SERVICE OF CELEBRATION AND COVENANT RENEWAL

Season of Advent

19 December 2021

Wise men still seek Him. —Daniel Bell

Long after the angels disappear into the heavens, the shepherds return to their flocks, the magi journey home and the great star sets, Jesus remains. —C.H. Spurgeon

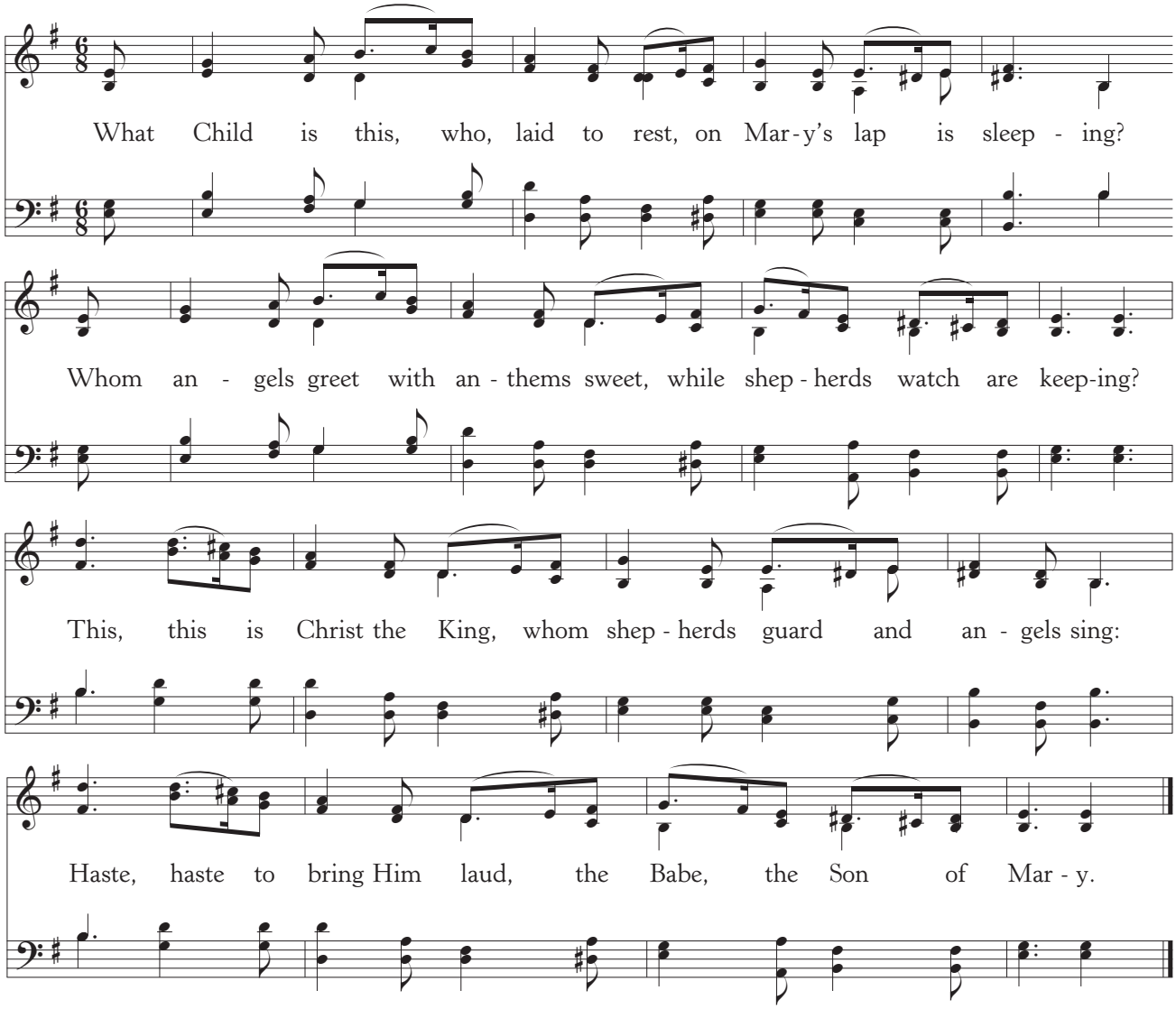
GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO WORSHIP

It is God Himself who calls His people to worship. We do not call ourselves, but it is the King who opens His gates and beckons us into His courts.

Gospel Invitation—John 10:10

Good News! Glad Tidings! Great Joy! Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

Introit—What Child Is This, Vs. 1



Text: William Chatterton Dix, 1865; Music: GREENSLEEVES, 16th Century English Carol.

Lighting Of The Advent Wreath

Call to Worship—Psalm 103:19-22

Pastor: The Lord has established His throne in the heavens.

