

**SOLOMON'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
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**A**  
**RIGHTEOUS**  
**BRANCH WILL**  
**SPRING UP**  
**FOR DAVID**



J E R E M I A H 3 3 : 1 5

*"Solomon's Evangelical Lutheran Church, following the example of Jesus Christ, seeks to live in the confidence and fullness of God's grace; to preach the Good News boldly and truthfully; to support and serve others in faith; to work in harmony with all creation."*

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**DECEMBER 1, 2024**

**December 1, 2024**  
**First Sunday of Advent**

*Advent is about the “coming days.” God’s people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a “righteous Branch to spring up for David.” The Thessalonians awaited “the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints.” Jesus’ contemporaries hoped for the time “to stand before the Son of Man.” With them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of Christ in word and supper.*

**CAROLS SING**

**GREETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ORGAN PRELUDE**    *Blest Be the God of Israel*    **(Forest Green)**    **Dale Wood**

**LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God  
and of one another.

God of mercy,  
**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.**

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. **Amen.**

**\*GATHERING SONG *Blessed Be the God of Israel* (ELW 250)**



1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free  
2 With prom - ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call,  
3 My child, as proph - et of the Lord you will pre - pare the way,



and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da - vid's tree.  
the oath once sworn to A - bra - ham, from foes to save us all;  
to tell God's peo - ple they are saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.



So have the proph - ets long de - clared that with a might - y arm  
that we might wor - ship with - out fear and of - fer lives of praise,  
Then shall God's mer - cy from on high shine forth and nev - er cease



God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.  
in ho - li - ness and righ - teous - ness to serve God all our days.  
to drive a - way the gloom of death and lead us in - to peace.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944, based on Luke 1:68-79

Music: FOREST GREEN, English folk tune

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## **GREETING**

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

**And also with you.**

## **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH "LIGHT OF HOPE"**

### **Responsive Litany**

We begin the season of Advent with expectant and believing hearts.

**We wait upon the Lord and place our hope in God's word.**

During Advent we confront the darkness that so often exists around us.

**We wait upon the Lord and place our hope in God's word.**

During Advent we confront the doubt that so often resides within us.

**We wait upon the Lord and place our hope in God's word.**

During Advent we confront the division that so often occurs between us.

**We wait upon the Lord and place our hope in God's word.**

This morning we light the **first candle** which reminds us of the ultimate hope that comes through our Savior's birth. In a world where we often get overwhelmed by our circumstances, Advent comes as a gentle whisper offering us hope to heal the broken, befriend the lonely, and share the good news of the Gospel. This morning let us begin this Advent season with expectant and believing hearts.

# Light of Hope

*A Candle Lighting Ceremony for Advent*

Words and Music by  
JOEL RANEY

Congregation:

The musical score is written on four staves in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics: "Light of life, Mak - er of day, gath - er our". The second staff contains: "sha - dows and cast them a - way. Bea - con of". The third staff contains: "truth, gleam - ing and bright, shine in our". The fourth staff contains: "hearts, shat - ter our night." There are some blank lines in the lyrics corresponding to the musical phrasing.

Light of life, Mak - er of day, gath - er our  
sha - dows and cast them a - way. Bea - con of  
truth, gleam - ing and bright, shine in our  
hearts, shat - ter our night.

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*Let us pray.*

**Gracious God, as we embark upon another Advent journey, we pray that we would be encouraged by hope, strengthened in unity, and inspired through faith. May our ears be open and our hearts ready to receive the gift of hope embodied in the Word made flesh. We pray this in the name of Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

## FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14-16

A reading from Jeremiah.

*In the Old Testament, “righteousness” often has to do with being faithful in relationship. God acts righteously both in punishing Israel for its sin and in having mercy. In today’s reading, Jerusalem’s future name—“The LORD is our righteousness”—proclaims that God is even now working salvation for Israel.*

<sup>14</sup> The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup> In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>16</sup> In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: Psalm 25:1-10

(read responsively between lector and congregation)

<sup>1</sup> To | you, O LORD,  
I lift | up my soul.

<sup>2</sup> **My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be | put to shame,  
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.**

<sup>3</sup> Let none who look to you be | put to shame;  
rather let those be put to shame | who are treacherous.

<sup>4</sup> **Show me your | ways, O LORD,  
and teach | me your paths.**

<sup>5</sup> Lead me in your | truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all | the day long.

