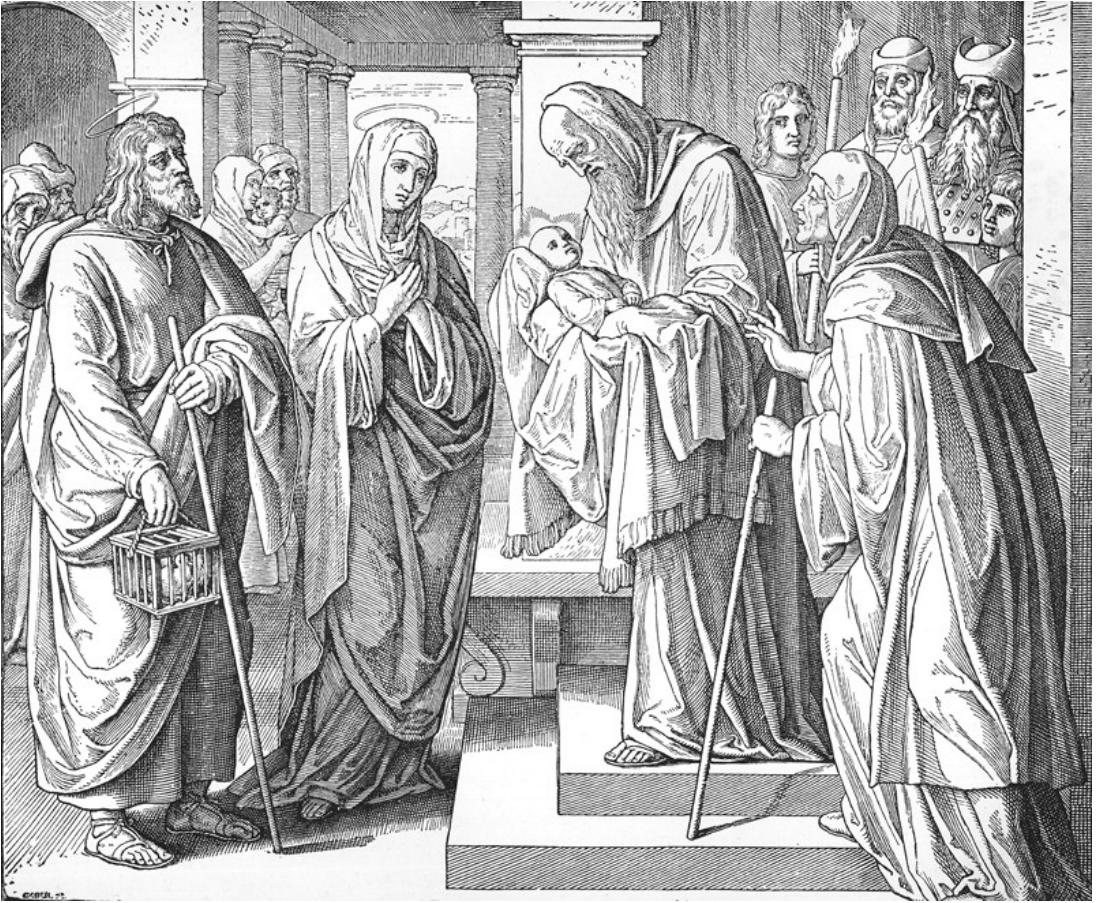


# THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

December 31st, 2023



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MARTIN LUTHER  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

St. Louis, MO

Pastor Seth Georgson

314-914-6457

COMMON SERVICE

Hymn ----- Come, Your Hearts and Voices Raising

CW 42

1. Come, your hearts and voices raising,  
Christ the Lord with gladness praising;  
Loudly sing his love amazing,  
Worthy folk of Christendom.
2. See how God, for us providing,  
Gave his Son and life abiding;  
He our weary steps is guiding  
From earth's woe to heav'nly joy.
3. Christ, from heav'n to us descending  
And in love our race befriending,  
In our need his help extending,  
Saved us from the wily foe.
4. Jacob's Star in all its splendor  
Beams with comfort sweet and tender,  
Forcing Satan to surrender,  
Breaking all the pow'rs of hell.
5. Gracious Child, we pray you, hear us;  
From your lowly manger cheer us.  
Gently lead us and be near us  
Till we join th' angelic choir.

*Stand.*

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

C: A - men.

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

*Lord, Have Mercy*

*Kyrie*

C: Lord, have mer - cy on us. Christ, have mer - cy  
on us. Lord, have mer - cy on us.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: A - men.

