## Invocation

- $\mathbf{P}$  In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- **C** Amen.

# Call to Repentance

▶ Lord God, as we gather together this evening to celebrate the birth of Your dear Son in the flesh, we are reminded once again why He came - to deliver us from everything that assails us: the devil, death, & our sins. And even though He has accomplished everything that needed to be done and you have claimed us as Your own dear children, we are reminded once again that we do not live our lives as You would have us live them. Let us silently reflect on our nature and our lives in light of God's Word and the Ten Commandments.

# **Confession and Absolution**

- **P** Let us confess our sins to God our Father.
- **C** Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.
- P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained 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.

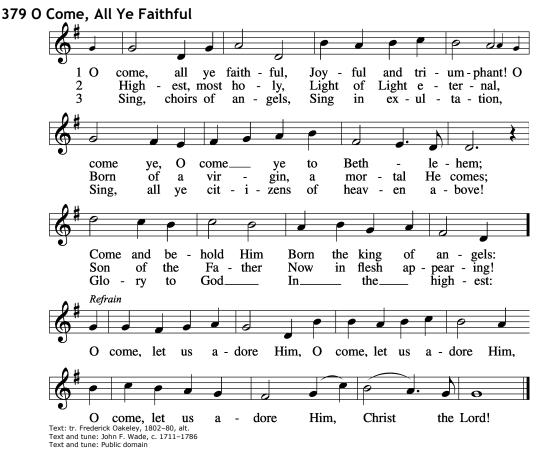
**C** Amen.

# **Christmas Eve Bidding Prayer**

▶ Beloved in the Lord, at this holy Christmastide let it be our care and delight to hear once more the message of the angels, and to journey back to Bethlehem and see what God has brought to pass - the babe born of the Virgin, the Christ child, lying in a manger. May we once more hear, read, learn and mark those Holy Scriptures that reveal God's promises of deliverance and salvation from the moment of our disobedience to our glorious redemption brought to us through Jesus the Christ. But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world, for peace on earth and goodwill amongst men; for unity and love within His Bride the Church, especially within this community of faith. Let us remember all those who are in need: the homeless and those in shelters; the unemployed and the underemployed; the hungry and malnourished; the sick and the dying; those who are lonely and depressed; the aged and the little children; and those who do not know the love of Jesus or have wandered from the truth. And lastly, let us remember all those who rejoice with us around the world along with all those who are on another shore in a greater light whose hope was in the Word made flesh that we may always be together in the Lord. Let us humbly offer up these prayers and praises before God's throne in heaven using the words that our Savior taught us to pray.

## Lord's Prayer

 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.



### **First Reading**

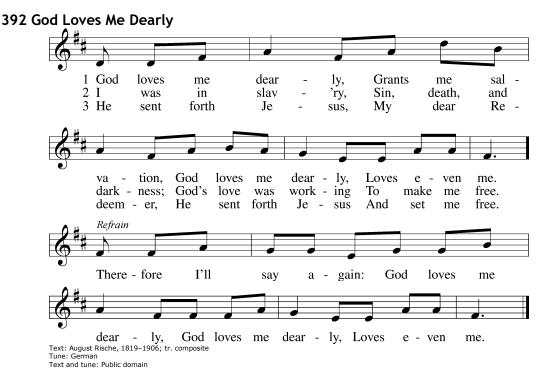
#### Genesis 3:8–15

<sup>8</sup>They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, 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>And 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 of 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 of 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 deceived me, and I ate."

<sup>14</sup>The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field;
on 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 her offspring;
he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.



## Second Reading

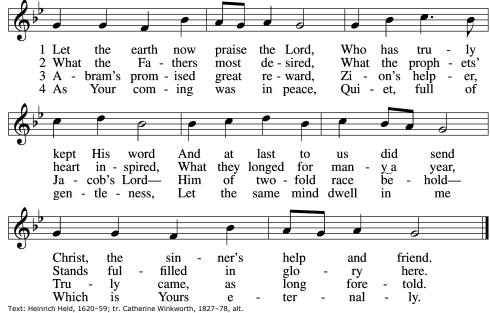
Genesis 22:15–18

<sup>15</sup>And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven <sup>16</sup>and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup>I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, <sup>18</sup>and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

## **C** Thanks be to God.

## 352 Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord



Text: Heinrich Held, 1620–59; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt. Tune: Geystliche gesangk Buchleyn, 1524, Wittenberg, ed. Johann Walter Text and tune: Public domain sts. 1–4

#### Third Reading

<sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness. on them has light shined. <sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. <sup>4</sup>For the voke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. <sup>5</sup>For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. <sup>6</sup>For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end. on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. <sup>1</sup>There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. <sup>2</sup>And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon 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>And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, <sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. <sup>5</sup>Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. <sup>6</sup>The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf 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 cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. <sup>9</sup>They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

**C** Thanks be to God.

# 359 Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

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Mattes, 1876–1948 Tune: Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengeseng, 1599, Köln Text and tune: Public domain

# Fourth Reading

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,

who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,

from you shall come forth for me

one who is to be ruler in Israel,

whose origin is from of old,

from ancient days.

