

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

NOVEMBER 15, 2026

ST. MARK EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

HAMILTON, NJ

A family of faith, rooted in Word and Sacrament,
proclaiming the redeeming love of Jesus Christ
through worship, nurture, and service.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

Today our seven-week Advent observance begins a season of quiet preparation for the arrival of Christ. This year, our theme My Heart Shall Sing reflects on the ways that God's people have passed the time while waiting for the promised day of justice and peace: by singing together. Seven hymns connect us with this wisdom and show us Christ anew. This week's featured hymn is Freedom is Coming.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Please stand as you are comfortable.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the prayer begins.
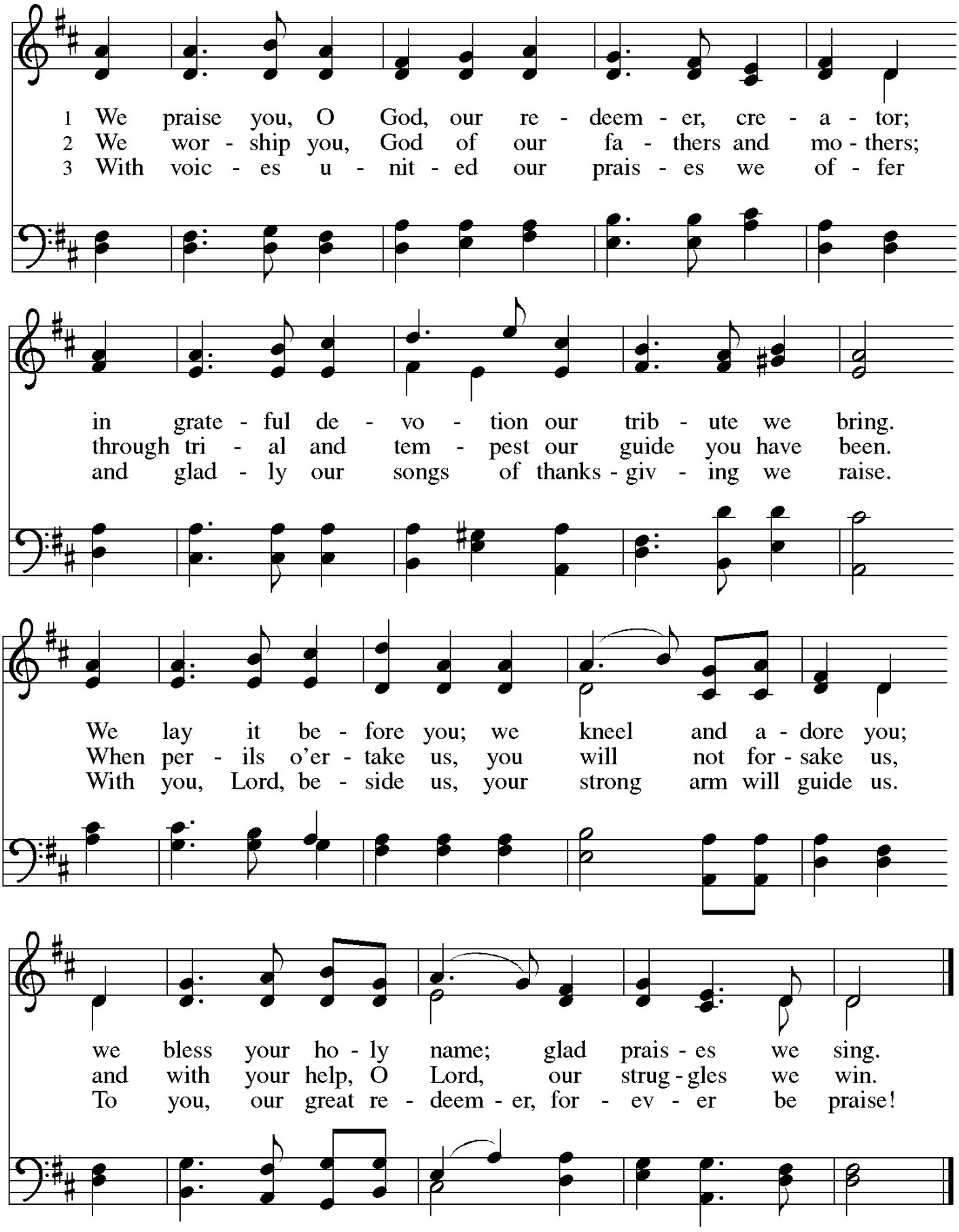
The triune God knows the deepest prayers of our hearts, even the ones for which we have no words. Trusting in God's endless well of forgiveness, we confess our sins together.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God who neither slumbers nor sleeps,
We try to stay awake as we wait for you,
but our lamps flicker and fade.
We fail to recognize your image
in our neighbors and in strangers.
We cling to what you give us
instead of sharing with neighbors in need.
We accept our world's flaws and injustices
instead of committing to change.
Hope seems dim in the lengthening night.
Meet us with your grace, even at midnight.
Show us the way to the heart of your love.
Empower and console us
with forgiveness beyond limits.
Amen.

