CALL TO WORSHIP: Long ago, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; now God has spoken to us by his Son. God made the world through that Son, who has been appointed heir of all things and the perfect reflection of God’s glory. In worship, let us welcome the light of the world!

INVOCATION: Almighty Father, in the glorious incarnation of your Son, Jesus Christ, you have sent a new light into the world; give us grace, that we may so receive the same light into our hearts as to be guided by it into the way of everlasting salvation, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, even as we pray the prayer he taught us when he said, “Our Father….”

ACT OF PRAISE: Psalm 50
1 The mighty one, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.
2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.
3 Our God comes and does not keep silence, before him is a devouring fire, and a mighty tempest all around him.
4 He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people:
5 “Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!”
6 The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge.
7 “Hear, O my people, and I will speak, O Israel, I will testify against you. I am God, your God.
8 Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you, your burnt offerings are continually before me.
9 I will not accept a bull from your house, or goats from your folds.
10 For every wild animal of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.
11 I know all the birds of the air,[a] and all that moves in the field is mine.
12 “If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and all that is in it is mine.
13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?
14 Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving,[b] and pay your vows to the Most High.
15 Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”
16 But to the wicked God says: “What right have you to recite my statutes, or take my covenant on your lips?
7 For you hate discipline, and you cast my words behind you.
18 You make friends with a thief when you see one, and you keep company with adulterers.
19 “You give your mouth free rein for evil, and your tongue frames deceit.
20 You sit and speak against your kin; you slander your own mother’s child.
21 These things you have done and I have been silent; you thought that I was one just like yourself. But now I rebuke you, and lay the charge before you.
22 “Mark this, then, you who forget God, or I will tear you apart, and there will be no one to deliver.
23 Those who bring thanksgiving as their sacrifice honor me; to those who go the right way[c]
I will show the salvation of God.”
READING: II Kings 2:1-12
1 Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel. 3 The company of prophets[a] who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?” And he said, “Yes, I know; keep silent.” 4 Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here; for the LORD has sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho. 5 The company of prophets[b] who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, “Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; be silent.”
6 Then Elijah said to him, “Stay here; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.” But he said, “As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on. 7 Fifty men of the company of prophets[c] also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. 8 Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.
9 When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha said, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.” 10 He responded, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.” 11 As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. 12 Elisha kept watching and crying out, “Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

MEDITATION: A Double Portion

BENEDICTION: May Christ, the Son of God, be manifest in you, that your lives may be a light to the world; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen