TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH



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GREENVILLE, SC 29601 Fax # 864/242-6442

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT DECEMBER 17, 2023 10:00 Am - IN THE GYM

GATHERING

Prelude

WORDS OF WELCOME AND AFFIRMATION

Please stand as able

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God, you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen. Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love. #267

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.**

Remain Standing

BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

Advent Hymn

Prepare the Royal Highway

#264

Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near! Let ev'ry hill and valley a level road appear! Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story:

Refrain

Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

God's people, see him coming: your own eternal King! Palm branches strew before him! Spread garments! Shout and Sing! God's promise will not fail you! No more shall doubt assail you! *Refrain*

His is no earthly kingdom; it comes from heav'n above. His rule is peace and freedom and justice, truth and love. So let your praise be sounding for kindness so abounding: *Refrain*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Let us pray. Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Please be seated

Word

The Very First Christmas

Innkeepers:

Welcome everyone to Bethlehem! Let us open our eyes and ears and listen to the story of when Christ was born.

Hymn

O Little Town of Bethlehem

#279

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.

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!

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.

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!

Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus move to the manger during the hymn.

Mary and Joseph, a pitiful sight. So tired and dirty, they gave us a fright. Sickly or dying? What was the matter? "A room in the inn?" Impossible chatter! "Our rooms are all taken; not one empty bed. There'll not be a room in all Bethlehem," I said. But their eyes told a story of hunger and need. I couldn't avoid them, so I tried a good deed. I cleaned up the stable: I cooked up a meal. We helped all we could, at least, that's how I feel. For we noticed that Mary was expecting - and soon! So we prepared for delivery right under the moon. The child came so quickly. His face seemed so bright in a stable so cold and dreary that night. Joseph said softly. "It's Jesus, my friend." God sent him among us to bring to an end fear and hatred, and darkness and sin. So God sent us light, which began to break in

Hymn

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

"Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace!" So says our God. Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow's load. To God's people now proclaim that God's pardon waits for them! Tell them that their war is over; God will reign in peace forever.

For the herald's voice is crying in the desert far and near, calling us to true repentance, since the reign of God is here. Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God away. Valleys, rise to greet the Savior; hills, bow down in humble favor.

Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain. Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits God's holy reign. For the glory of the Lord now on earth is shed abroad, and all flesh shall see the token that God's word is never broken.

PART 2: THE ANIMALS

My animals were calm, quieter than normal. They often were noisy, and never too formal. They always were eating, or else they were sleeping. The stable required continuous sweeping. But on Christmas night, they were strangely in awe at the sight of the babe and all that they saw. It's as if they were aware that God had just hushed them, Had fed and watered and carefully brushed them. They knew, I believe, that God had been able to work a miracle there in that stable.

Animals are invited to move to the center of the worship space and surround the Holy Family.

Hymn

Away in a Manger

#277

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes. I love you Lord Jesus; look down from the sky and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay close by me forever and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in your tender care and fit us for heaven, to live with you there. We don't often see angels in flight. But on that very first Christmas, they lit up the night. They appeared to the shepherds and, wow, were they scared! "Angels!" cried one. "Will any lives be spared?" "Are they here to destroy us? Is our time on earth up? Have we seen our last day? Have we drunk our last cup?" But "Peace on earth; goodwill to all" was the angels' sweet song; that was their call. With a light show that dazzled all who did see, the angels hallelujahed and sang out with glee. "To Bethlehem, shepherds!" the angels directed. "To see Jesus the Christ, whom God has perfected." "Go worship the Lord and follow God's ways. And you'll find Christmas joy for all of your days."

Angels are invited to move to the center of the worship space and surround the Holy Family.

Hymn

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

#270

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king; peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled." Joyful, all you nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies; with angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

Christ by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord, late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see! Hail, incarnate deity! Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*

Hail the heav'n born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth. Refrain

PART 4: SHEPHERDS

The shepherds, I told you, were scared and were stunned. "Too much hard work or too much hot sun!" That's what they thought; that's how they explained. Perplexed and afraid, they loudly complained. But the angels' song calmed them, and then they believed. They rejoiced when they knew, and they were quite relieved. They went to the stable and worshiped the Lord. Then they left and began to spread the good Word.

Shepherds are invited to move to the center of the worship space and surround the Holy Family.

Go Tell It on the Mountain	#290
Refrain:	
Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;	
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!	
While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night	τ,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.	Refrain
The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth	
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.	Refrain
Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;	
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.	Refrain
	Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere; go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born! While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;

PART 5: WISE ONES AND STARS

The star that shone brightly led Wise Ones to seek a child, prophesied, to give strength to the weak. They came bearing gifts, in worship and love, praising God for these wonders from heaven above. The Wise Ones were scholars, come from afar seeking the child by the light of a star. If they brought him treasure, then maybe we, too, can share of our gifts as Christ comes into view. The child, come to save us, was born full of grace and loved and redeemed the whole human race.