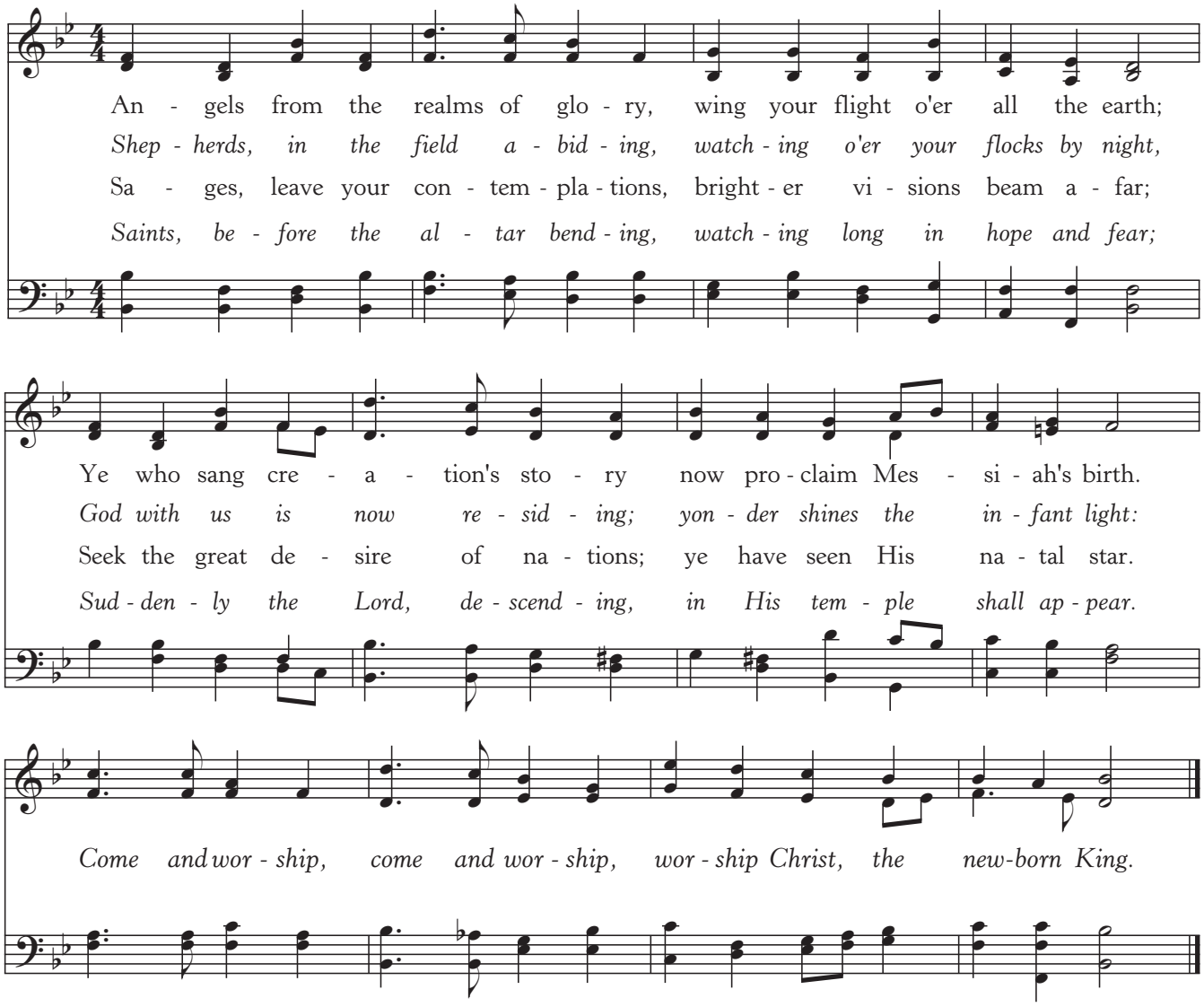
All: His kingdom rules over all.

Reader 1: Bless the Lord, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His Word, obeying the voice of His Word!

Reader 2: Bless the Lord, all His hosts, His ministers, who do His will! Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion.

All: Bless the Lord, O my soul!

