



West River United Church

Rev. Barbara J. Cairns

and all members of West River United Church

Worship on Sunday, December 24th, 2017, 10:00 a.m.



**Merry Christmas**



PRE- SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME\*

ONE: May the God of love live in your hearts!

ALL: **And also in yours!**

♪ **'All Is Done for the Glory of God' –**  
MV 34 vs. 1 & 2 (*projected*)

LIGHTING THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE – LOVE (*in unison*)

ALL: **In a world filled with loneliness and isolation,**  
**we are called to share God's love,**  
**a love that is not dependent on our feelings and**  
**likes; rather, a love that is rooted in connection.**  
**Grant us the courage to love others a God loves us,**  
**as we prepare the way for love-made-known,**  
**God-with-us, Emmanuel.**  
**And may this gift of a candle's defiant flame**  
**remind us of God's love for the world!**  
(*Light the last Advent candle.*)

♪ **'Hope is a Candle' vs 4, 3, 2 & 1** (*projected*)

CALL TO WORSHIP- *please stand, as you are able*\*\*\*

ONE: May our souls magnify God.

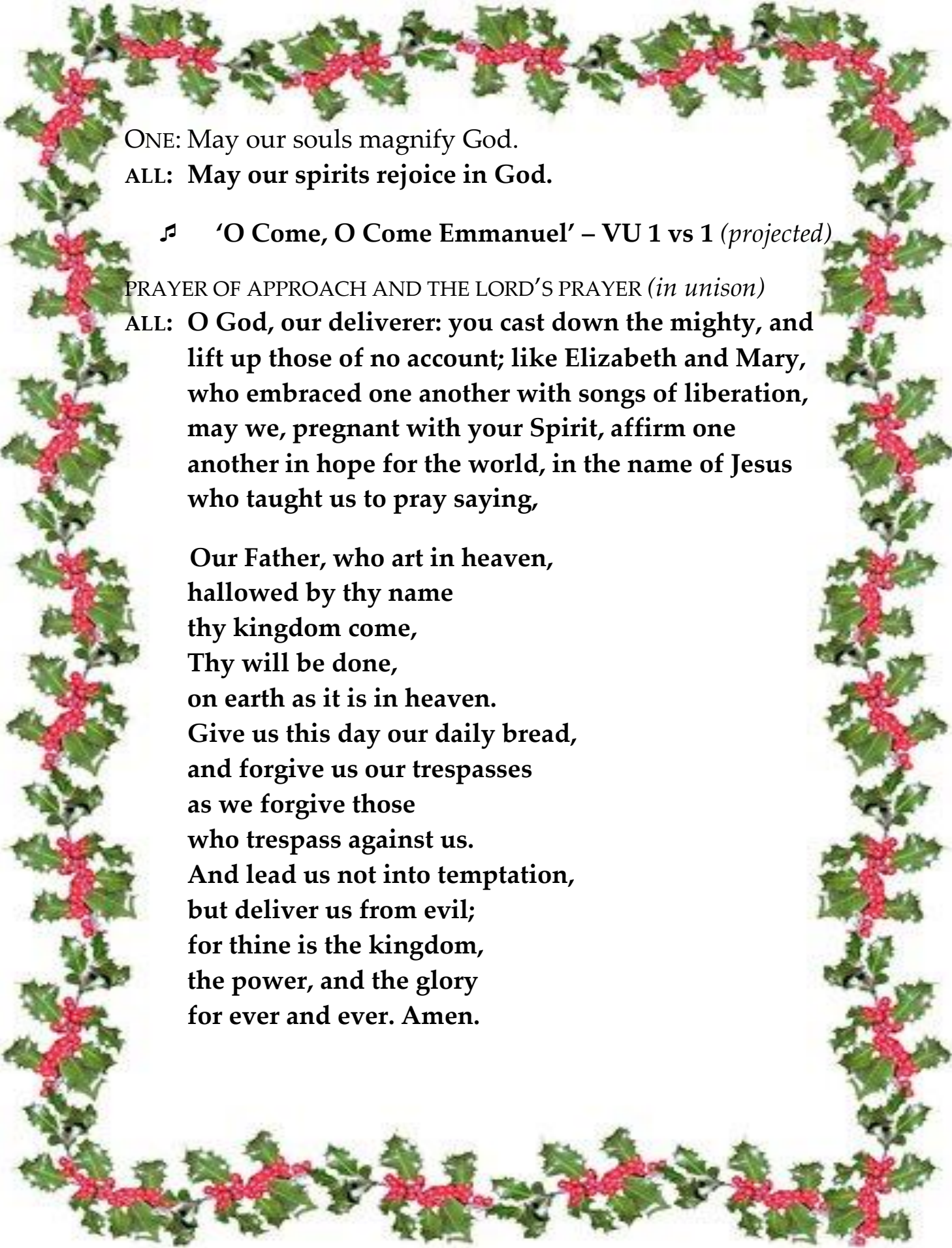
ALL: **May our spirits rejoice in God.**