> Wise Ones and Stars are invited to move to the center of the worship space and surround the Holy Family.

Hymn

What Child Is This

#296

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!

Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you; hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!

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!

All nativity participants are invited to return to their seats during the hymn.

Please stand as able

He Came Down

He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; hallelujah forever more.

He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light; hallelujah forever more.

He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace; hallelujah forever more.

He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy; hallelujah forever more.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Watching and waiting joyfully for Christ with the sure and certain hope that God frees us from the bondage of sin, we pray for the church, creation, and all in need.

Brief silence

Holy One, you bring hope and peace to the world through the good news of your word. Bless, strengthen, and reform your church to more closely resemble your kin-dom. Raise up leaders who are willing to proclaim your inclusive Gospel to absolutely all people. As we watch and we wait,

hear our prayer.

Magnificent One, your creation is full of glory and wonder. Grant peaceful slumber to the bears who begin hibernating in the mountains north of here. Let the trees of the field, even those now without leaves, sing your praise. Protect wooded areas from deforestation and make us grateful for the gifts trees and plant life provide. We give you thanks for your tender love of all creation. As we watch and we wait,

hear our prayer.

Just One, you lead us mercifully from generation to generation. Guide legislators both locally and nationally in making decisions in the best interest of not only this generation, but the generations to come. You love justice and promise your favor to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and incarcerated. Bring peace to families torn by political or religious conflict. As we watch and we wait,

hear our prayer.

Inclusive One, you are Emanuel to all. We give you thanks that in this place, babies are born to all kinds of parents and are surrounded by the love of family and chosen family alike. Continue to fill our hearts with the knowledge that we are all your holy family and all types of families are holy. Your work of radical inclusion is often difficult. Sustain us with more joyful days such as these, when seemingly small things tell us of how life changing your gospel can be. As we watch and we wait,

hear our prayer.

Mighty One, you bring the powerful down from their thrones and lift up the lowly. Bring food to those of us who have too little and guide those of us who have too much to share freely. Provide warm and safe shelter to those of us who find ourselves without places to lay our head. Swiftly bring justice and equity to those who are oppressed, especially those suffering under the strong arm of power, hate, and patriarchy. As we watch and we wait, **hear our prayer**.

Healing One, you blessed Mary with the miracle of pregnancy. When it be your will, and at your perfect time, bring your miraculous healing to those who are sick. Comfort the dying and grant the terminally ill the gift of Christian hope. Be with all who suffer alone this holiday season. We pray especially for those we name now on our lips or silently in our hearts ... As we watch and we wait,

hear our prayer.

Loving One, you let your face shine upon your people. Continue using this congregation to do your good work in the world. Strengthen outreach and worship ministries and sustain our youth, queer, and education ministries. As we watch and we wait, **hear our prayer.**

Eternal One, through Christ, you have made a way for all people to know eternal life. We thank you for the witness of all the faithful who have gone before us to be with you. Fill us with the beautiful hope of eternal life as we await your coming. As we watch and we wait, **hear our prayer.**

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

PEACE

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

Please share with one another a sign of Christ's peace.

Please be seated

ANTHEM

Christmas Sanctus Text by Susan Dengler Music by Lee Dengler Adult Choir

See the weary pair, nestled in a stable bare gazing at their baby boy, filled with love and praise. Earth and heaven sing, worshipping the newborn King, who has come to change the world.

Join in songs of praise: Holy, holy, holy is the blessed one. Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Holy, holy, holy is the promised Son. Glory be to God in the highest.

See the shepherds run, searching for God's precious Son; kneeling at his manger bed, filled with love and praise. Every knee will bow. Every tongue confessing now, Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

Join in songs of praise: Holy, holy, holy is the blessed one. Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Holy, holy, holy is the promised Son. Glory be to God in the highest. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord.

Please stand as able

Canticle of the Turning

My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great, and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait. You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn. Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.

Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me, and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be. Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*

From the hall of pow'r to the fortress tow'r, not a stone will be left on stone. Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne. The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn; there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*

Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast: God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.

This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around. *Refrain*

Let us pray. God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

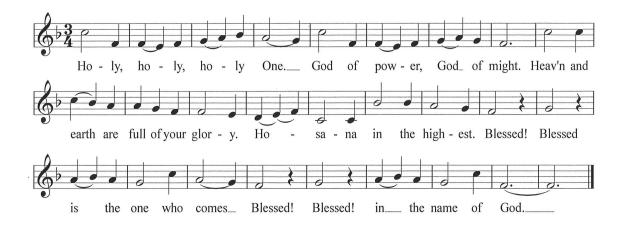
GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord is 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.