Hymn of Praise—Angels From The Realms Of Glory

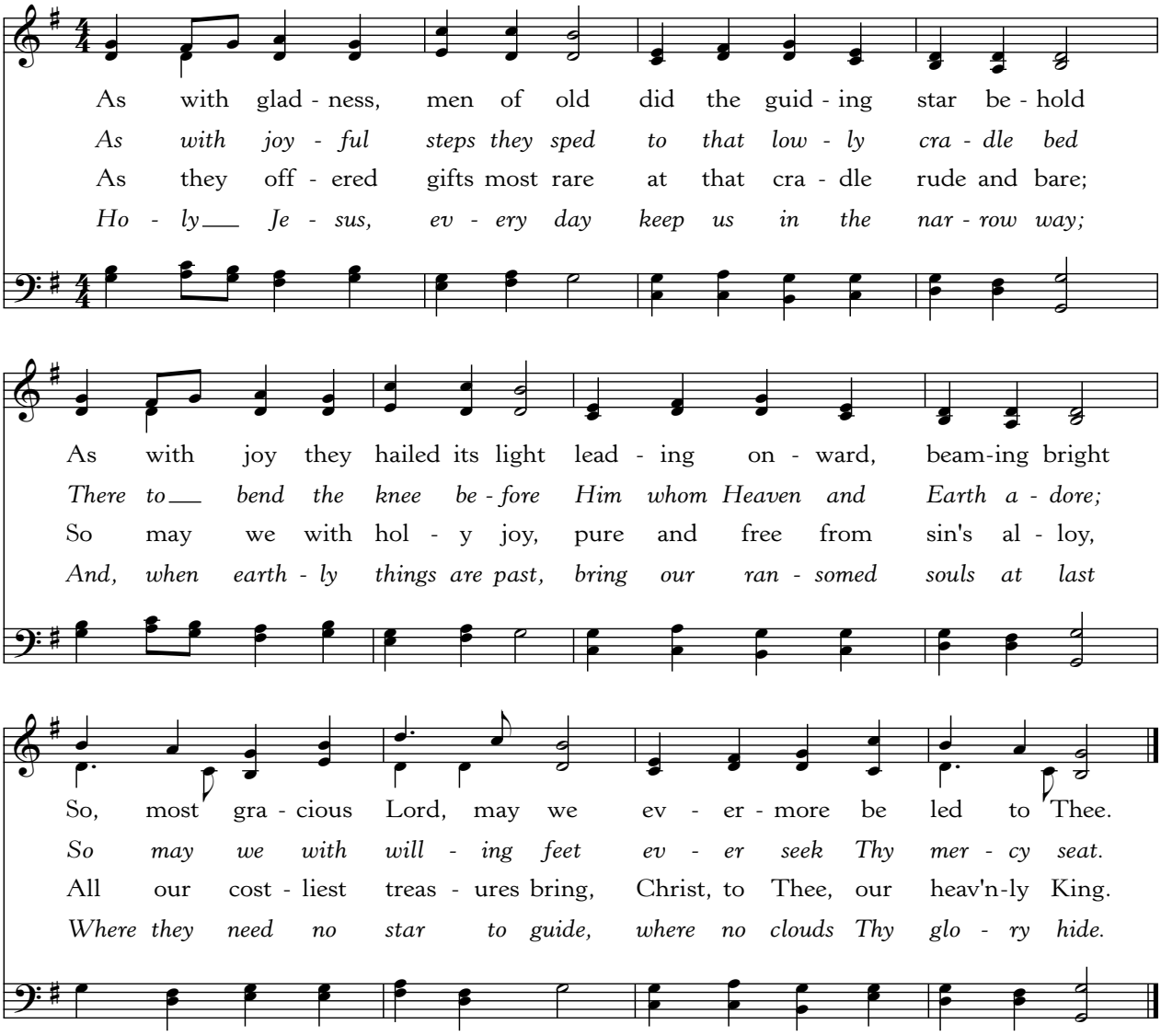


Text: James Montgomery, 1816, 1825; Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry Smart, 1867.

God Speaks to His People Through His Word

The Bible is the means by which God graciously reveals Himself to His people—so we listen, read, and study with expectant hearts.

Hymn of Praise—As With Gladness, Men Of Old



Text: William C. Dix, 1860, Music: DIX, Konrad Kocher, 1838.

Responsive Psalter Reading—based on Psalm 103:1-6, 19

Elder: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

All: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

Elder: He forgives all our iniquity. He heals all our diseases. He redeems our life.

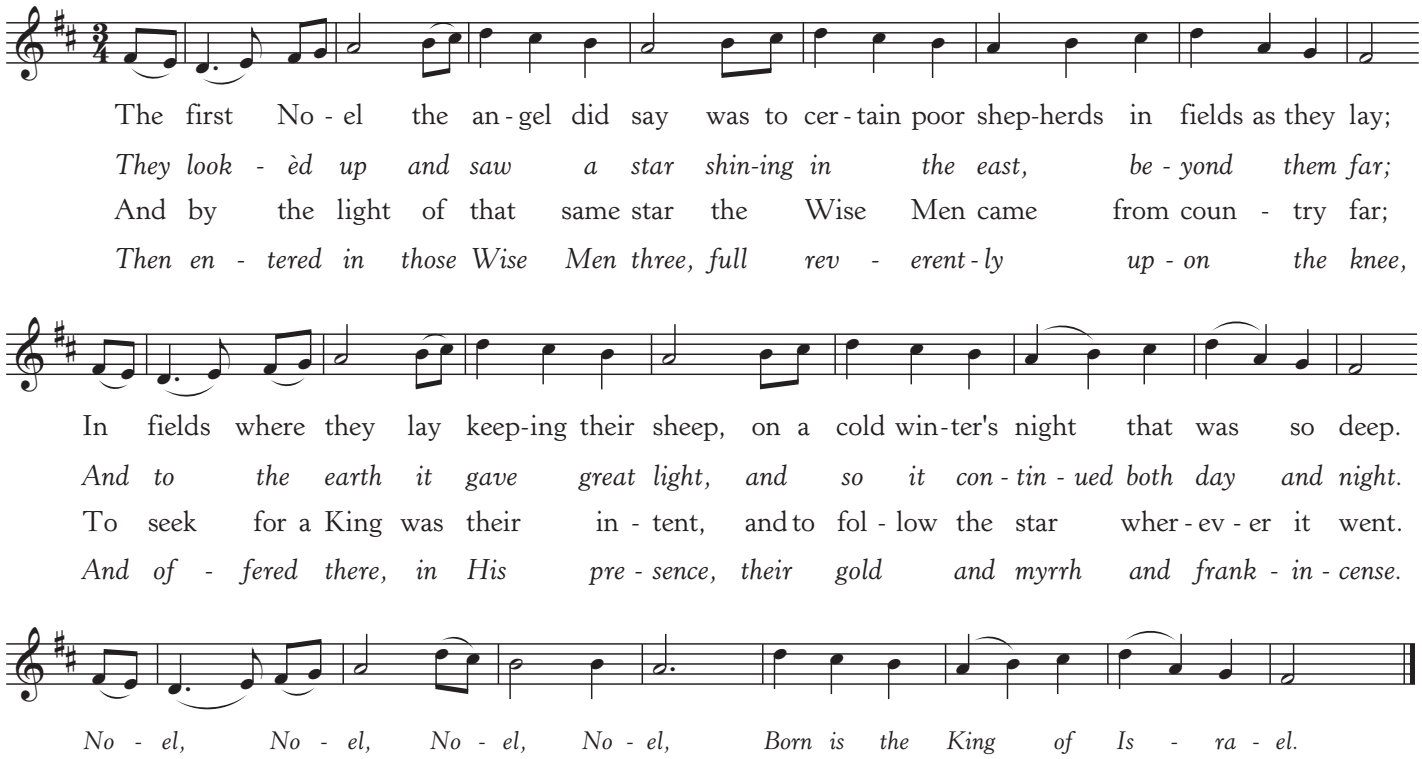
All: He crowns us with steadfast love and mercy. He satisfies us with good so that our strength is renewed like the eagle's.

Elder: The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.

All: The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.

Elder: This is the Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God.

Hymn of Praise—The First Noel



Text: Traditional English Carol; Music: THE FIRST NOEL, W. Sandy's *Christmas Carols*, 1833.