ONE: God gives rest from all that afflicts us.

ALL: **God goes with us wherever we go.**

ONE: This is the God of mysteries, of prophecies and  
promises.

ALL: **This is the God who lifts up the lowly and fills the**  
**hungry with good things.** (*...lover*)



ONE: May our souls magnify God.

ALL: **May our spirits rejoice in God.**

♪ 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel' – VU 1 vs 1 (*projected*)

PRAYER OF APPROACH AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (*in unison*)

ALL: **O God, our deliverer: you cast down the mighty, and lift up those of no account; like Elizabeth and Mary, who embraced one another with songs of liberation, may we, pregnant with your Spirit, affirm one another in hope for the world, in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray saying,**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed by 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,  
the power, and the glory  
for ever and ever. Amen.**



PRESENTATION OF OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS TO GOD

♪ 'In the Bleak Midwinter' – VU 55 vs 4 (*projected*)

OFFERTORY PRAYER\* (*in unison*)

**ALL: Through these gifts, may we be agents of love in your world; lifting people up in love so that they can experience an abundant future. Amen.**

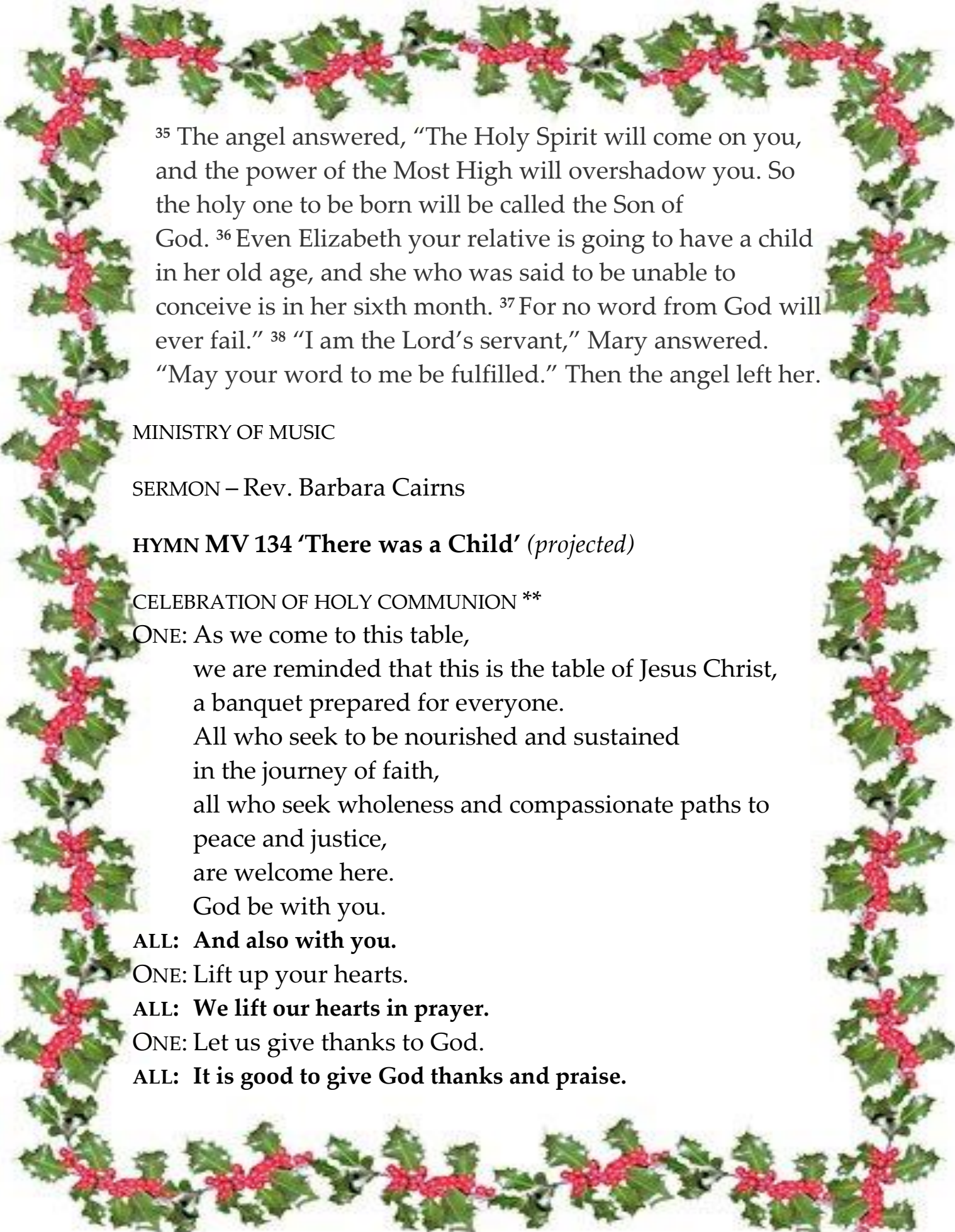
CHILDREN'S TIME

♪ 'Dream a Dream' – MV 158 (*projected*)

SCRIPTURE READING

**LUKE 1: 26-38** (*New Revised Standard Version*)

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,  
<sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." <sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"  
*(...lover)*



<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail.” <sup>38</sup> “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

SERMON – Rev. Barbara Cairns

**HYMN MV 134 ‘There was a Child’** (*projected*)

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION \*\*

ONE: As we come to this table,  
we are reminded that this is the table of Jesus Christ,  
a banquet prepared for everyone.  
All who seek to be nourished and sustained  
in the journey of faith,  
all who seek wholeness and compassionate paths to  
peace and justice,  
are welcome here.  
God be with you.