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:



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

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 INVITATION TO COMMUNION

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

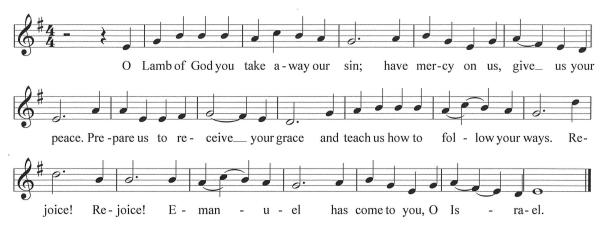
Please be seated

COMMUNION

All, without exception, are welcome at the table of God's grace and love. Anyone preferring not to receive the wine may receive only the bread, completely trusting that the full benefit of communion — Christ's grace and forgiveness — may be found in either the bread or wine. Gluten free wafers are available.

At the direction of the ushers, worshippers are invited to move to the front of the center aisle to dip the bread into the wine to receive Communion by intinction.

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION



ANTHEM

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel arranged by Cynthia Dobrinski Handbell Choir

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel #257

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high, embracing all things far and nigh: in strength and beauty come and stay; teach us your will and guide our way. *Refrain*

O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on Sinai's height in ancient times you gave the law in cloud, and majesty, and awe. *Refrain*

O come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny; from depths of hell your people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain*

O come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home; make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. *Refrain*

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain*

O come, O King of nations, come, O Cornerstone that binds in one: refresh the hearts that long for you; restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. *Refrain* Still, Still, Still an Australian Folk Carol arranged by Roberta Rowland-Raybold

Hymns

O Come, All Ye Faithful

#283

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant! O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; come and behold him, born the king of angels:

Refrain

O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

The highest, most holy, light of light eternal, born of a virgin, a mortal he comes; Son of the Father now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God in the highest: *Refrain*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning; Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n! Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: *Refrain*

That Boy-Child of Mary

Refrain That boy-child of Mary was born in a stable, a manger his cradle in Bethlehem.

What shall we call him, child of the manger? What name is given in Bethlehem? *Refrain*

His name is Jesus, God ever with us, God given for us in Bethlehem. *Refrain*

How can he save us, how can he help us, born here among us in Bethlehem? *Refrain*

Gift of the Father, to human mother, makes him our brother in Bethlehem. *Refrain*

One with the Father, he is our Savior. heaven-sent helper in Bethlehem. *Refrain*

Gladly we praise him, love and adore him, give ourselves to him in Bethlehem. *Refrain*

Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

'Twas in the moon of wintertime when all the birds had fled, that God the Lord of all the earth sent angel choirs instead; before their light the stars grew dim, and wand'ring hunters heard the hymn:

> Refrain Jesus your king is born! Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria!

Within a lodge of broken bark the tender babe ws found; a ragged robe of rabbit skin enwrapped his beauty round; but as the hunter braves drew nigh, the angel song rang loud and high: *Refrain*

The earliest moon of winter time is not so round and fair as was the ring of glory on the helpless infant there. The chiefs from far before him knelt with gifts of fox and beaver pelt. *Refrain*

O children of the forest free, the angel song is true; the holy child of earth and heav'n is born today for you. Come kneel before the radiant boy, who brings you beauty, peace, and joy. *Refrain* Please stand as able

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

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit + remain upon you now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Once in Royal David's City

#269

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.

He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all, and his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall; with the poor and meek and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love; for that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav'n above; and he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

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. DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is coming soon! Emmanuel is with us. Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Drama participants are encouraged to keep their candy canes, crowns, halos, masks, and stars, or return them to the tables where they received them.

Everyone is invited to gather in the Multipurpose Room for a festive Christmas Brunch.

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SERVING TODAY

Presiding Minister	Susan Crowell
Assisting Minister	Patrick Preacher
Pianist/Choir Director	Jim Parham
Pageant Coordinators	Amy Brown, Angie McCormack
Narrators	Madelyn Fagala, Jerry Salley
The Holy Family	Leah, Chris, and Addy Sommerville
Prayers	Jonathan Preacher
Acolytes	Eileen Finnern, Cesar Thomas-Harewood
Communion Assistant	Jaime Fivecoat
Praying for Possibilities	Nell Orscheln
Instrumentalists Violin Cello Flute Clarinet Bassoon Euphonium Guitar Percussion	Caroline Brightwell, Mary Beth Ridenhour Heather Kleckley Amanda Mast, Susan Schwartzkopf Jenna Mast Margo Otten Nate Hybl Stephen Koenemann, Dan Thomas-Harewood John Beckford, Kylee Mast, Chad Brightwell
Greeters	Deirdre Hixson, Chris Mast, Linda Morgan Lisa Rehm, Chris Sorenson
Ushers	Carol Elliott, Calvin Harmon Pattimarie Janssen, Wayne Landreth
Brunch Coordinator	Cathie Landreth
Video, Set, and Lighting Design Audio	Henry Wilcox Gregg Alley