Reading of the Word—Matthew 2:1-12

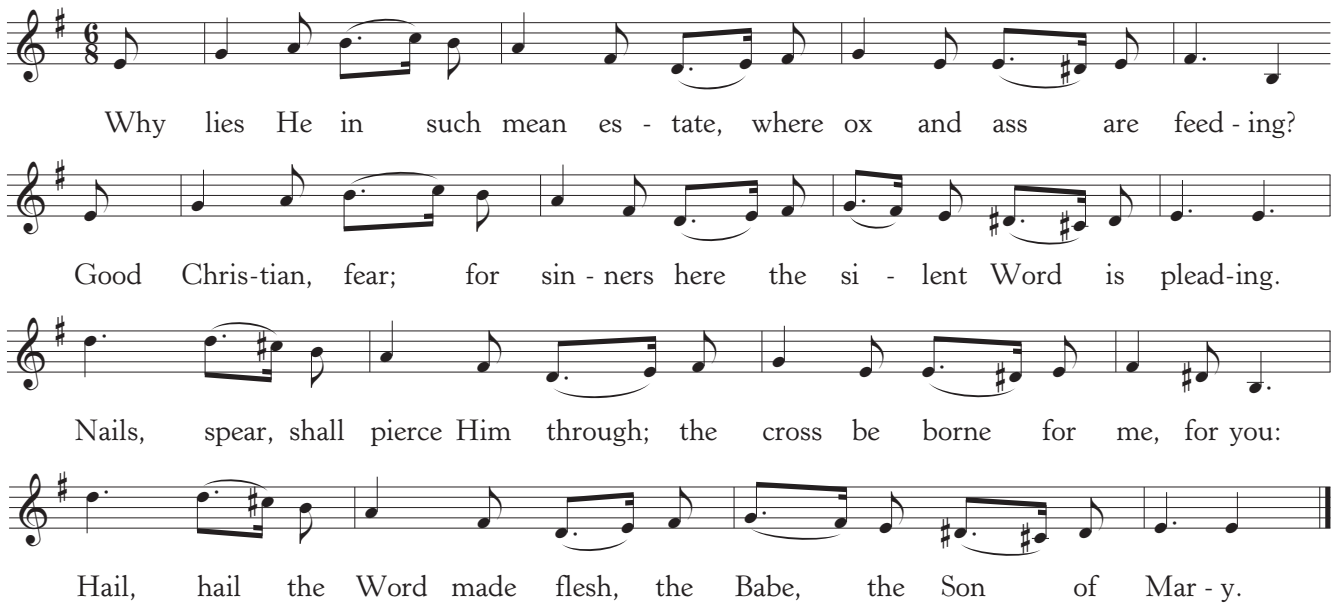
Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise
men from the east came to Jerusalem, [2] saying, "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For
we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him." [3] When Herod the king heard this, he
was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; [4] and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the
people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. [5] 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."

[7] Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had
appeared. [8] 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." [9] After 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. [10] When they saw the star, they rejoiced
exceedingly with great joy. [11] 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. [12] And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to
their own country by another way

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God.

Sung Response—What Child Is This, Vs. 2



Text: William Chatterton Dix, 1865; Music: GREENSLEEVES, 16th Century English Carol.

Sermon—*Almost Persuaded*

—Pastor, George Grant

GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO CONFESSION, REPENTANCE, AND RECONCILIATION

The people of God respond to His Word by confessing their sins, repenting of their sinful ways, and seeking God's favor through the reconciling work of Jesus, the Son of God.

Confession of Sin—based on Isaiah 9:2-7

Pastor: Lord, we come confessing. We confess that we were people who walked in darkness.

All: But now we have seen a great light.

Pastor: We once lived in a land of deep darkness—but now light has shone upon us.

All: Despite our sins, You have multiplied our blessings. You have increased our joy and so we rejoice before You.

Pastor: We rejoice as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing treasure.

All: For the yoke of our burden, and the bar across our shoulders, the rod of our oppressor, You have broken.

Pastor: There is endless peace at Your throne of mercy.

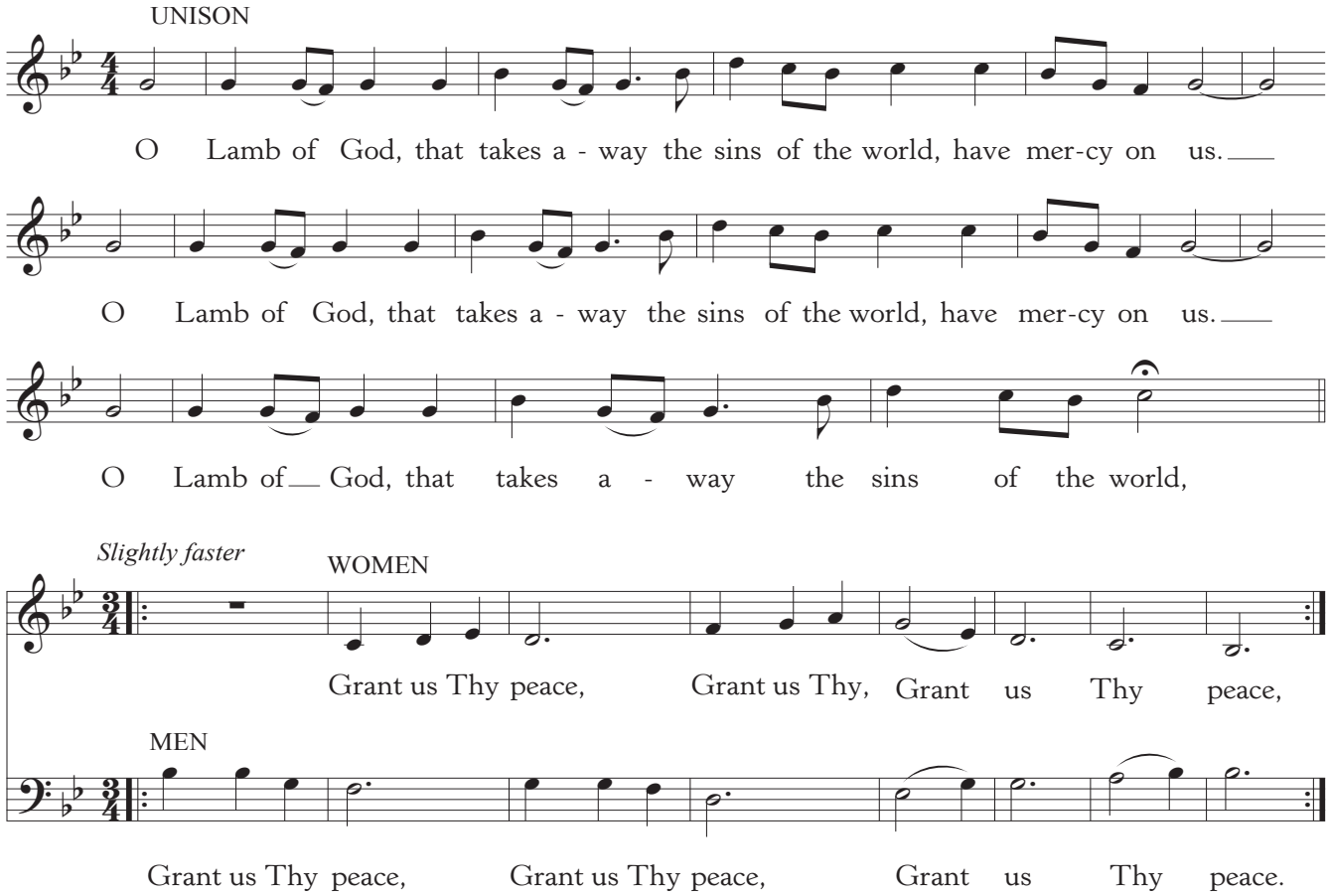
All: O Lord, You establish and uphold justice and with righteousness—from this time forth and forevermore.