<sup>3</sup>Therefore he shall give them up until the time

when she who is in labor has given birth;

then the rest of his brothers shall return

to the people of Israel.

<sup>4</sup>And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great

to the ends of the earth.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

Micah 5:2–4

361 O Little Town of Bethlehem



#### Fifth Reading

Luke 1:26–38

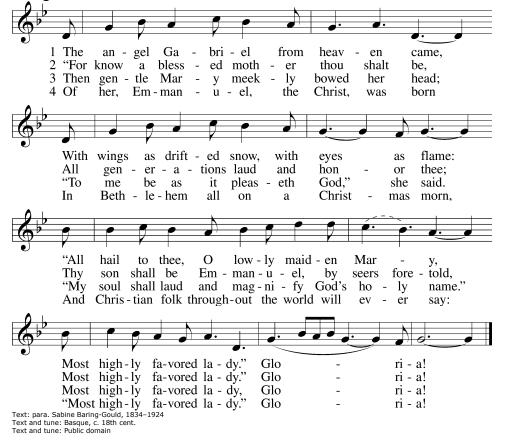
<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup>But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name 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 father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

<sup>34</sup>And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup>And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

356 The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came



#### Sixth Reading

Matthew 1:18-25

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

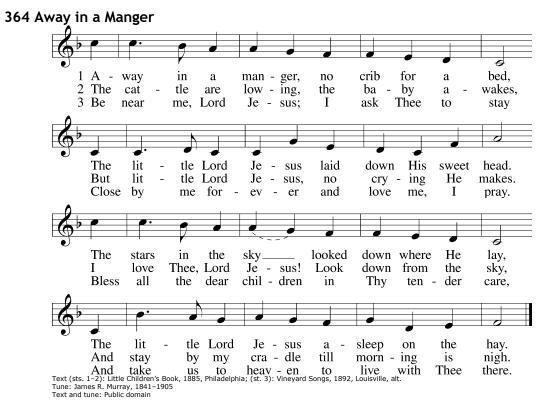
<sup>23</sup>"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup>but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Luke 2:1-7

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup>to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup>And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.



### Seventh Reading

Luke 2:8–20

<sup>8</sup>And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. <sup>10</sup>And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths 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,

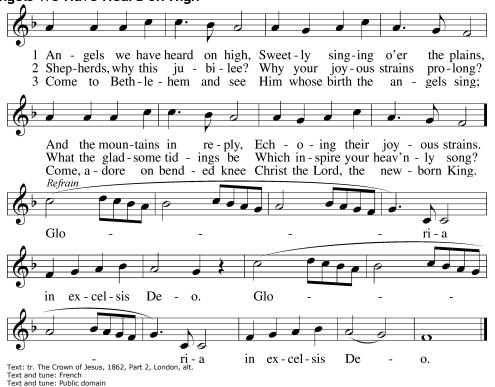
<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest,

and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

<sup>15</sup>When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup>And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

368 Angels We Have Heard on High



#### **Eighth Reading**

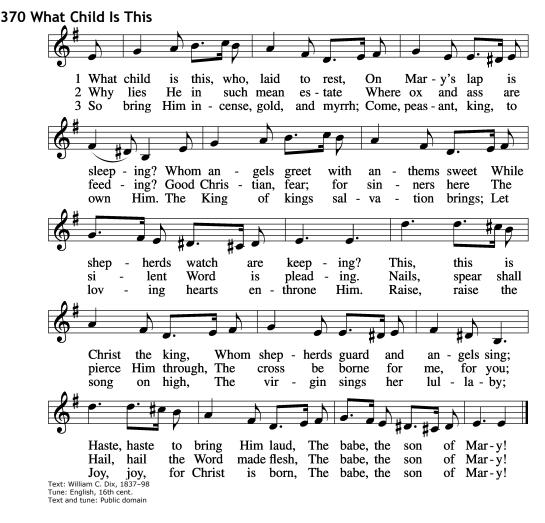
Matthew 2:1–12

<sup>1</sup>Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." <sup>3</sup>When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

