

Greetings, favored one!
The Lord is
with you

LUKE 1:28





The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday, December 23, 2023—5:00 pm
Sunday, December 24, 2023—9:00 am

God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

PRELUDE

**"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"
"Once in Royal David's City"
"The Holly and the Ivy"
"The First Noel"**

GATHERING

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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

Amen.

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 SONG

"Canticle of the Turning"

ELW 723

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.

FOURTH SUNDAY - *The Wonder of the Message*

Candle Lighting

Today we light four candles. The **first candle** calls us to behold the glory of the season with renewed wonder. Advent is a time to be awed by God's redeeming love for the lost and broken. The **second candle** calls us to reclaim the promises of God spoken in ages past. As the light fills this room, so the Word of God fills our world with hope for the hurting, peace for the restless, and joy for the heavy hearted. The **third candle** is an invitation to wait patiently upon the Lord. In a world where we often lack for patience, Advent reminds us to rest in God's timing and trust God's plan. The **fourth candle** challenges us to grow in faithful expectation. As people who faith often becomes tamed to the miraculous, Advent is a time to remember afresh a God in whom all things are possible.

Responsive Litany

During Advent, we ignite the wonder of expectation.

Open our eyes, O Lord, to behold your glory.

During Advent, we look for the light that shines in the darkness.

Open our eyes, O Lord, to behold your glory.

During Advent, we embrace the hope that enlivens the soul.

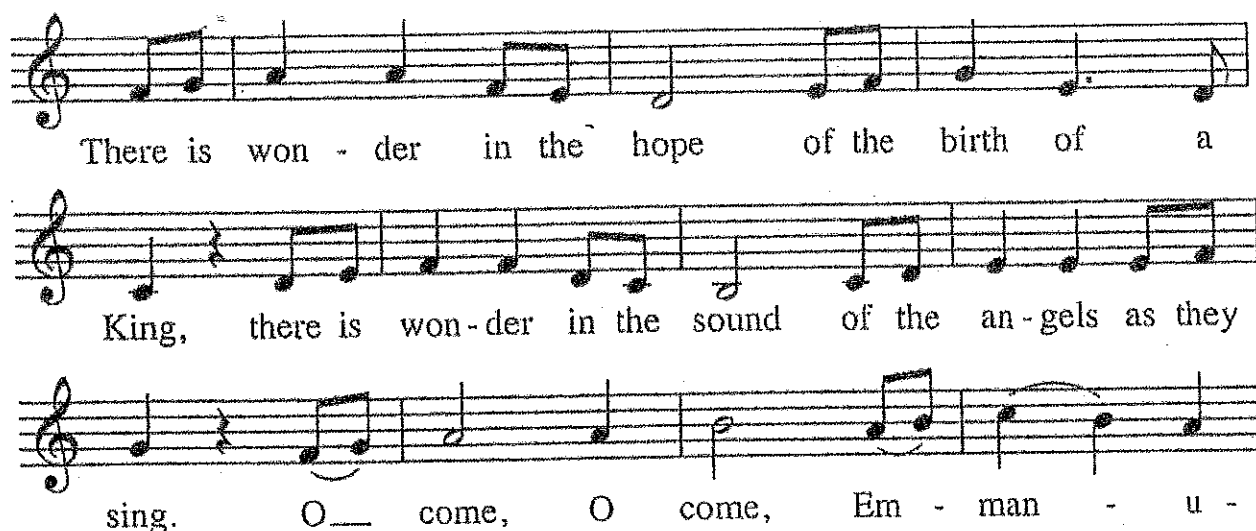
Open our eyes, O Lord, to behold your glory.

During Advent, we welcome the Savior who beckons the world.

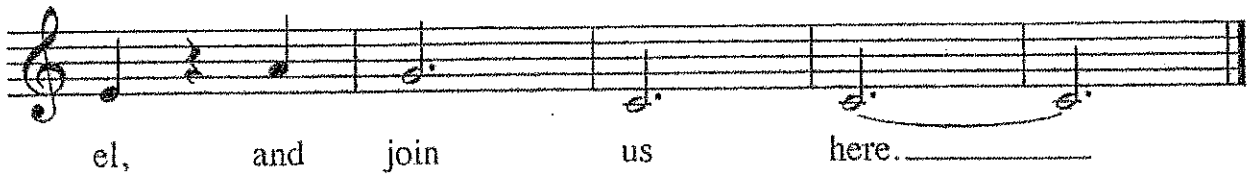
Open our eyes, O Lord, to behold your glory.

During Advent, we rejoice in the One who has reclaimed the lost.

Open our eyes, O Lord, to behold your glory.



(Continues on next page.)