People of God, receive this good news:
God's grace falls on us like so much starlight.
Nothing is beyond the reach of God's love.
In the name of Christ Jesus, + the light of the world, all of your sins are forgiven.
Let grace guide your way to freedom and a life transformed.
Amen.

GATHERING HYMN **WE PRAISE YOU, O GOD** **ELW 870**

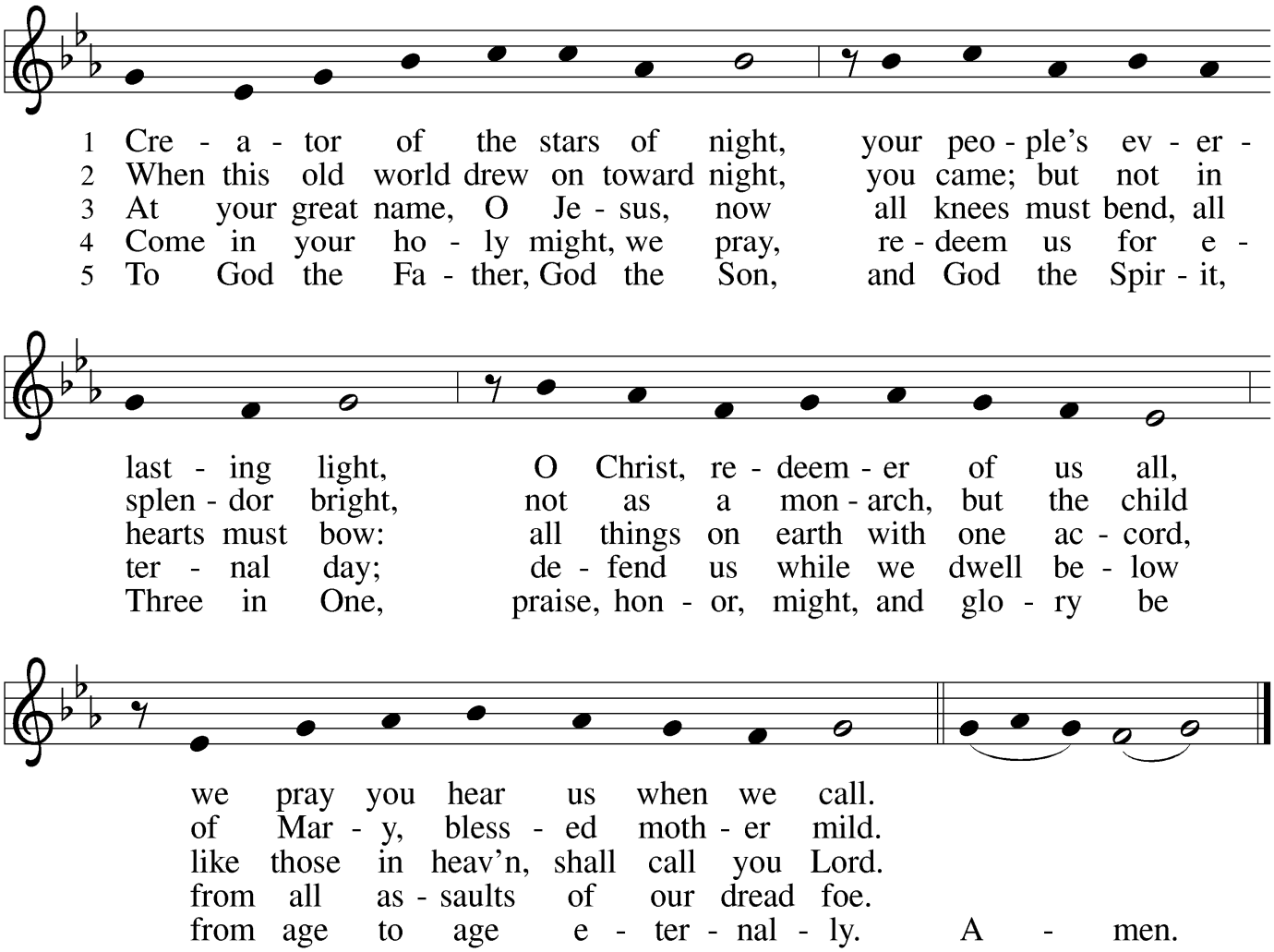


GREETING

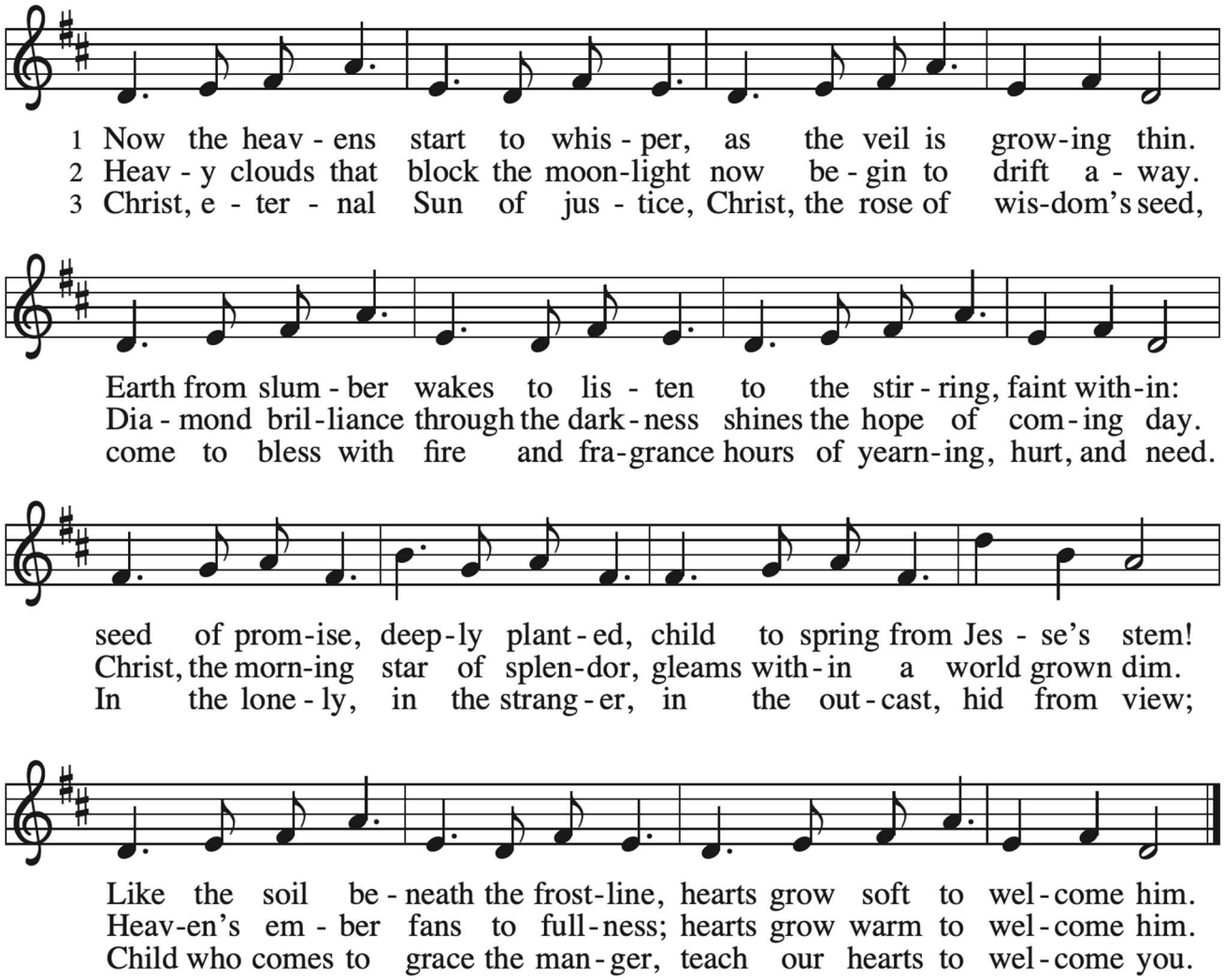
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

KYRIE **CREATOR OF THE STARS OF NIGHT** **ELW 245**

We sing verses 1, 2, and 4.



HYMN OF PRAISE **NOW THE HEAVENS START TO WHISPER** **ACS 901**



LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Each week as we approach the advent of our Savior Jesus Christ on Christmas, we acknowledge what God's people have always known: even when God is active in this world, hope is a work in progress.

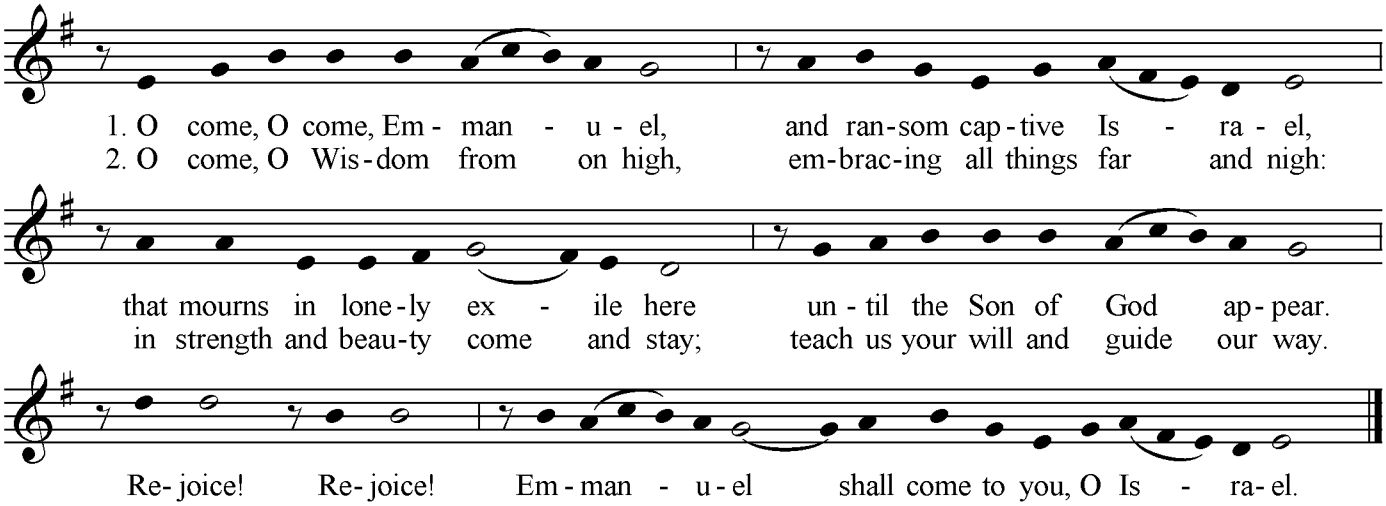
Each candle on our wreath represents a moment in time that still awaits God's goodness. We are witnesses to God's work in this world. Just as a small spark can give new life to a dead wick, we believe the fire of God's presence can ignite God's purpose in this place.

God, through your love,
a familiar light can banish the fear of the other.
Through your love,
the warmth of good cheer can extinguish cold-hearted injustice.
Through your love,
the song of faith can rekindle hope for the hopeless.
We light this candle as a small act of our great anticipation.

The second candle is lit during the hymn.

ADVENT WREATH HYMN **O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL** **ELW 257**

We sing verses 1 and 2.



Please be seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

7 Be silent before the Lord GOD,
for the day of the LORD is at hand!
The LORD has prepared a sacrifice;
God has consecrated the guests.

12 At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
and I will punish the people
who settle like dregs in wine,
those who say in their hearts,
"The LORD will not do good,
nor will God do harm."
13 Their wealth shall be plundered
and their houses laid waste.
Though they build houses,
they shall not inhabit them;
though they plant vineyards,
they shall not drink wine from them.

