

# Festival of Our Lord's Epiphany | Lessons & Carols

December 31, 2023

## Order of Worship: Holy Communion, Setting Four

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**Congregational responses are printed in bold type.**

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PRELUDE & BELLS *We observe a moment of silence for prayer and meditation.*

WELCOME *congregation responds* **and unto ages of ages. Amen.**

*We stand* OPENING HYMN

“Sing We Now Of Christmas”

*tune #379*

### ✠BRIEF RITE FOR CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS OF SINS✠

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

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thought of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:8-9

*Silence is kept for reflection and personal confession.*

Most merciful God, **we confess that we have grievously sinned against you in many ways; not only by outward transgressions, but also by secret thoughts and desires which we cannot fully understand, but which are known to you. We repent and are sorry for our offenses, and we ask of your great goodness to have mercy upon us, for the sake of your dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, to forgive our sins, and graciously to help our infirmities. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by His authority, I declare to you- who believe and repent- the forgiveness of all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

✠HOLY COMMUNION✠

APOSTOLIC GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. **Amen.**

*2 Corinthians 13:13*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray...O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

Next Steps Weekly Memory Verse: MATTHEW 2:2

*We have observed his star at its rising and have come to worship him.*

*Note: We sit for the readings & stand for the songs. We stand for the final reading.*

FIRST READING: GENESIS 3:8-15, 17-19

<sup>8</sup>They heard the sound of the Lord GOD walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord GOD among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>But the Lord GOD called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup>He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." <sup>11</sup>He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" <sup>12</sup>The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." <sup>13</sup>Then the Lord GOD said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." <sup>14</sup>The Lord GOD said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup>I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." <sup>17</sup>And to the man he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; <sup>18</sup>thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

SECOND READING: GENESIS 22:15-18

<sup>15</sup>The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, <sup>16</sup>and said, "By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup>I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, <sup>18</sup>and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice."

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

#282

"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

*w1,4*

THIRD READING: ISAIAH 9:2, 6-7

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined. <sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

#276

"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

*w1,2*

FOURTH READING: ISAIAH 11:1-3a, 4a, 6-9

<sup>1</sup>A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. <sup>2</sup>The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. <sup>3</sup>His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. <sup>4</sup>[H]e shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. <sup>6</sup>The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. <sup>7</sup>The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup>The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. <sup>9</sup>They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

#296

"What Child Is This"

*w1,3*

FIFTH READING: LUKE 1:26–35, 38

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

#269

"Once in Royal David's City"

*w1,4*

SIXTH READING: LUKE 2:1, 3-7

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

#271

"I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve"

*w1,3*

SEVENTH READING: LUKE 2:8–16

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" <sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

#275

"Angels, from the Realms of Glory"

*w1,4*

EIGHTH READING: MATTHEW 2:1–12

<sup>1</sup>In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." <sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: <sup>6</sup>'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" <sup>7</sup>Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." <sup>9</sup>When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup>On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

#308

"O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!"

*w1,6*

*We stand* NINTH READING: JOHN 1:1–14

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup>in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. <sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

#295

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten”

*vv1,4*

PROCLAMATION OF FAITH

Nicene Creed

**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; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary and was made man. 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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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.**

\*means whole, entire Christian

## RESPONSIVE PRAYER

Gracious God, you come from heaven above into the midst of our world.

**Fill our hearts with the joy of the angels at your birth.**

You come from heaven above to the lowliest of human conditions.

**Watch over those in need, the sick, the hungry, the grieving.**

You come from heaven above to walk the way of the cross.

**Guide us to follow your path of forgiveness, mercy, and peace.**

You come from heaven above to become flesh and live among us.