Pastor: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

All: Thanks be to God.

(*Silent prayers of confession)*

Sung Response—Lamb Of God



Text: Traditional, based on John 1:29; Music: CLOVERCROFT AGNUS DEI, Henry C. Haffner, 2019.

Assurance of Pardon—Psalm 103: 8-13; Revelation 15:3-4

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him.

Pastor: This is the promise of God.

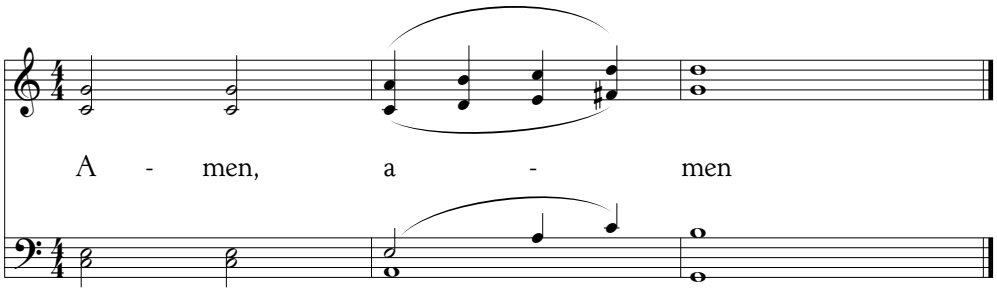
All: This is the Word of the Lord.

Pastor: Great and marvelous are Your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are Your ways, King of the nations.

All: Who will not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

Pastor: For You alone are holy. Amen.

Sung Response—Twofold Amen



Text: Traditional; Music: DRESDEN, Johann Naumann, 18th Century.

HEAVENLY GIFT—*EUCHARISTO*

As God beckons His people to the bounty of His table, they make joyous profession of their fealty to Him.

Profession of Faith—The Apostles' Creed

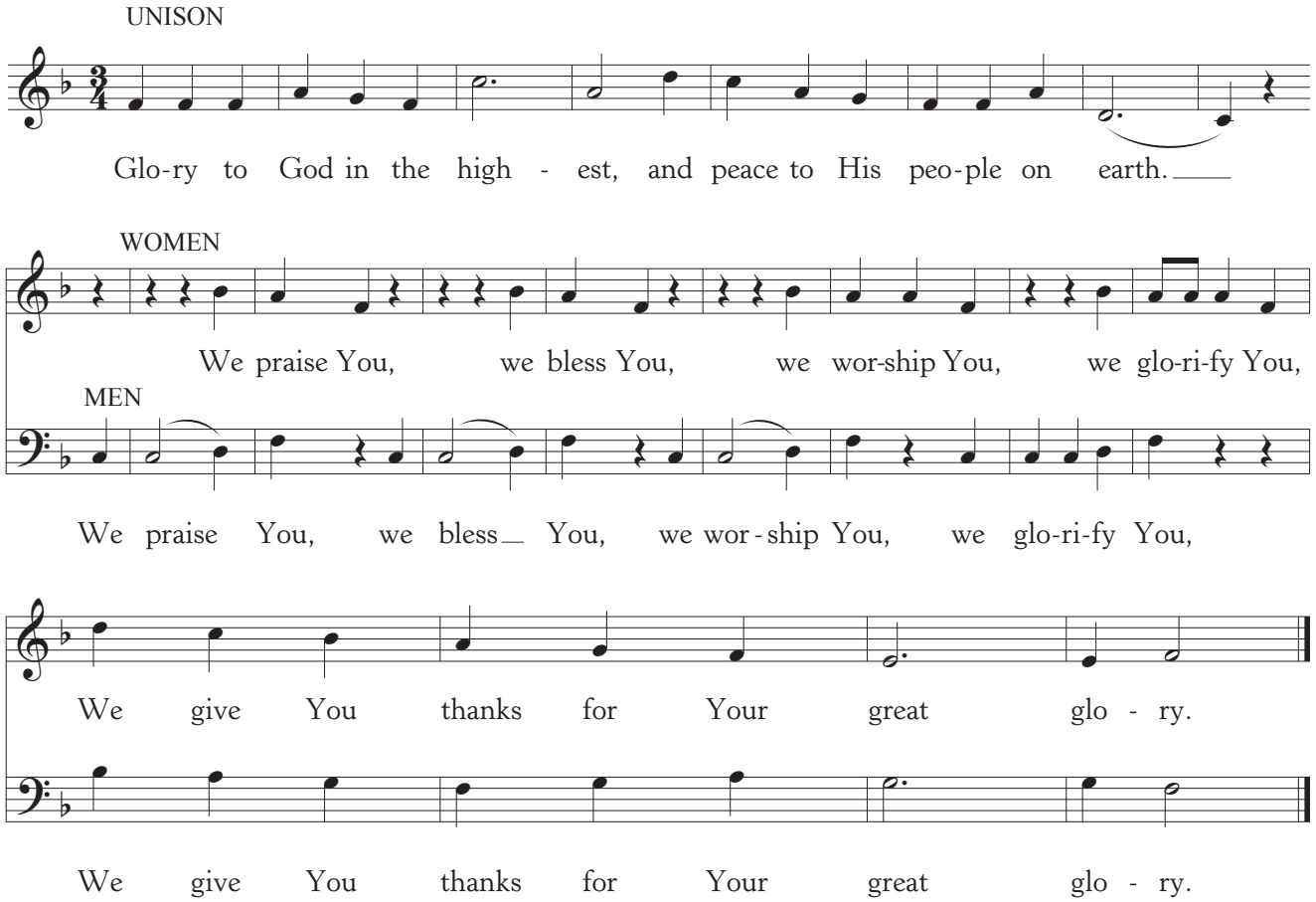
We believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and Earth,