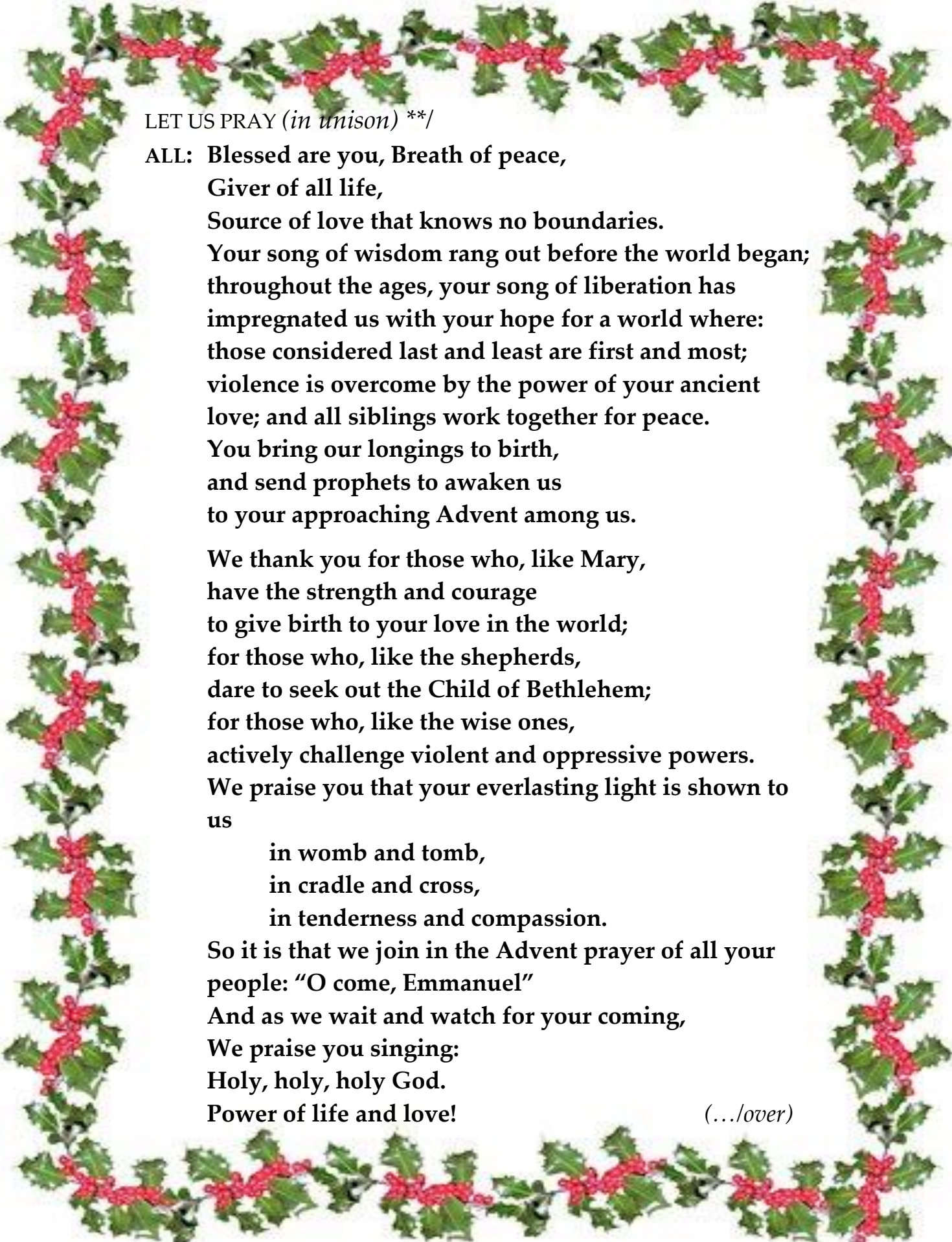
**ALL: And also with you.**

ONE: Lift up your hearts.

**ALL: We lift our hearts in prayer.**

ONE: Let us give thanks to God.