<sup>6</sup> **Remember, O LORD, your compas- | sion and love,  
for they are from | everlasting.**

<sup>7</sup> Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;  
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your good- | ness, O

LORD.

<sup>8</sup> **You are gracious and up- | right, O LORD;  
therefore you teach sinners | in your way.**

<sup>9</sup> You lead the low- | ly in justice  
and teach the low- | ly your way.

<sup>10</sup> **All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast | love and faithfulness  
to those who keep your covenant and your | testimonies.**

## SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

A reading from 1 Thessalonians.

*Upon Timothy's report from the congregation at Thessalonica, Paul is exuberant with gratitude for them. In this passage from his letter, Paul voices overflowing thanks, joy, and blessings for the people of this growing church.*

<sup>9</sup> How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? <sup>10</sup> Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

<sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you.

<sup>12</sup> And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. <sup>13</sup> And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Gospel Acclamation (Taizé)* (ELW 175)

Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

*Verses may be sung by a leader. Then the alleluia is repeated.*

Music: "Alleluia 7," Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994, and the Taizé Community  
Music © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent, 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. [www.giamusic.com](http://www.giamusic.com). 800.442.3358.  
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**\*GOSPEL: Luke 21:25-36**

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>25</sup> "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. <sup>26</sup> People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup> Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

<sup>29</sup> Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup> as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup> Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>34</sup> "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup> like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup> Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON** *Asleep at the Switch?*

**\*Please stand as you are able for the final verse**

**HYMN OF THE DAY *Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying* (ELW 436)**



1 Wake, a - wake, for night is fly - ing, the watch-men  
2 Zi - on hears the watch-men sing - ing, and all her  
3 Glo - ri - a! Let heav'n a - dore you! Let saints and



on the heights are cry - ing; a - wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, at last.  
heart with joy is spring-ing. She wakes, she ris - es from her gloom.  
an - gels sing be - fore you, with harp and cym-bal's clear-est tone.



Mid - night hears the wel - come voic - es, and at the  
Her dear friend comes down, all glo - rious, the strong in  
Gates of pearl, twelve por - tals gleam - ing, lead us to



thrill-ing cry re - joic - es: "Come forth, you maid-ens! Night is past.  
grace, in truth vic - to - rious: her star is ris'n; her light is come.  
bliss be - yond all dream - ing, with an - gel choirs a - round your throne.



The bride - groom comes! A - wake; your lamps with glad - ness take!"  
Now come, O Bless - ed One, Lord Je - sus, God's own Son.  
No eye has caught the light, no ear the thun - d'ring might



Al - le - lu - ia! Rise and pre - pare the feast to share;  
Sing ho - san - na! Oh, hear the call! Come one, come all,  
of such glo - ry. There we will go: what joy we'll know!



go, meet the bride - groom, who draws near.  
and fol - low to the ban - quet hall.  
There sweet de - light will ev - er flow.



Please join me as we confirm our faith together in the words of the apostles' creed.

**\*CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**\*PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH** *(Please respond.)*

*P: Lord, in your mercy, C: receive our prayer.*

**\*PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

**\*OFFERTORY** *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* (ELW 254)



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;  
2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.  
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,  
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.  
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788  
Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

**\*OFFERING PRAYER**

Creator God,  
you made the whole world,  
even the farthest stars,  
and you draw near to feed us.  
We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine.  
Strengthen us with this food  
that we may live in expectation  
for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## \*GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## \*PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,  
through whom you will also make all things new  
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 207)



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -



san-na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## **\*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

## **\*LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

## **\*INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

God feeds us with tender mercy.  
Come to the table.

## COMMUNION

*Continuous - Please continue down center aisle at the direction of the usher. After you receive the bread, you may take a cup of red wine or white grape juice from the tray. Please place your empty communion cup in the basket. Gluten free wafers are available, ask the Pastor when you come forward. Notify the Head Usher if you would appreciate receiving Communion at your seat rather than walking up to the altar, the Pastor and Communion Assistant will be happy to bring Communion to you*

### COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 481)



Come to the ta - ble of mer - cy, pre - pared with the wine and the bread.



All who are hun - gry and thirst - y, come, and your souls will be fed.



Come at the Lord's in - vi - ta - tion; re - ceive from his nail - scarred hand.



Eat of the bread of sal - va - tion; drink of the blood of the Lamb.