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into Hell.
On the third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into Heaven and now sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit; the one holy church—both visible and invisible;
The communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
The resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

Sursum Corda

Pastor: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Pastor: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them up to the Lord.
Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.
Pastor: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to You, Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth. Therefore, we praise You, Triune God, and we join our voices with the angels, the archangels, and the whole company of Heaven in this hymn of eternal praise:

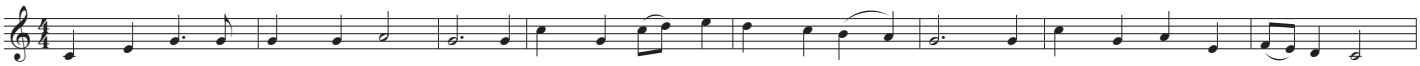


Text: Traditional, based on Luke 2:14; Music: CLOVERCROFT GLORIA, Henry C. Haffner, 2019.

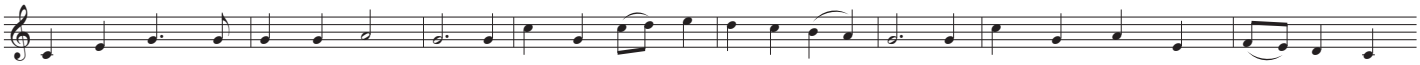
Words of Institution and the Lord's Table

This table is open to all baptized Christians who have made a profession of faith. You may come forward to receive the bread and wine or grape juice.

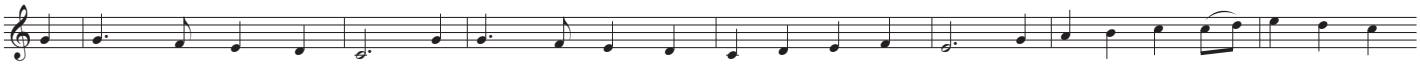
Hymn of Anticipation—Wake, Awake, For Night Is Flying



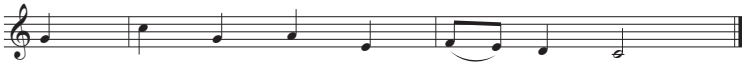
"Wake, a - wake, for night is fly - ing," the watch - men on the heights are cry - ing, "a - wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, at last!"
Zi - on hears the watch - men sing - ing, and all her heart with joy is spring - ing; she wakes, she ris - es from her gloom,
Now let all the heav'ns a - dore thee, and men and an - gels sing be - fore thee, with harp and cym - bal's clear - est tone;



Mid - night hears the wel - come voic - es, and at the thrill - ing cry rej - oic - es: "Come forth, ye mai - dens, night is past!
for her Lord comes down all - glo - rious, the strong in grace, in truth vic - to - rious; her Star is ris'n, her Light is come!
of one pearl each shin - ing por - tal, where we are with the choir im - mor - tal of an - gels round thy daz - zling throne;



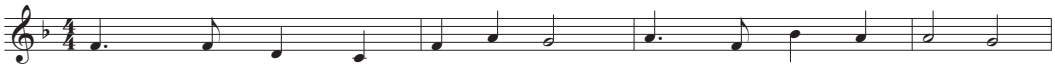
The Bride - groom comes; a - wake, your lamps with glad - ness take; al - le - lu - ia! And for his mar - riage feast pre - pare,
Ah, come, thou bles - sed Lord, O Je - sus, Son of God, al - le - lu - ia! We fol - low 'til the halls we see
nor eye hath seen, nor ear hath yet at - tained to hear what there is ours; but we re - joice, and sing to thee



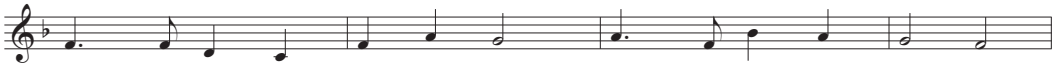
for you must go to meet him there."
where thou hast bid us sup with thee.
our hymn of joy e - ter - nal - ly.

Text: Phillipp Nicolai 1599, Tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; Music: WACHET AUF, Phillipp Nicolai 1599.