PRAYER AND PRAISE

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

*Angels We Have Heard on High (CW 63)*

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

2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
Which inspire your heav'nly song?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

3. Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

*Prayer of the Day*

M: The Lord be with you.



C: And al - so with you.

M: Let us pray.

Almighty God, in mercy you sent your one and only Son to take upon himself our human nature. By his gracious coming deliver us from the corruption of our sin and transform us into the likeness of his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



*Be seated.*

#### THE WORD

#### First Lesson ----- Isaiah 45:20–25

Gather! Come! Draw near together,  
you survivors from the nations.  
They have no knowledge  
—those who are lifting up their idols of wood  
and praying to a god that cannot save.  
Make an announcement and come close.  
Let them consult together.  
Who made this known ahead of time?  
From time past who announced it?  
Was it not I, the LORD?  
There is no god except me,  
a righteous God and Savior.  
There is no one except me.  
Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth,  
because I am God,

and there is no other.  
I have sworn by myself.  
From my mouth a righteous word has gone out,  
and it will not return unfulfilled.  
Indeed, to me every knee will bow,  
and every tongue will swear allegiance.  
“Only in the LORD,” they will say of me,  
“Only in the LORD is there true righteousness and  
strength.”  
To him they will come and be ashamed—  
all those who are angry at him.  
In the LORD, all the descendants of Israel will be  
justified.  
They will be praised by him.

*Refrain*

**Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.**

Great are the works of the LORD;\*

they are pondered by all who delight in them.

Glorious and majestic are his deeds,\*

and his righteousness endures forever.

He has caused his wonders to be remembered;

the LORD is gracious and compassionate.

*Refrain*

The works of his hands are faithful and just;\*

all his precepts are trustworthy.

He provided redemption for his people;

he ordained his covenant forever.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;

all who follow his precepts have good understanding.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son\***

**and to the Holy Spirit,**

**as it was in the beginning,**\*

**is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

*Refrain*

**Second Lesson ----- Colossians 3:12-17**

Therefore, as God's elect, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with one another and forgive each other if anyone has a

complaint against anyone else. Forgive, just as Christ forgave you. And, in addition to all these things, put on love, which ties things together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ control your

hearts, to which you were also called, in one body. And be thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs,

with gratitude in your hearts to God. And everything you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

*Verse of the Day*

*Colossians 3:15a*

*Tune: CW 38*

C: Now may Christ's peace rule in your heart— His ho - ly  
man - ger, set a - part. Re-joyce, be glad, and ne -  
ver fear— The Sa - vior of the world is here.

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*Stand.*

**Gospel ----- Luke 2:25-40**

*After the announcement of the Gospel, the congregation sings:*

C: Glo - ry be to you, O Lord!

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, waiting for the comfort of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved by

the Spirit he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary according to the law, Simeon took him into his arms and praised God. He said,

Lord, you now dismiss your servant in  
peace, according to your word,  
because my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared before the face of  
all people,  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the  
glory of your people Israel.

Joseph and the child's mother were amazed at the things that were spoken about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Listen carefully, this child is appointed for the falling and rising of many in Israel and for a sign that is spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Anna, a prophetess, was there. She was a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old. She had lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, and then she was a widow of eighty-four years. She did not leave the temple complex, since she was worshipping with fasting and prayers night and day. Standing nearby at that very hour, she gave thanks to the Lord. She kept speaking about the child to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had accomplished everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town, Nazareth. The child grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

*After the Gospel, the congregation sings:*



**C: Praise be to you, O Christ!**

*Nicene Creed*

**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 fully 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 in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian 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.

*Be seated.*

**Hymn of the Day ----- Let All Together Praise Our God**

CW 41

1. Let all together praise our God Before his highest throne;  
Today he opens heav'n again And gives us his own Son,  
And gives us his own Son.
2. He leaves his heav'nly Father's throne, Is born an infant small,  
And in a manger, poor and lone, Lies in a humble stall,  
Lies in a humble stall.
3. He veils in flesh his pow'r divine A servant's form to take;  
In want and lowliness must die Who heav'n and earth did make,  
Who heav'n and earth did make.
4. A wondrous change which he does make: He takes our flesh and blood,  
And he conceals for sinners' sake His majesty as God,  
His majesty as God.
5. He serves that I a lord may be—A great exchange indeed!  
Could Jesus' love do more for me To help me in my need,  
To help me in my need?