Text: Claire Cloninger, b. 1942

Music: COME TO THE TABLE, Martin J. Nystrom, b. 1956

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**COMMUNION HYMN *Christ, Be Our Light* (ELW 715)**



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for  
 2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for  
 3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for  
 4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for  
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,  
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone  
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,  
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,  
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.  
 has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.  
 bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.  
 shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.  
 to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.



*Refrain*  
 Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957  
 Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell  
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## **\*COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.  
**Amen.**

## **\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Generous God,  
we thank you for the gift of life,  
for the bread of salvation.  
We thank you for coming among us,  
for leading us into peace.  
We thank you for showering us with mercy,  
for sending us into the world.  
Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us  
as we feed the hungry in your name.  
**Amen.**

## **\*BLESSING**

God of endings and beginnings,  
God in the darkness and the light,  
God, our hope for the journey,  
✠ bless and keep you now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**\*SENDING SONG *People, Look East* (ELW 248)**



1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing  
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is  
3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the  
4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new



of the year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble,  
plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,  
bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,  
life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming



trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look  
that in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look  
bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look  
with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look



east, and sing to - day— Love, the Guest, is on the way.  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Star, is on the way.  
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881–1965

Music: BESANÇON, French carol

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**\*DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

**Thanks be to God.**

**EXTINGUISHING THE CANDLES/SILENT PRAYER**

**POSTLUDE**

*O Blessed Emanuel*

J S Bach

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## SERVING TODAY

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Head Usher .....	Janice McEntire
Acolyte .....	Sam Mull
Lector.....	Janice McEntire
Securing Offering.....	Janice McEntire & Sam Mull
Communion Set-Up.....	Jerry & Ilona Laney
Communion Clean-Up .....	Jerry & Ilona Laney
Communion Bread .....	Marjorie Dale
Communion Assist .....	Becky Mull
Coffee Station.....	Becky Mull
Attendance last Sunday .....	42

### **Glimpses of Vibrancy**

This week we give thanks for the many gifts Solomons Lutheran continues to share into the surrounding community. Today we lift up the gift of **Support Lutheran Camping**. May this gift continue to be a significant **Glimpse of the Vibrancy** of the love of Jesus Christ!

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The altar flowers** this morning are placed to the Glory of God and our country given by Kathy Bowen.

**Welcome Visitors!** We welcome you to our worship service. We hope your visit with us will be a time of blessing. If you have any concerns, please talk to the Head Usher. We invite you to worship with us again!

**Prayer requests for the following:** *Linda Berberich, Karen Wolfinger, Fran Stouffer, Marty Wenger, Don Wildeson, Nancy Marshall, Betty Amt, our world & country, Debbie Aschmann, Donna, Karen, Chuck Bedsworth, Millie Kulkusky, Linda Mumaugh, Katy Klutz, Bonnie Hudson, Darrell Veilleux, Malvern Zimmerman, Becky Ensinger, Sam Mull, and all the Homebound. If anyone has a prayer request, please call Janice McEntire, 717-264-3702.*

**Please Be Aware:** *We wish to be a praying congregation, and especially for those who are sick or experiencing difficult times. We will continue to name person's (first name only) aloud each Sunday, and we will hold each name for a month. In order to keep our list updated we ask that by the final Thursday of the month, but please call Janice McEntire 717 264-3702 to keep the name on for an extra month. Any name can remain for as long as desired, but we need to hear from the person adding the name, or we will presume the name can be removed. Thank you for your understanding.*

**Weekly Calendar Reminders:**

December 5 - Finance 6pm

Choir 7pm

7 - Antietam Battlefield 9 :15am

**Christmas Party – December 8<sup>th</sup> after the church service in the SFC. Everyone's invited!**

**Advent begins today! Do you have a favorite Christmas carol that you love to sing?**

Prior to worship today and for the remaining Sundays of Advent, we will use a few minutes to sing Christmas carols of your choice. Carols begin with #263-300 in our hymnal. We'll be asking for your favorite carol and will sing a verse or two as time allows.

**Do you like to sing?** With the holiday services coming up, the choir would love to have some additional voices join us for Christmas Eve worship and/or Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 29. You can either join us Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM when we will rehearse special music for the first half hour or Sunday mornings after worship. See Mary-Jo Bedsworth or any choir member if you have questions.

**The January/February/March 2025 issue of Our Daily Bread** is available in the pamphlet rack in the narthex.

**Communion Cards** – to maintain accurate records, we ask that each member fill out a communion card **only once per calendar year**, at a service when you partake of Holy Communion.