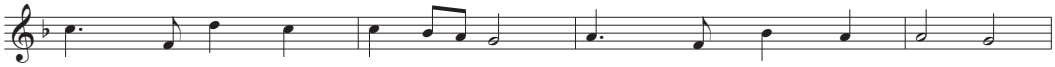
Hymn of Praise—Joy Has Dawned Upon The World



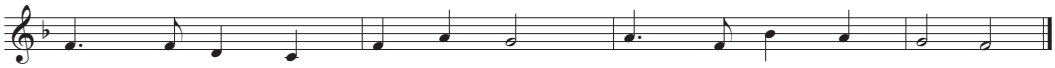
Joy has dawned up - on the world pro - mised from cre - a - tion
Sounds of won - der fill the sky with the songs of an - gels.
Shep - herds bow be - fore the lamb gaz - ing at the glo - ry
Son of Ad - am Son of Heav'n giv - en as a ran - som



God's sal - va - tion now un - furled hope for ev' - ry na - tion
As the migh - ty Prince of life shel - ters in a sta - ble
Gifts of men from dis - tant land pro - phe - sy the sto - ry
Re - con - ci - ling God and man Christ, our migh - ty cham - pion!



Not with fan - fares from a - bove not with scenes of glo - ry
Hands that set each star in place shaped the earth in dark - ness
Gold: a King is born to - day In - cense: God is with us
What a Sav - ior! What a friend! What a glor - ious myst - 'ry!



But a hum - ble gift of love Jes - us born of Ma - ry.
Cling now to a mo - ther's breast vuln' - ra - ble and help - less.
Myrrh: His death will make a way by His blood He'll win us
Once a babe in Beth - le - hem, now the Lord of His' - try.

CCLI #2844402 © 2004, Thankyou music; Text and Music: Keith Getty and Stuart Townend, 2004.

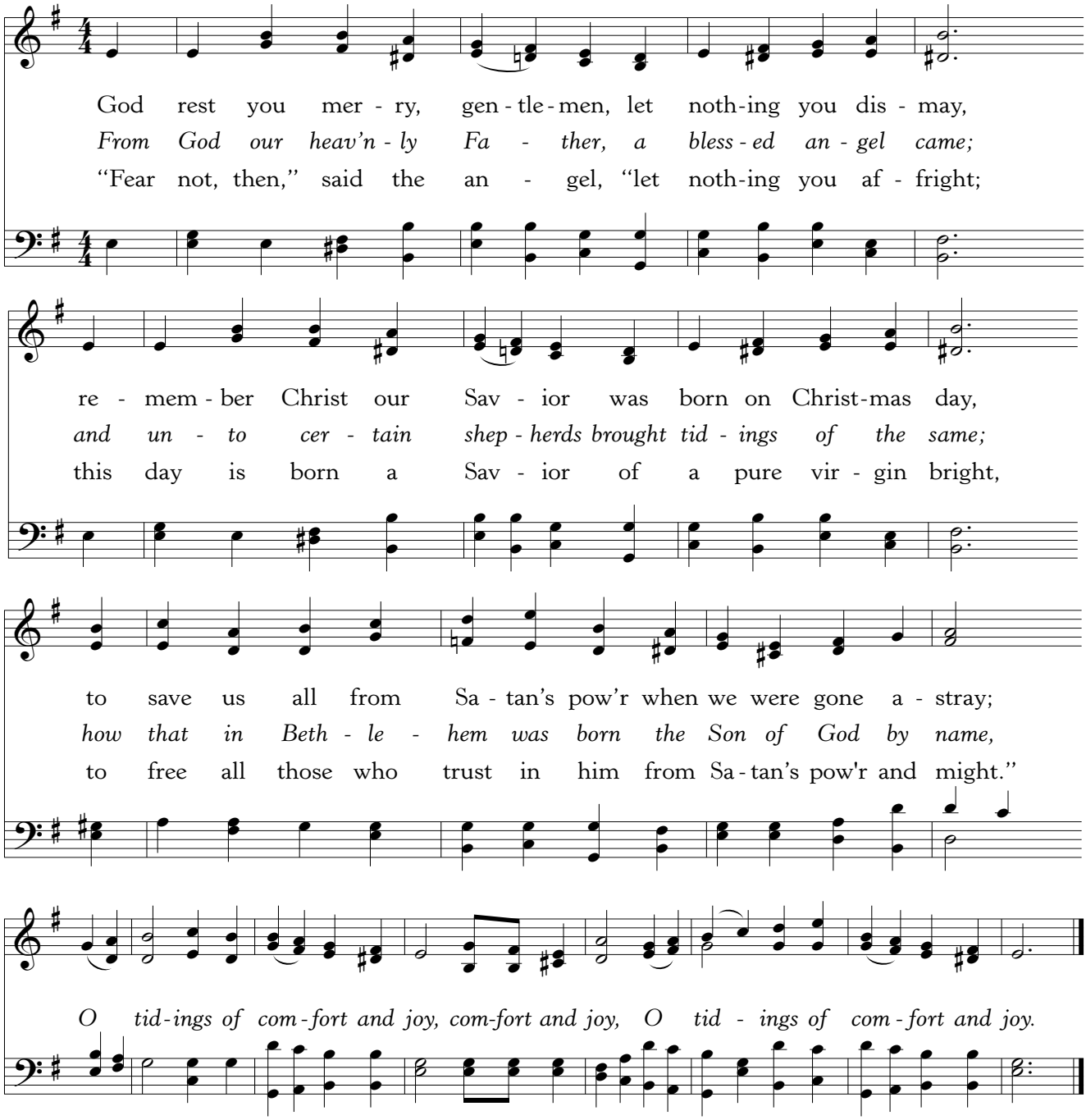
God's People Respond in Grateful Praise, Petitions, Tithes & Offerings

Our praying, serving, and giving are essential aspects of worship. It is here that our faith moves from our heads and hearts into our lives and callings.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession—The 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. *Amen*.

Hymn of Praise—God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen



Text and Music: 18th century English Carol.