**ALL: It is good to give God thanks and praise.**



LET US PRAY (*in unison*) \*\*/

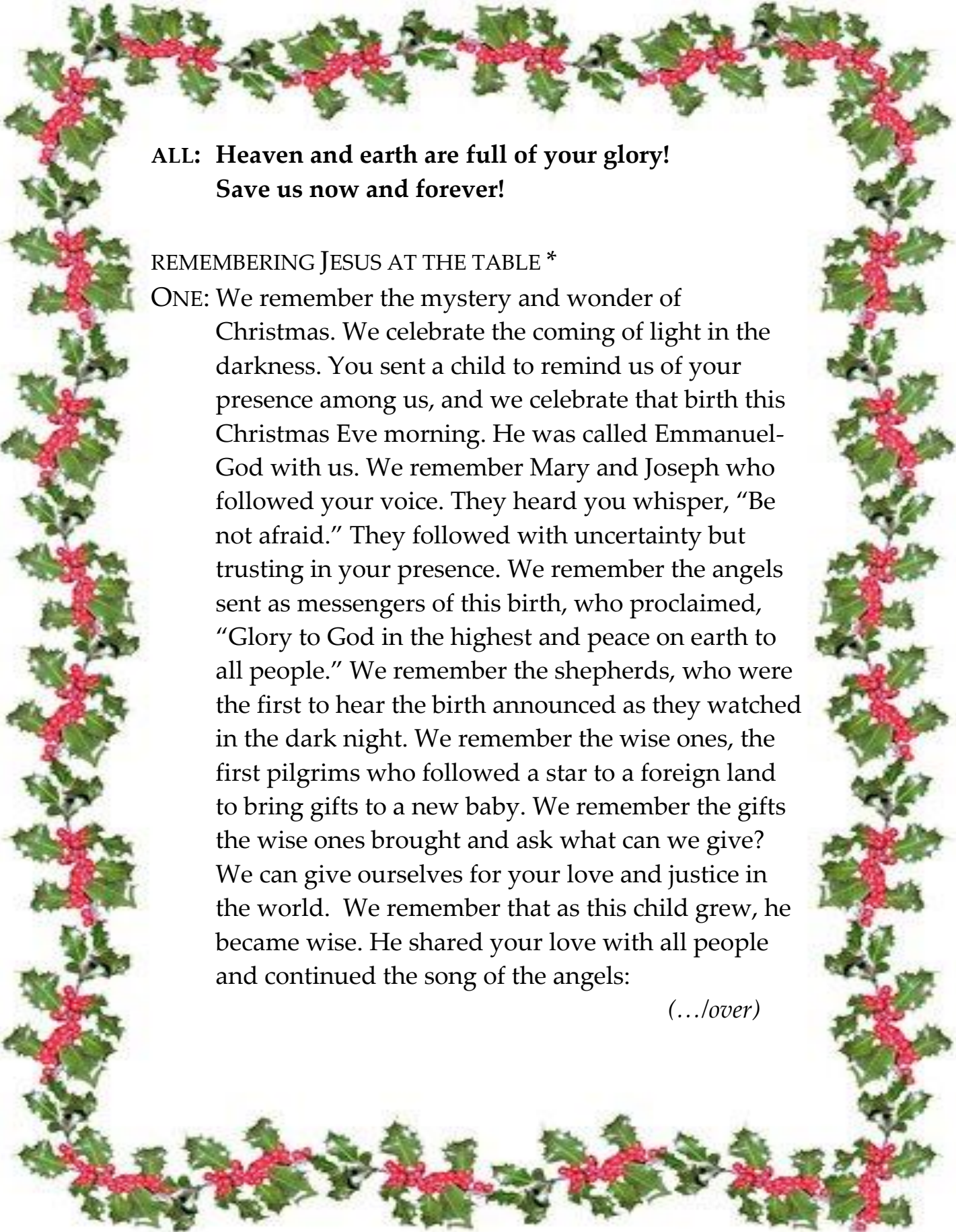
**ALL:** Blessed are you, Breath of peace,  
Giver of all life,  
Source of love that knows no boundaries.  
Your song of wisdom rang out before the world began;  
throughout the ages, your song of liberation has  
impregnated us with your hope for a world where:  
those considered last and least are first and most;  
violence is overcome by the power of your ancient  
love; and all siblings work together for peace.  
You bring our longings to birth,  
and send prophets to awaken us  
to your approaching Advent among us.

We thank you for those who, like Mary,  
have the strength and courage  
to give birth to your love in the world;  
for those who, like the shepherds,  
dare to seek out the Child of Bethlehem;  
for those who, like the wise ones,  
actively challenge violent and oppressive powers.  
We praise you that your everlasting light is shown to  
us

in womb and tomb,  
in cradle and cross,  
in tenderness and compassion.

So it is that we join in the Advent prayer of all your  
people: "O come, Emmanuel"  
And as we wait and watch for your coming,  
We praise you singing:  
Holy, holy, holy God.  
Power of life and love!

(...lover)