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PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Tidings of Joy"

Neal Becker, Euphonium

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

A reading from Second Samuel.

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Luke 1:46b-55

^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.**
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great things for me
and holy is your name.
⁵⁰**You have mercy on those who fear you,**
from generation to generation.
⁵¹You have shown strength with your arm
and scattered the proud in their conceit,
⁵²**casting down the mighty from their thrones**
and lifting up the lowly.
⁵³You have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,**
to remember the promise of mercy,
⁵⁵the promise made to our forebears,
to Abraham and his children forever.

SECOND READING: Romans 16:25-27

A reading from Romans.

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages
²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles,
according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

“Your Little Ones, Dear Lord”



The musical notation is written on three staves in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is simple and consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The first staff contains the lyrics 'I Your lit - tle - ones, dear Lord, are we, and'. The second staff contains 'come your low - ly bed to see; en - light - en ev - 'ry'. The third staff contains 'soul and mind, that we the way to you may find.' The system ends with a double bar line.

I Your lit - tle - ones, dear Lord, are we, and
come your low - ly bed to see; en - light - en ev - 'ry
soul and mind, that we the way to you may find.

GOSPEL Luke 1:26-38

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He 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 ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to 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 holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

ELW #265

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.

BLESSING OF NEW PATENS AND CHALICES

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING

OFFERING MUSIC

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

OFFERING SONG

"What Feast of Love"



1 What feast of love is of-fered here, what ban-quet come from heav-en?



What food of ev-er-last-ing life, what gra-cious gift is giv-en?



This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heav-en.



Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the man-na giv-en!

OFFERING PRAYER

THE 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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

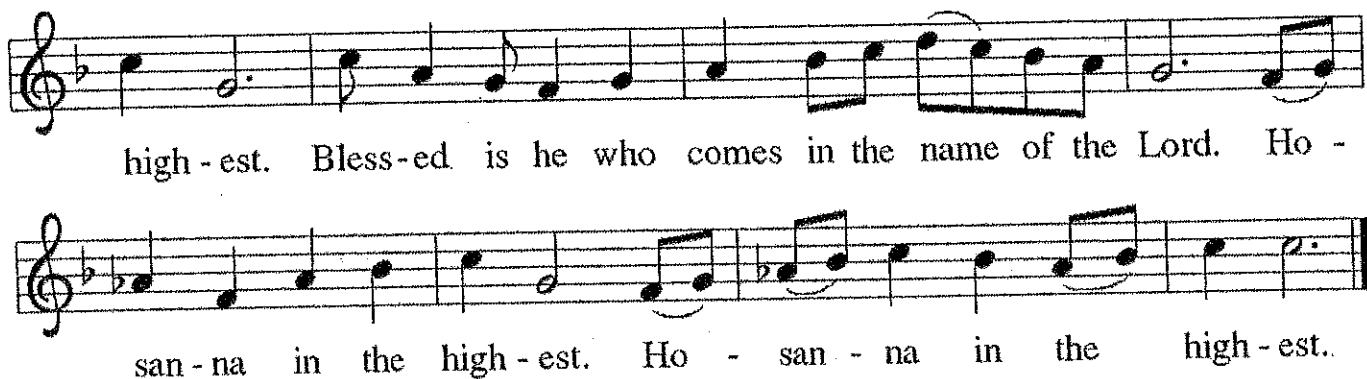


Ho-ly, hò-ly, ho-ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav-en and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san-na in the

