Thee,

 we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee, for Thy great glory.

 O Lord God, heav'n-ly King, God the Fa-ther Al - mighty.

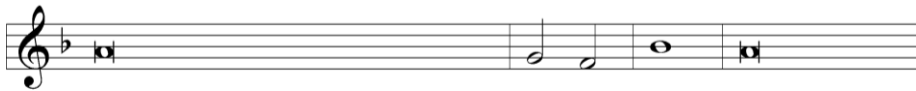
 O Lord, the only begotten Son, Je - sus Christ;

 O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

 that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy up - on us.



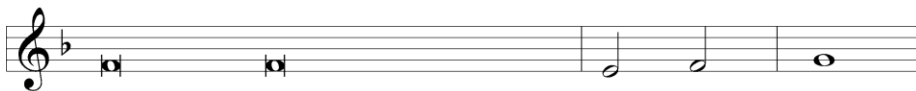
Thou that takest away the sin of the world, re-ceive our prayer.



Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy up-



on us. For Thou only art holy; Thou on-ly art the Lord.



Thou only, O Christ, with the Ho - ly Ghost,



art most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

Salutation and Collect of the Day



P The Lord be with you.



C And with thy spir - it.



P Let us pray.

P Almighty God, the martyred innocents of Bethlehem showed forth Your praise not by speaking but by dying. Put to death in us all that is in conflict with Your will that our lives may bear witness to the faith we profess with our lips; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C A - men.

Alleluia and Verse

Psalm 116:15



Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia.



Precious in the sight | of the LORD*
is the death | of his saints.



Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 2:13–18

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the second chapter.



Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord.

¹³When [the wise men] had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” ¹⁴And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

¹⁶Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸“A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

Nicene Creed

**☩ I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.**

**And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life \dagger of the world to come. Amen.**

273

Sweet Flowerets of the Martyr Band

Rev. 14: 4

L. M.

Salvete, flores martyrum

*Aurelius C. Prudentius, 413, cento**Tr., Henry W. Baker, 1875, alt.*

Das walt' Gott Vater

Daniel Vetter, 1713

1 Sweet flow'r - ets of the mar - tyr band, Plucked
 2 First vic - tims for th' in - car - nate Lord, A
 3 Ah, what a - vailed King Her - od's wrath? He
 4 O Lord, the Vir - gin - born, to Thee E -

by the ty - rant's ruth - less hand Up - on the thresh - old
 ten - der flock to feel the sword; Be - side the ver - y
 could not stop the Sav - ior's path. A - lone, while oth - ers
 ter - nal praise and glo - ry be, Whom with the Fa - ther

of the morn, Like rose-buds by a tem - pest torn;
 al - tar gay, With palm and crown, ye seemed to play.
 mur - dered lay, In safe - ty Christ is borne a - way.
 we a - dore And Ho - ly Ghost for - ev - er - more. A - men.

Sermon

Offertory

C Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -
way from Thy pres - ence, and take not Thy Ho - ly Spir - it
from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of Thy sal - va -
tion, and up - hold me with Thy free spir - it. A - men.

Prayer of the Church

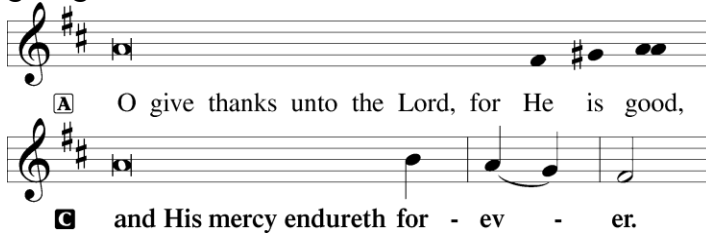
Nunc Dimittis

C Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant de - part in peace ac -
cord - ing to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
which Thou hast pre - pared be - fore the face of all people,
a light to light - en the Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of Thy



peo-ple Is - ra-el. Glo - ry be to the Father and
to the Son and to the Ho-ly Ghost; as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ev - er shall be, world with - out end. A - men.

Thanksgiving

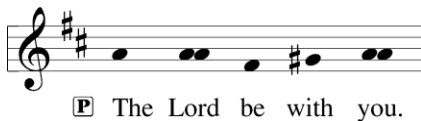


A O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,
C and His mercy endureth for - ev - er.

P Let us pray.
We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C A - men.



P The Lord be with you.



C And with thy spir - it.

Benedicamus

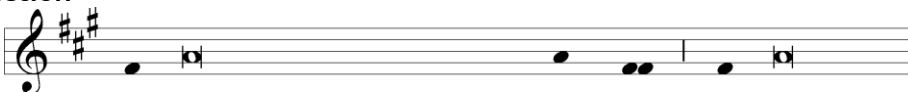


A Bless we the Lord.

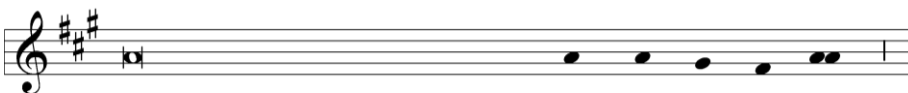


G Thanks be to God.

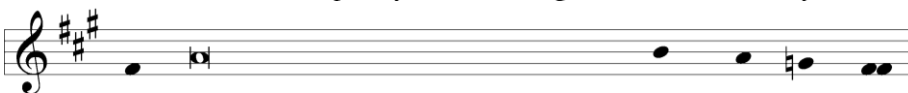
Benediction



P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make



His face shine upon you and be gra - cious un - to you.



The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.



G A-men, a-men, a - men.

756 Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me



1 Why should cross and tri - al grieve me? Christ is near
2 When life's trou - bles rise to meet me, Though their weight
3 God gives me my days of glad - ness, And I will
4 From God's joy can noth - ing sev - er, For I am
5 Now in Christ, death can - not slay me, Though it might,



With His cheer; Nev - er will He leave me.
May be great, They will not de - feat me.
Trust Him still When He sends me sad - ness.
His dear lamb, He, my Shep - herd ev - er.
Day and night, Trou - ble and dis - may me.



Who can rob me of the heav - en That God's Son
God, my lov - ing Sav - ior, sends them; He who knows
God is good; His love at - tends me Day by day,
I am His be - cause He gave me His own blood
Christ has made my death a por - tal From the strife



For me won When His life was giv - en?
All my woes Knows how best to end them.
Come what may, Guides me and de - fends me.
For my good, By His death to save me.
Of this life To His joy im - mor - tal!

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607-76; (sts. 1-3): tr. Christian Worship, 1993; (sts. 4-5): tr. Stephen P. Starke, 1955

Tune: Johann G. Ebeling, 1637-76

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Divine Service, Setting Three from Lutheran Service Book

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