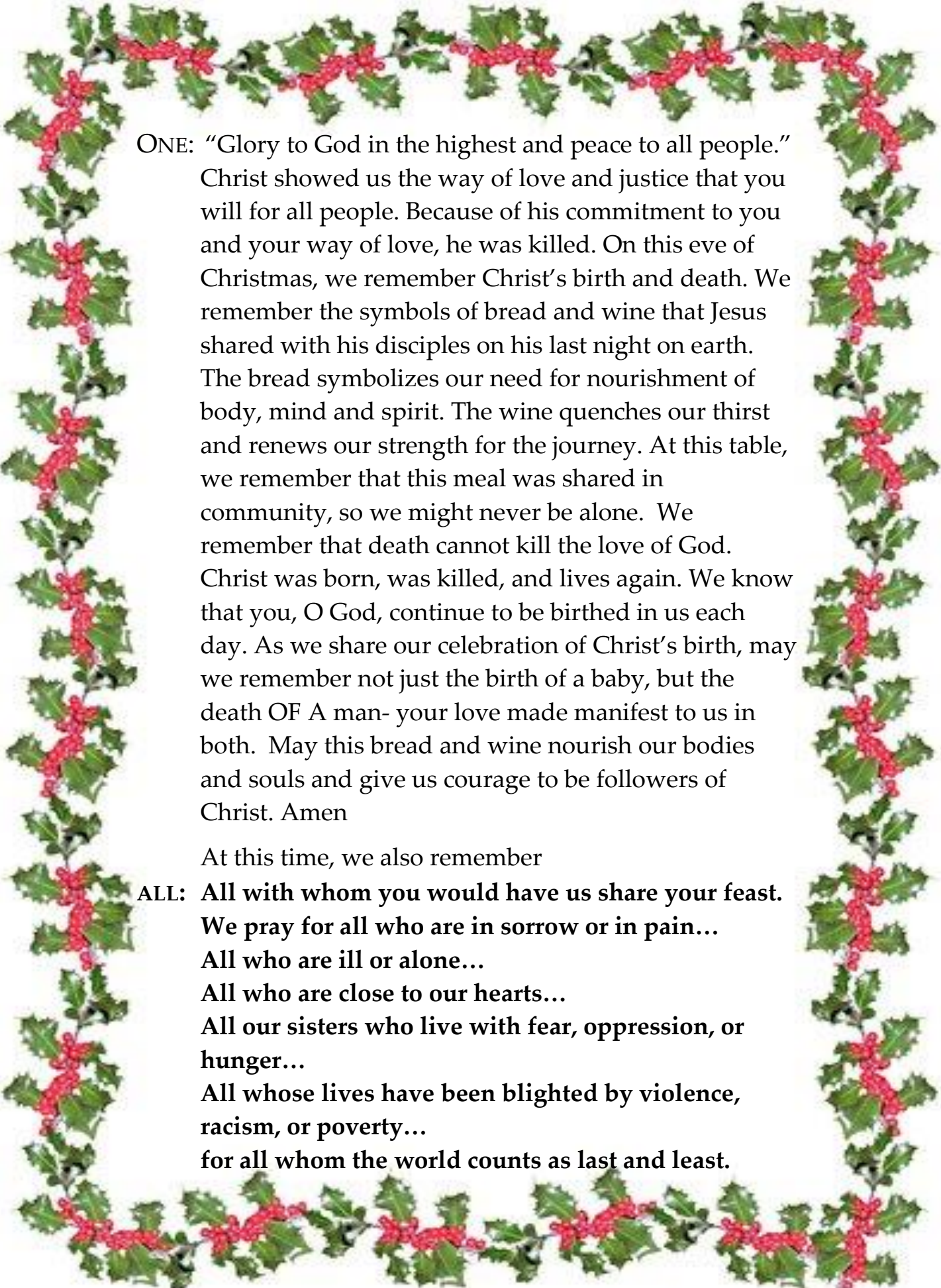


**ALL: Heaven and earth are full of your glory!  
Save us now and forever!**

REMEMBERING JESUS AT THE TABLE \*

ONE: We remember the mystery and wonder of Christmas. We celebrate the coming of light in the darkness. You sent a child to remind us of your presence among us, and we celebrate that birth this Christmas Eve morning. He was called Emmanuel-God with us. We remember Mary and Joseph who followed your voice. They heard you whisper, "Be not afraid." They followed with uncertainty but trusting in your presence. We remember the angels sent as messengers of this birth, who proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to all people." We remember the shepherds, who were the first to hear the birth announced as they watched in the dark night. We remember the wise ones, the first pilgrims who followed a star to a foreign land to bring gifts to a new baby. We remember the gifts the wise ones brought and ask what can we give? We can give ourselves for your love and justice in the world. We remember that as this child grew, he became wise. He shared your love with all people and continued the song of the angels:

*(...lover)*

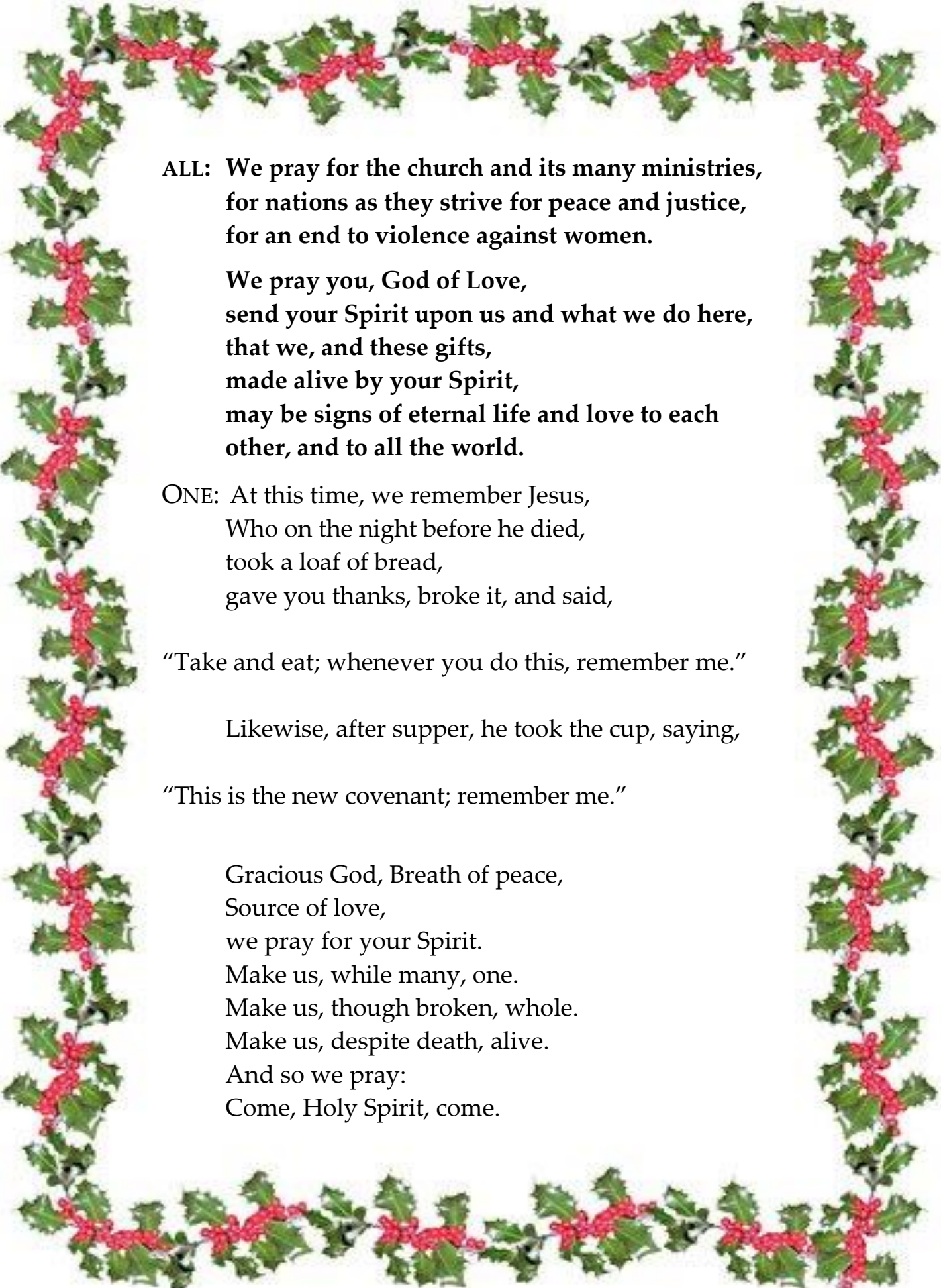


ONE: "Glory to God in the highest and peace to all people." Christ showed us the way of love and justice that you will for all people. Because of his commitment to you and your way of love, he was killed. On this eve of Christmas, we remember Christ's birth and death. We remember the symbols of bread and wine that Jesus shared with his disciples on his last night on earth. The bread symbolizes our need for nourishment of body, mind and spirit. The wine quenches our thirst and renews our strength for the journey. At this table, we remember that this meal was shared in community, so we might never be alone. We remember that death cannot kill the love of God. Christ was born, was killed, and lives again. We know that you, O God, continue to be birthed in us each day. As we share our celebration of Christ's birth, may we remember not just the birth of a baby, but the death OF A man- your love made manifest to us in both. May this bread and wine nourish our bodies and souls and give us courage to be followers of Christ. Amen

At this time, we also remember

**ALL: All with whom you would have us share your feast.  
We pray for all who are in sorrow or in pain...  
All who are ill or alone...  
All who are close to our hearts...  
All our sisters who live with fear, oppression, or  
hunger...  
All whose lives have been blighted by violence,  
racism, or poverty...  
for all whom the world counts as last and least.**





**ALL:** We pray for the church and its many ministries,  
for nations as they strive for peace and justice,  
for an end to violence against women.