**May we see your glory, full of grace and truth. Amen.**

## SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also, with you.**

*We briefly greet those in our row with the words "Peace be with you."*

*We sit.* OFFERING, OFFERTORY SONG & PRAYER- *Giving back to God*



*First- and second-time guests are not expected to give a monetary offering; your Connection Card and your presence this morning are your gifts.*

*Safe, secure & easy electronic giving is available on our website [stpeterhallettsville.org/giving](http://stpeterhallettsville.org/giving) or by scanning this code.*

*We stand* #294

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

*v3 only*

**3 What can I give him, poor as I am?**

**If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;**

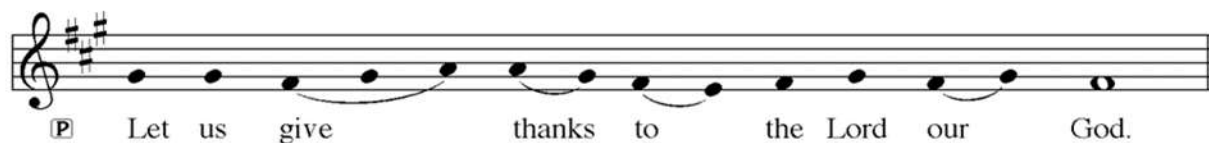
**if I were a wise man I would do my part;**

**yet what I can give him--give my heart.**

## OFFERING PRAYER

Blessed are you, O Lord, our God, king of the universe. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: ourselves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING



It is indeed right and salutary . . . and join their unending hymn:





## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER & WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven & earth...

As he comes to us in his holy supper. **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

In the night in which he was betrayed, ... Do this for the remembrance of me.

## LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9-13

**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.**

## *We sit.* INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The gifts of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

*Holy Communion is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ present and received in, with, and under the bread and wine. All who are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and who believe the Lord's words "This is my body given for you" and "This is my blood poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins" may receive Communion. Young children, not yet receiving Communion, may receive a blessing.*

*(Matt 26:26ff, Mark 14:22ff, Luke 22:19ff, 1 Cor. 11:24ff)*

*Communion administration occurs in a continuous fashion at the Communion rail. The ushers will guide you to the rail. To receive the elements, extend your hand, palm up, to the ministers. White grape juice is available in the center of the trays. For those unable to consume either bread or wine, the Church affirms the Lord's full presence in each element alone. Once you have received the elements, return to your seat by the side aisles. If you do not desire to receive Holy Communion, you may remain seated.*

## COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"Lamb of God"

p154 John 1:29



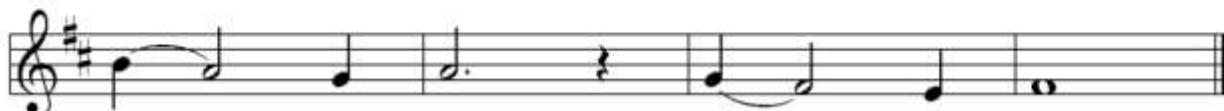
**Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.**



**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 sin of the world;**



**grant us peace, grant us peace.**

*We stand* POST-COMMUNION BLESSING, SONG, & PRAYER  
May the true body and blood...keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

#267

“Joy to the World

*v1*

Let us pray... We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life; and we pray that in your mercy you would strengthen us, through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

#300

“The First Noel”

*vv1,5*

ST. PETER LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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Our mission is Christ's mission – "I will build my church"  
by developing fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

**ENTRANCE HYMN *Sing We Now of Christmas (ELW tune 379)***

Words & Music by French carol, 15<sup>th</sup>c

**1 Sing we now of Christmas,  
Noel, sing we here!  
Hear our grateful praises  
to the babe so dear.**

**Refrain:**

**Sing we Noel, the King is born, Noel!  
Sing we now of Christmas, sing we now Noel!**

**2 Angels called to shepherds,  
"Leave your flocks at rest,  
journey forth to Bethlehem,  
find the lambkin blest." [Refrain]**

**3 In Bethlehem they found him;  
Joseph and Mary mild,  
seated by the manger,  
watching the holy child. [Refrain]**

**4 From the eastern country  
came the kings afar,  
bearing gifts to Bethlehem  
guided by a star. [Refrain]**

**5 Gold and myrrh they took there,  
gifts of greatest price;  
there was ne'er a place on earth  
so like paradise. [Refrain]**

**1ST READING *Let All Together Praise Our God* (ELW 287)**

Text & Music by Nikolaus Herman

1 Let all together praise our God  
before the highest throne;  
today God opens heav'n again  
and sends the only Son,  
and sends the only Son.

6 Unlock the door again today  
that leads to paradise;  
the angel bars the way no more.  
To God let praises rise,  
to God let praises rise!