6" And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." 9After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. <sup>11</sup>And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

This is the Word of the Lord. A С



#### 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 were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has 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 bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

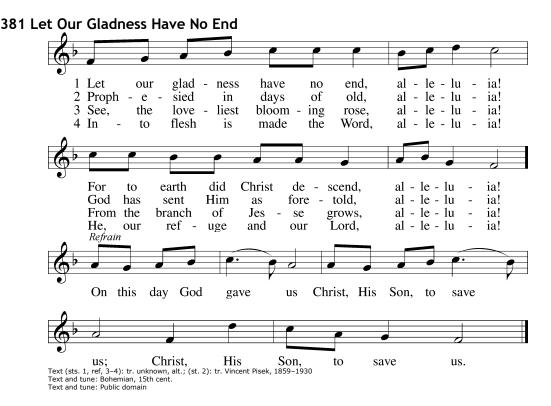
<sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**A** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

#### Sermon



# **Apostles' Creed**

**C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life + everlasting. Amen.

# Prayer of the Church

- **P** Let us pray for the people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.
- **P** In peace, let us pray to the Lord:
- **C** Lord, have mercy.
- P On this most holy night, in awe at the wonder and majesty of the incarnation and in thanksgiving that the Savior of the nations has come, let us pray to the Lord:

#### **C** Lord, have mercy.

- That the proclamation of Christ's birth would sound forth throughout the world, that God would give faithful pastors to His Church to proclaim these good tidings, and that He would give His people willing ears to hear and believe, let us pray to the Lord:
- **C** Lord, have mercy.

● For peace in all homes, that our heavenly Father, who revealed Jesus' identity and Mary's fidelity to Joseph, would richly preserve all families with His Word and grace to live in love for one another, let us pray to the Lord:

## **C** Lord, have mercy.

- ▶ For good government, that God would move all authorities to govern in service to the will of David's Son and Lord, let us pray to the Lord:
- **C** Lord, have mercy.
- For generosity, that the Father who loves us and sent His Son as the propitiation for our sins would perfect His love in us to show kindness to those in need, let us pray to the Lord:

# **C** Lord, have mercy.

▶ For deliverance from affliction, that God, who sent Jesus to save us from sin's curse, would hear the pleas of all who call to Him for mercy; and that He would rescue them from trouble and preserve them in the hope of the resurrection in Christ, let us pray to the Lord:

# **C** Lord, have mercy.

▶ For emergency workers and all whose vocations keep them from their families for our well-being this evening, let us pray to the Lord:

# **C** Lord, have mercy.

▶ For faith and humility to receive the virgin-born Son of God in the signs where He is promised to be found: His Holy Word and Sacraments, let us pray to the Lord:

# **C** Lord, have mercy.

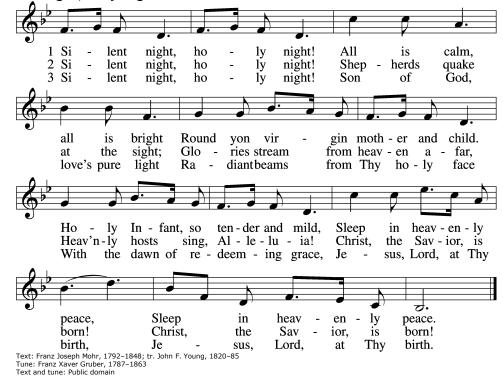
 P Almighty God, You have given Your Son, born of Mary, to be the Savior of the world. Send Your Spirit and abide with us, that we may confess Him and remain in Your love until He comes again in glory; for He lives and reigns with You and the same Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

# **Candlelight Service**

- As the light of these candles illumines our faces, it reminds us of Christ, our Light, the child in the manger at Bethlehem, a Savior suffering our death on the cross, and soon to come from His throne on high as Judge of all. He is our Light here on earth and the eternal Light who enlightens heaven, where there is no need of candle or sun. Rejoice! The Light of the World has come. That light transforms us with the brightness of His glory. This is the message we have heard from Him and proclaimed to you: that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
- **C** If we say we have fellowship with Him but still walk in darkness, we lie, and do not live according to the truth.
- **P** But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another;
- **C** And the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all our sins.
- You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and then cover its light. Instead they set the lamp on its stand, set up high, and it lights everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before everyone, that they may see your good works and give praise to your Father in heaven. O God, as You make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of Your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, grant that we, who joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our judge; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- **C** Amen.

363 Silent Night, Holy Night



#### God's Blessing

The almighty and merciful God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. P

С Amen.



# Acknowledgments

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