We pray you, God of Love,  
send your Spirit upon us and what we do here,  
that we, and these gifts,  
made alive by your Spirit,  
may be signs of eternal life and love to each  
other, and to all the world.

**ONE:** At this time, we remember Jesus,  
Who on the night before he died,  
took a loaf of bread,  
gave you thanks, broke it, and said,

“Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me.”

Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, saying,

“This is the new covenant; remember me.”

Gracious God, Breath of peace,  
Source of love,  
we pray for your Spirit.  
Make us, while many, one.  
Make us, though broken, whole.  
Make us, despite death, alive.  
And so we pray:  
Come, Holy Spirit, come.



SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

BREAKING THE BREAD

ONE: May the bread of life give life to each of us.

POURING THE WINE

ONE: May the cup of blessing be the wine of friendship for each of us.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION \*1

**ALL: We give thanks for the blessing of bread and wine. May they nourish us as your people. Grant us your grace and peace this Christmas season as we celebrate the birth of Christ. Amen.**

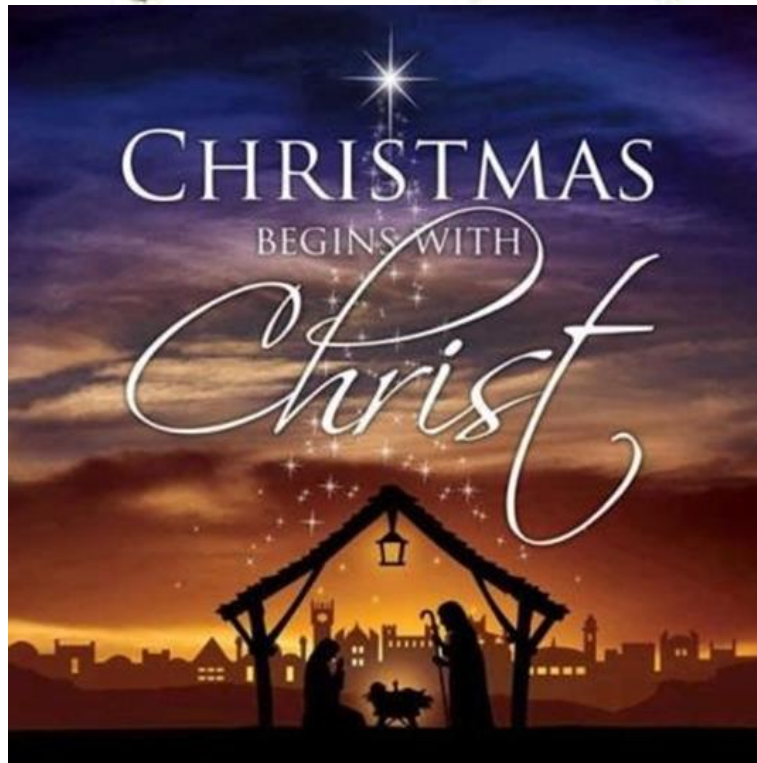
**HYMN VU 8 'Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming' (projected)**

BENEDICTION \*2

ONE: Send us forth this Christmas Eve, O God, with the light of Christ glowing within us. send us forth from this feast of love to celebrate the One who is Bread for the journey and the Wine of Arrival.

**♪ 'People Look East' – VU 9 vs 4 (projected)**

*\*Kim Falls, 2017, Advent Year B., Gathering pg., 30. \*1 Jen Dresser, pg. 37, Gathering, 2014.\*2, Robin Wardlaw, Gathering 2017, pg. 34.\*\* Alydia Smith, Program Coordinator, Worship, Music, and Spirituality, United Church of Canada Advent Unwrapped. 2017. Let us pray\*/ (THE PRAYER WAS INSPIRED BY "BLESSED ARE YOU, GRACIOUS GOD..." BY WILLIAM KERVIN AND LILLIAN PERIGOE IN CELEBRATE GOD'S PRESENCE, PAGE 276. USED WITH PERMISSION.)*



*May the light of His love  
shine brightly on you this  
Christmas  
and carry you through the New  
Year.*

*Merry Christmas*