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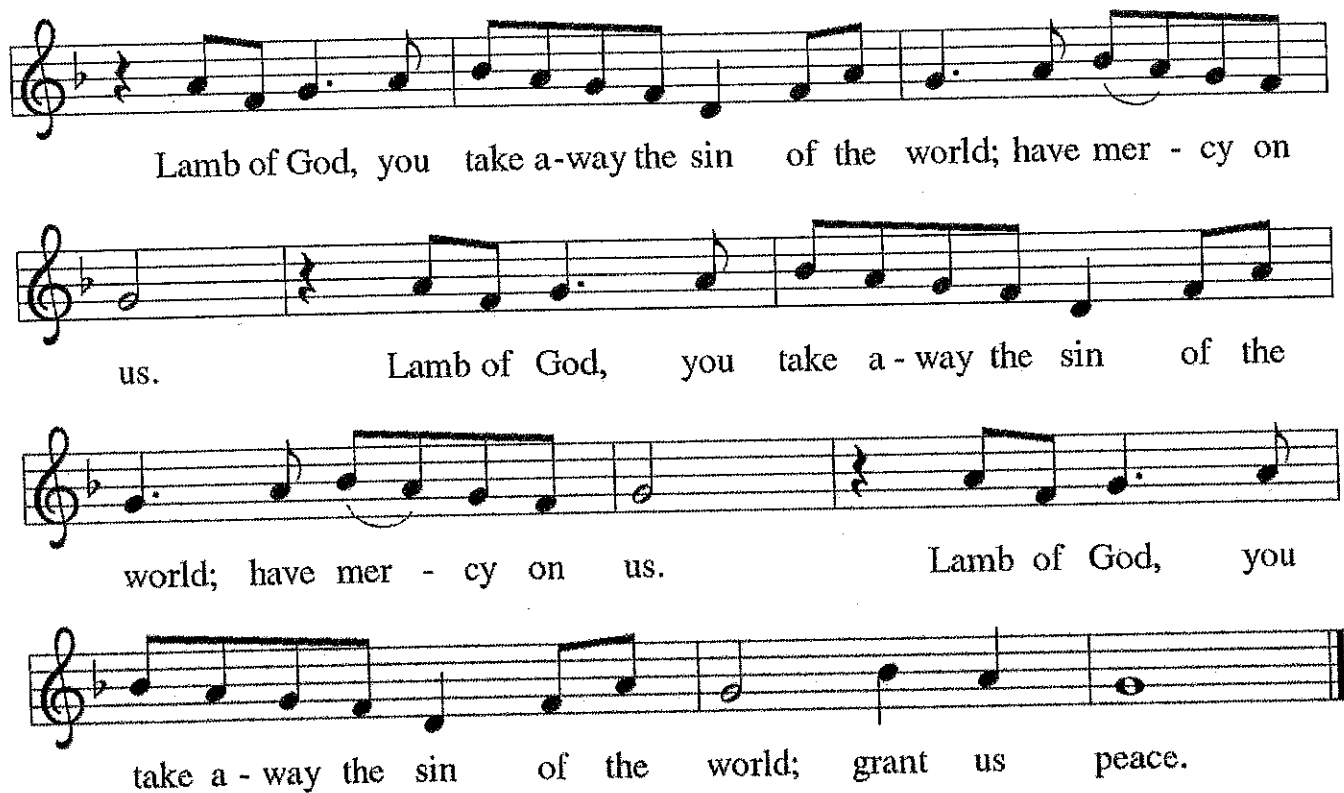


WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

COMMUNION SONG



DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

Believing in the real presence of Christ, we invite all present to participate in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. All who are baptized and believe that Jesus Christ is present in the gifts of bread and wine are welcome at the Lord's table. The ushers will direct you to come forward by the center aisle to receive the bread from the pastors. Both wine and grape juice are available for communion. The grape juice is the darker color in the middle of the tray. Those who do not wish to receive communion and children who are not yet receiving communion may come forward to receive a blessing. There are baskets at the end of the front pews where you can deposit your cups as you return to your seat. Those who are worshipping with us online are invited to have bread and wine or juice available for worship, and we will commune you at the end of communion.

COMMUNION HYMN "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

ELW #240

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

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

SONG AFTER COMMUNION "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"



3 Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!



Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

BLESSING

SENDING SONG

"Joy to the World"

ELW #267

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

"Joy to the World"

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO SHARE IN OUR WORSHIP

SATURDAY	5:00 pm Worship Service
Ushers	Mark & Michele Mess & Kris Schwien
Reader	Tonya Knutsen
Communion Assistant	Mark & Michele Mess
Counters	Mike & Rita Smith
SUNDAY	9:00 am Worship Service
Ushers	Jim & Donna Gruenhagen
Reader	Jim & Donna Gruenhagen
Communion Assistant	Jim & Donna Gruenhagen
Counters	Chelsey Dingbaum & Carol Marten
Choir Director	Susan Becker
Organist	Teri Wittkowski and Susan Becker
Jubilation Leader	Neal Becker



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How Can This Be?

Mary receives a visit from the angel Gabriel, who shares the news that she will give birth to a holy one who will be called the Son of God. Her answer is not surprising: "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" We also hear that Elizabeth has conceived a child in her old age. How can *this* be?

While not always asked in just this way, the sentiment resounds throughout scripture. Noah is told of a coming flood, Abram and Sarai are promised a child in their old age, Moses is called to lead the people of Israel out from slavery under Pharaoh, and prophets foretell an end to exile. Every time, people wonder, *How can this be?*

Today we join Mary and Elizabeth in anticipation of the promised coming of the Son of God who will reign forever, and of the prophet-son who will prepare Jesus' way. Mary's question is an Advent question. But as we head through this new church year, it is a question we can return to again and again. It is a Christmas question that could have come from the mouths of the shepherds. It is an Epiphany question brought to mind by the bright light of a star. It is an Easter question from the women at the tomb and the disciples on the road to Emmaus. It is a Pentecost question for those set afire with the Holy Spirit and for those who hear their proclamation about Jesus in their own languages.