**2ND READING *It Came upon the Midnight Clear* (ELW 282)**

Text by Edmund H. Sears; Music by Richard S. Willis

1 It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,  
from heav'n's all-gracious king."  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.

4 For lo! The days are hast'ning on,  
by prophets seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years  
shall come the time foretold,  
when peace shall over all the earth  
its ancient splendors fling,  
and all the world give back the song  
which now the angels sing.

### **3RD READING *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* (ELW 276)**

Text & Music by Polish carol

1 Infant holy, infant lowly,  
for his bed a cattle stall;  
oxen lowing, little knowing  
Christ the child is Lord of all.  
Swiftly winging, angels singing,  
bells are ringing, tidings bringing:  
Christ the child is Lord of all!  
Christ the child is Lord of all!

2 Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping  
vigil till the morning new  
saw the glory, heard the story,  
tidings of a gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,  
praises voicing, greet the morrow:  
Christ the child was born for you!  
Christ the child was born for you!

### **4TH READING *What Child Is This* (ELW 296)**

Text by William C. Dix; Music by English Ballad

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,  
on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the babe, the son of Mary!

3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
come, peasant, king, to own him.  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
let loving hearts enthrone him.  
Raise, raise the song on high,  
the virgin sings her lullaby;  
joy, joy, for Christ is born,  
the babe, the son of Mary!

**5TH SONG (TUNE 533) *Once in Royal David's City* (ELW 269)**

Text by Cecil Frances Alexander; Music by Henry J. Gauntlett

1 Once in royal David's city  
stood a lowly cattle shed,  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed:  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ, her little child.

4 Not in that poor lowly stable,  
with the oxen standing by,  
we shall see him; but in heaven,  
set at God's right hand on high;  
there his children gather round,  
bright like stars, with glory crowned.

**6TH SONG (TUNE 239) *I Am So Glad Each Christmas* (ELW 271)**

Text by Peter A. Sveeggen; Musci by Peder Knudsen

1 I am so glad each Christmas Eve,  
the night of Jesus' birth!  
Then like the sun the star shone forth,  
and angels sang on earth.

3 He dwells again in heaven's realm,  
the Son of God today;  
and still he loves his little ones  
and hears them when they pray.

**7TH SONG *Angels, from the Realms of Glory* (ELW 275)**

Text by James Montgomery; Music by Henry T. Smart

1 Angels, from the realms of glory,  
wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
once you sang creation's story,  
now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the newborn king.

4 All creation, join in praising  
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,  
evermore your voices raising  
to the eternal Three in One.  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the newborn king.

**8TH SONG *O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright!* (ELW 308)**

Text & Music by Philipp Nicolai

1 O Morning Star, how fair and bright!  
You shine with God's own truth and light,  
aglow with grace and mercy!  
Of Jacob's line, King David's son,  
our Lord and Savior, you have won  
our hearts to serve you only!  
Lowly, holy!  
Great and glorious,  
all victorious,  
rich in blessing!  
Rule and might o'er all possessing!

6 What joy to know, when life is past,  
the Lord we love is first and last,  
the end and the beginning!  
He will one day, oh, glorious grace,  
transport us to that happy place  
beyond all tears and sinning!  
Amen! Amen!  
Come, Lord Jesus!  
Crown of gladness!  
We are yearning  
for the day of your returning.

## **9TH SONG *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (ELW 295)**

Text by Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius; Music by Plainsong mode V.

1 Of the Father's love begotten  
ere the worlds began to be,  
he is Alpha and Omega,  
he the source, the ending he,  
of the things that are, that have been,  
and that future years shall see,  
evermore and evermore.

4 Let the heights of heav'n adore him;  
angel hosts, his praises sing;  
pow'rs, dominions, bow before him  
and extol our God and King;  
let no tongue on earth be silent,  
ev'ry voice in concert ring  
evermore and evermore.

## **CLOSING HYMN (ELW) *The First Noel* (ELW 300)**

Text & Music by English traditional

1 The first Noel the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

### **Refrain**

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!  
Born is the King of Israel.

5 Then entered in those wise men three,  
full rev'rently upon their knee,  
and offered there in his presence  
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. Refrain