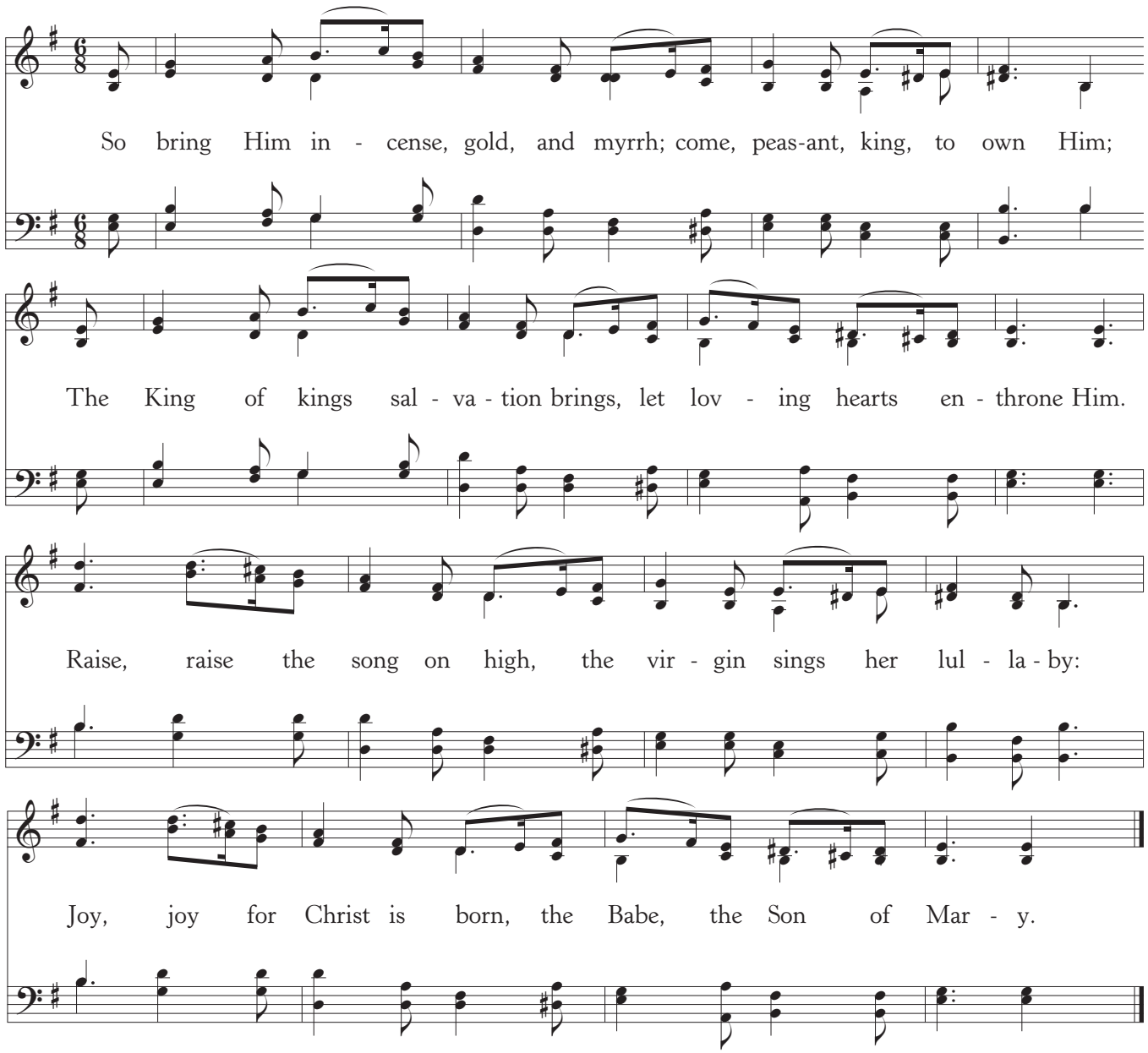
GOD SENDS HIS PEOPLE OUT

After calling His people into His presence, forgiving their sins, instructing them in His Word, and providing a foretaste of the marriage supper of the Lamb, God sends His people into the world to show His light in the darkness.

Benediction—based on Psalm 103:17

The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, and His righteousness to our children's children. Therefore, go forth covered by His perfect provision. *Amen.*

Sung Response—What Child Is This, Vs. 3



Text: William Chatterton Dix, 1865; Music: GREENSLEEVES, 16th Century English Carol.

Announcements

Worship Notes:

Today's Scripture reading from Matthew recounts the story of the "wise men from the east" who come to Judea to worship to the newly born Savior. Though featured in countless popular Christmas scenes along with Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds and angels from Luke 2, the Magi and their gifts are more properly associated with the feast of Epiphany. But even though it isn't January quite yet, we can still enjoy some of the wonderful carols and hymns which use "wise men" imagery. The gentile "sages" in *Angels From The Realms Of Glory* follow the "natal star" to find a Christ who is not merely born to be the "King of the Jews," but the desire of every nation. *As With Gladness, Men Of Old* calls us to imitate them by bringing our costliest treasures to Christ, our heavenly King. The contemporary hymn *Joy Has Dawned Upon The Earth* suggests that the gifts brought to Jesus prophesy His life and work—gold for kingship, incense for intercession, and myrrh for embalming His body. *What Child Is This* reminds us that all men, be they kings or peasants, are all called to enthrone Him in their hearts. We may not see Him face to face in the same way the wise men did, but we can all heed the call to come and "worship Christ, the newborn King!"
—Henry C. Haffner & Emma Marsh

Key Words: Bethlehem, Herod, Wise Men, Prophet, Secretly, Star, Warned
Keystone Verse: Where is He who was born King of the Jews? For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him. (Matthew 2:2)

PARISH
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Matt Morrison (482-5107)
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Phil Hutcheson
Steve Nelson

Deacons

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All Biblical quotes taken from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.