**The 2025 Chart for Altar flowers is on the table in the Sunday School room.** The cost of the two vases will be \$50.00 per week. You will continue to provide Kimberly with the information for the bulletin prior to the week before the Sunday you choose. Include the cost of \$50.00 with the bulletin information.

**The 2025 sign-up charts for Acolyte, Lector etc. are on the table in the Sunday School room.** Please sign up for as many as you can.

**SpiriTrust Lutheran Chambersburg Auxiliary has cookbooks for sale, \$15 each.** Lots of great recipes! Great for Christmas gifts! All proceeds go to support programs at Luther Ridge. If interested, see Becky Pecha, Frances Reichard, Margie Dale, or Bonney Coldsmith.

**Sunday Morning Bible Study** - Pastor Mike 's Bible study is held every Sunday, beginning at 9:00 a.m. We conclude at 9:50 a.m., to prepare for worship. We look at one of the Scripture texts for the following Sunday. If you cannot join us every week, please join us when you are able! The Bible is our Book of Faith!

**Copies of today's sermon can be found in the office room at the rear of the worship space.** Pick one up before service if this will be helpful in hearing the sermon; or, pick one up to take home if you wish to use it reflect on throughout this upcoming week.

**Power Pack Meals:** The need for nutritious food for New Franklin Elementary School students in need is an on-going project. If you would like to give a monetary donation, please make your check payable to Solomon's Lutheran Church and put Power Pack Meals in the memo of your check.

**If you are not taking your altar flowers home,** please let Kathy Bowen know to whom or to where you would like them donated. Thanks.

**Bulletin Announcement Forms** are in both pamphlet racks. Please submit all bulletin announcements to the office by the Wednesday prior to the Sunday for inclusion in the bulletin.

### **Music Notes/Hymn Notes:**

Our closing hymn today, "People, Look East," was written by Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965). Farjeon grew up in England and is best known there as the author of more than eighty children's books and poems. In the United States, Farjeon's best-known work is the hymn "Morning Has Broken" which is included in our current hymnal. "People, Look East" first appeared in *The Oxford Book of Carols* (1928). The lively tune provides a festive setting for this wonderful Advent text. Key images of the season are abundant. "People, Look East" is the direction of the rising sun and, in the history of Christianity, the direction of the coming Messiah. In stanza two, the bare earth is waiting for the seed that will flourish in the reign of the Promised One. In stanza three, the stars that guided the Magi shape the "bowl" of the heavens, giving signs of hope beyond "the frosty weather." The angels' song, in stanza four, sets "every peak and valley humming," a reference to Isaiah 40:4, "Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low." Except for one word that changes in the last two lines of each stanza, the poem and its musical setting give the sense of a refrain. "Love," in turn, is defined as "Guest," "Rose," "Star," and "Lord." This joyful Advent hymn has the spirit of a Christmas carol, but with an imaginative Advent text. Singing this carol is indeed one way to prepare both our homes and hearts for the coming of our Savior. (Discipleship Ministries: UMC).

**Hymn Notes:** Many songs have been inspired by happy times, but today's Hymn of the Day, "Wake, Awake for Night is Flying," was inspired by the worst of times. Philip Nicolai was a Lutheran pastor in Unna, Germany when the plague did its terrible work in the winter of 1597-1598. The plague took the lives of more than 1300 people in his community. He kept busy all winter conducting funerals, and comforting the sick and grieving. He wrote this hymn as an encouragement—a statement of faith in the coming of

the Christ who overcame death on the cross—and who overcomes death for us as well. In most cases, a poet writes the words to a hymn and a musician adds the tune. However, in this case, Nicolai wrote both words and music. Johann Sebastian Bach came across Nicolai's hymn and made some small changes to make it more singable. In the process, Bach also helped to popularize it. The hymn was based on the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. Although not our Gospel reading today, the hymn still relates to our readings. "Be on guard...be alert at all times" are phrases from today's Gospel reading. The opening stanza calls the followers of Christ to be roused and alert for His Second Coming. Stanza 2 describes the joyous scene when the Bridegroom returns and takes His bride, the church, in to the wedding feast. Finally, the third stanza adores the Lamb of God and describes the glorious scene in heaven, as given in Revelation 19 and 21, where the saints will worship in song forever. (sermonwriter.com; hymnary.org)