If we could make all things new on our own, we would not need God. If we could conquer death and bring reconciliation to the world, we would not need grace. But since nothing is impossible with God, we encounter new life in ways we have not imagined and find ourselves asking, *How can this be?* In joyous fear and trembling, we too can echo Mary and the others who each in their own way said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord!"

Canticle of the Turning



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .
 3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
 4 Though the na - tions rage from . . age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
 work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
 jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . from his throne.
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



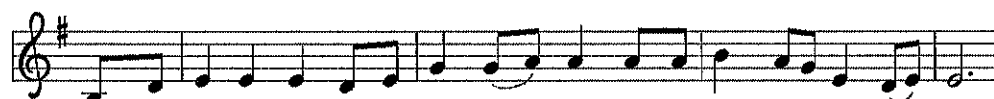
weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest, Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



Refrain
 My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.

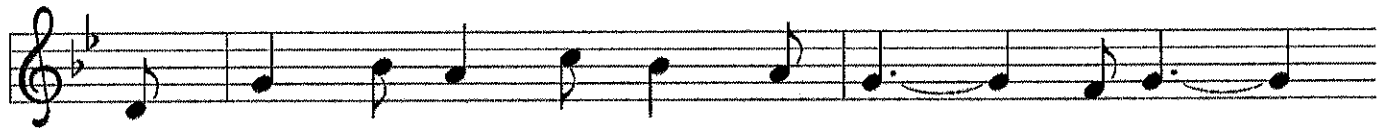


Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came



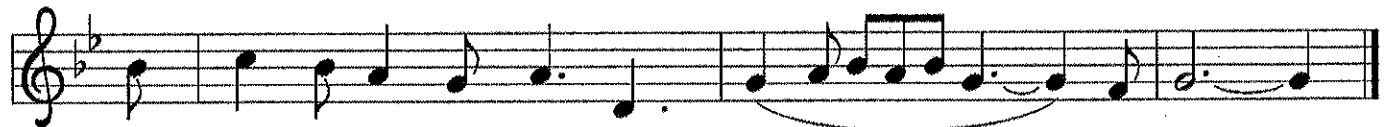
1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
 2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
 3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
 4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born



with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
 all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
 "To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.
 in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
 thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
 "My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
 and Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say:

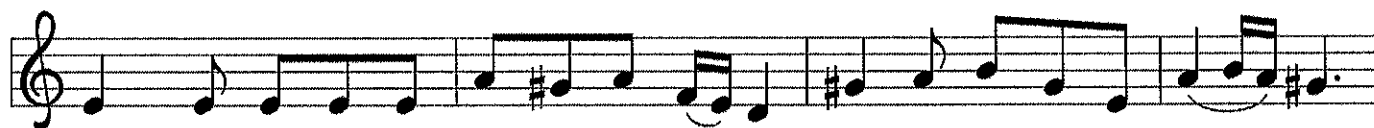


most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."
 most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."
 Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,
 "Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."
 Glo - ri - a!

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924

Music: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE, Basque carol

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954

Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune

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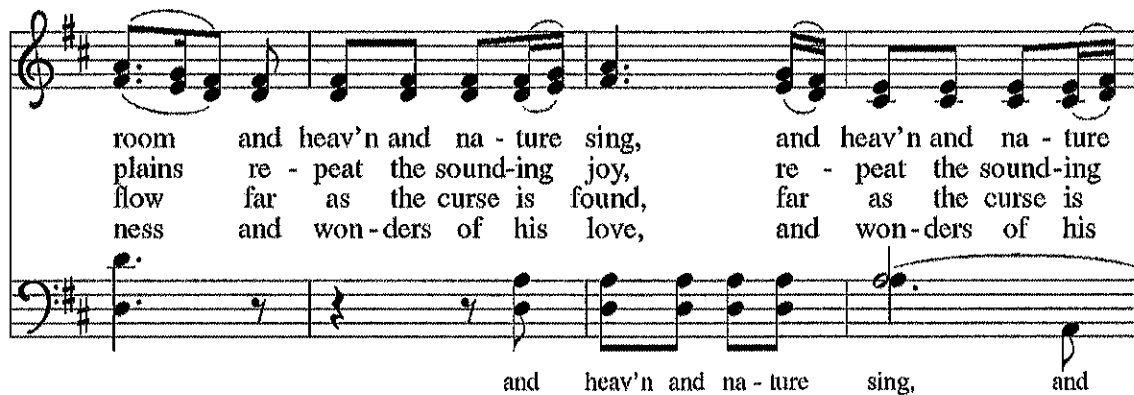
Joy to the World



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heav'n and na - ture sing,