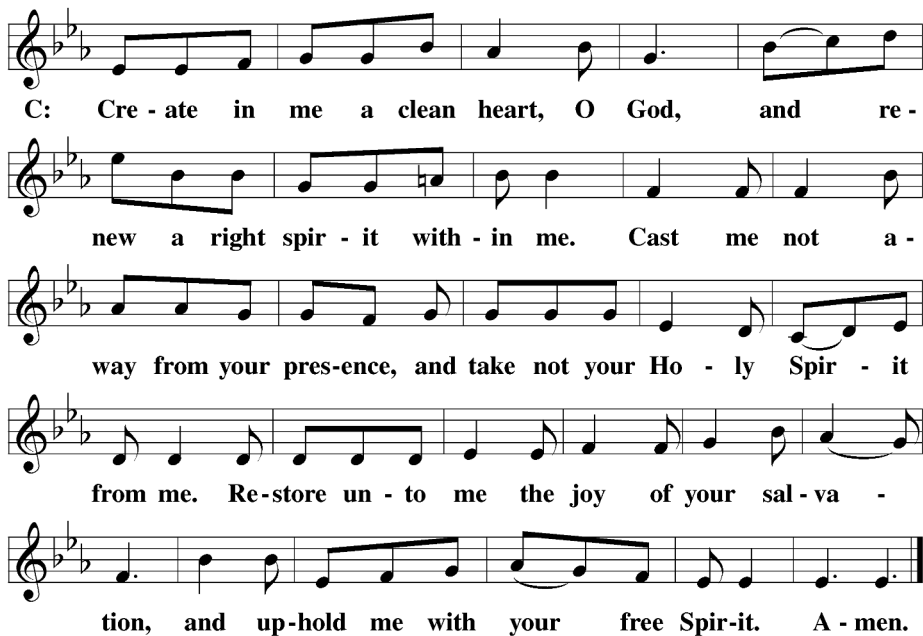
6. For us he opens wide the door Of paradise today.  
 The angel guards the gate no more; To God our thanks we pay,  
 To God our thanks we pay.

**Sermon** ----- **Luke 2:25-40**

*Jesus Is Praised in His Temple*

*Stand.*

*After the sermon, the congregation sings:*



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 your pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it  
 from me. Re - store un - to me the joy of your sal - va -  
 tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it. A - men.

*Be seated.*

*Offering*

*Stand.*

*Online giving option:*

*[mluther.org/give](http://mluther.org/give)*



*Offerings support the spread*

*of the Gospel here and around the world.*

## *Prayer of the Church*

*The minister offers the petitions and the congregation responds with “**Hear our prayer.**”*

M: Eternal Lord God, in the fullness of time, You sent forth Your Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem us and give us the adoption as Your sons and heirs. Hear us, Father, as we call to You in His name. Give us grace to rejoice in Christ’s blessed incarnation, and grant us a glad new year. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

M: Lead Your Church, Lord, to follow the example of blessed Simeon, that all baptized Christians would embrace the Christ Child by Word and faith, and so be ready to depart whenever they are called. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

M: Heavenly Father, from whom all fatherhood on earth is named, bless Christian families with Your promises. Give parents diligence and delight in their work, and grant Your favor on all children, that they may grow in strength and wisdom. Bless widows, orphans and broken families also with Your mercy, and give them joy in the redemption You have won for us in Christ. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

M: Holy God, mighty Lord, You have given power to the nations and to those who govern for the good of their people. Bless our president, Congress, governor and all our leaders, that justice may prevail and Your people would be free to live at peace with all. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

M: Gracious Lord, receive our prayers for those who suffer from loneliness. Comfort them with the sure and certain knowledge that You will never forsake them. Give them family and friends within the household of faith with whom they can find loving companionship. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

M: Blessed Lord, help the sick and suffering, especially those who desire our prayers [*including* \_\_\_\_\_]. Surround them with Your love in Christ and, according to Your gracious will, heal them. Comfort those who mourn, [*especially* \_\_\_\_\_,] and fill their hearts with the certain hope of the resurrection. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

M: Father of lasting peace, show Your mercy to those who receive the Lord's Supper this day, that they would behold their salvation in the very body and blood of Christ given for them and, with St. Simeon, be well-prepared to depart in peace according to Your Word. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

M: Lord God, heavenly Father, we here remember the sufferings and death of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Praising His victorious resurrection from the dead, we draw strength from His ascension before You, where He ever stands for us as our own High Priest. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us, for to You alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

*Lord's Prayer*

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.**

THE SACRAMENT

M: The Lord be with you.



C: **And al - so with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.



C: **We lift them up un - to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.



C: **It is good and right so to do.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for in the wonder and mystery of his birth you have opened our eyes to the glory of your grace and renewed in our hearts the fervor of your love.

Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

*Holy, Holy, Holy*

*Sanctus*



C: **Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en - ly hosts:**

heav'n 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, bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san -  
na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

*Prayer of Thanksgiving*

M: Blessed are you, Lord God, eternal King and gracious Father. In love you made us the crown of your creation. In mercy you planned our salvation. In grace you sent your Son to redeem us from sin.

We remember and give you thanks  
that your eternal Son, Jesus Christ, became flesh and made his  
dwelling among us,  
that he willingly placed himself under law to redeem those under law,  
that he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death on a cross,  
that he has destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light  
through the gospel.

Bless us as we receive your Son's body and blood in this Sacrament. Forgive our sins, increase our faith, strengthen our fellowship, and deepen our longing for the day when Christ will welcome us to his eternal feast. Praise and thanks to you, O God our Father, and to your Son, and to the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

*Words of Institution*

**M:** Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.



**C: A - men.**

*O Christ, Lamb of God*

*Agnus Dei*



**C: O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;**



**have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,**

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

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

grant us your peace. A - men.

*Be seated.*

#### DISTRIBUTION

*In Holy Communion we believe that Jesus gives us his own body and blood to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of our sins. We ask that, in keeping with God's Word, only confirmed members who are in confessional unity with our church (WELS and ELS) would come forward to receive this sacrament. If you have any questions or are interested in communicant membership, please speak with the pastor.*

*During the distribution, the congregation sings the following hymns:*

**Hymn ----- Oh, Rejoice, All Christians Loudly**  
 CW 45

1. Oh, rejoice, all Christians, loudly,  
 For our joys have now begun; Wondrous things our God has done.  
 Tell abroad his goodness proudly,  
 Who our race has honored so, That he lives with us below.

***Refrain:***

Joy, oh, joy beyond all gladness,  
 Christ has done away with sadness!  
 Hence all sorrow and repining, For the Sun of grace is shining!



2. See, my soul, your Savior chooses Poverty and weakness, too;  
In such love he comes to you.  
Neither crib nor cross refuses, All he suffers for your good  
To redeem you by his blood.       *Refrain*
  
3. Lord, how shall I thank you rightly? I am saved eternally  
By your life and death for me.  
Let me not regard you lightly But on you in faith depend,  
Praising you, my heav'nly friend.   *Refrain*
  
4. Jesus, guard and guide your members; Make us children of your grace;  
Hear our prayers in ev'ry place.  
Fan to life faith's glowing embers; Give all Christians far and near  
Holy peace, a glad new year.       *Refrain*

**Hymn ----- Gentle Mary Laid Her Child**

CW 56

1. Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;  
There he lay, the undefiled, To the world a stranger.  
Such a babe in such a place—Can he be the Savior?  
Ask the saved of all the race Who have found his favor.
  
2. Angels sang about his birth; Wise men sought and found him.  
Heaven's star shone brightly forth, Glory all around them.  
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, Heard the angels singing.  
All the plains were lit that night; All the hills were ringing.
  
3. Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;  
He is still the undefiled, But no more a stranger.  
Son of God, of humble birth, Beautiful the story;  
Praise his name in all the earth, Hail the King of glory!

Hymn ----- O Little Town of Bethlehem

CW 65

1. O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep And dreamless sleep The silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears Of all the years Are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary, And, gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, The angels keep Their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing To God the King And peace to all the earth.
3. How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts To human hearts The blessings of his heav'n.  
No ear may hear his coming, But in this world of sin  
Where meek souls will Receive him still, The dear Christ enters in.
4. O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin And enter in; Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;  
Oh, come to us, Abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

*After the distribution is finished the congregation stands and sings:*

*Song of Simeon*

*Nunc Dimittis*

C: Lord, now you let your servant de - part in peace ac-cord-ing  
to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have pre-

pared be - fore the face of all people, a light to light - en the  
 Gen - tiles and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.

M: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

C: And his mercy endures for - ev - er.

M: O God the Father, source of all goodness, in your loving kindness you sent your Son to share our humanity. We thank you that through him you have given us pardon and peace in this sacrament. We also pray that you will not forsake us but will rule our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit so that we willingly serve you day after day, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: A - men.

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: A - men. A - men. A - men.  
*Be seated.*

Hymn ----- Go, Tell It on the Mountain

CW 57

*Refrain:*

Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills, and ev'rywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born.

1. While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light. *Refrain*
2. The shepherds feared and trembled When lo, above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior's birth. *Refrain*
3. Down in a lowly manger The humble Christ was born;  
And God sent us salvation That blessed Christmas morn. *Refrain*



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