14 The great day of the LORD is near,
near and hastening fast;
the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter;
the warrior cries aloud there.

15 That day will be a day of wrath,
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of ruin and devastation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness,
16 a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the lofty battlements.

17 I will bring such distress upon people
that they shall walk like the blind;
because they have sinned against the LORD,
their blood shall be poured out like dust
and their flesh like dung.
18 Neither their silver nor their gold
will be able to save them
on the day of the LORD's wrath;
in the fire of God passion
the whole earth shall be consumed,
for a full, a terrible end
God will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM 90:1-8

1 Lord, you have | been our refuge
from one generation | to another.
2 **Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the | earth were born,**
from age to age | you are God.
3 You turn us back to the | dust and say,
"Turn back, O child- | ren of earth."
4 **For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when | it is past**
and like a watch | in the night;
5 you sweep them away | like a dream,
they fade away suddenly | like the grass:
6 **in the morning it is | green and flourishes;**
in the evening it is dried | up and withered.
7 For we are consumed | by your anger;
we are afraid because | of your wrath.
8 **Our iniquities you have | set before you,**
and our secret sins in the light | of your countenance.

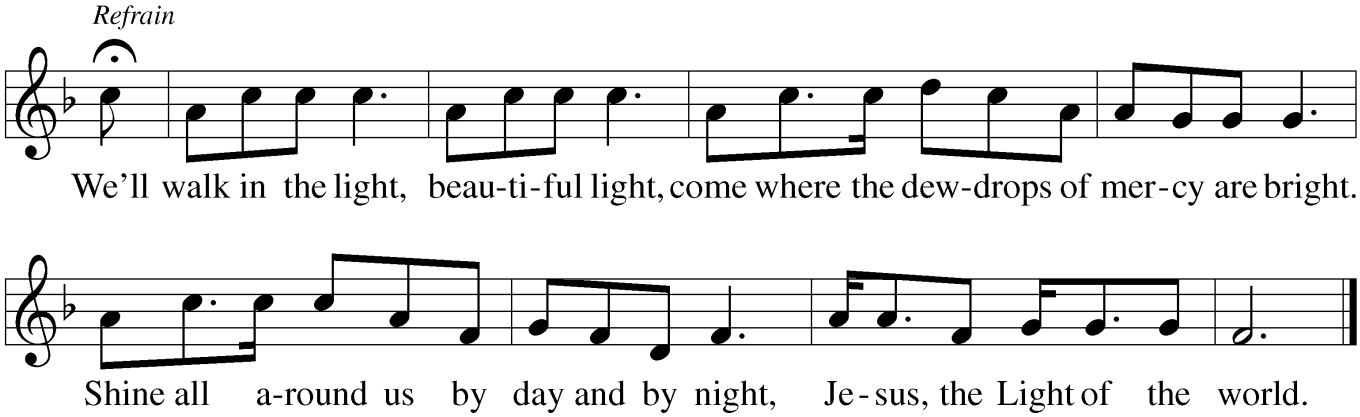
SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, siblings, you do not need to have anything
written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like
a thief in the night. 3 When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden
destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there
will be no escape! 4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, for that day to
surprise you like a thief; 5 for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are
not of the night or of darkness. 6 So, then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep
awake and be sober, 7 for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get
drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober and put on the breastplate
of faith and love and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has destined us not for
wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that
whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one
another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are comfortable.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION **JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD** **ACS 914**



GOSPEL: Matthew 25:14-30

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] 14 "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his
slaves and entrusted his property to them; 15 to one he gave five talents, to another two, to
another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. At once 16 the one who
had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made five more talents.
17 In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. 18 But the one
who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's
money. 19 After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with
them.

20 Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more
talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more
talents.’ 21 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been
trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of
your master.’ 22 And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you
handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ 23 His master said to
him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I
will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ 24 Then the one
who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were
a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter, 25 so
I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’
26 But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where
I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter? 27 Then you ought to have invested my
money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with
interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. 29 For to
all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those
who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 30 As for this worthless slave,
throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ”

This is the good news of the gospel.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Please be seated.

SERMON

Please stand as you are comfortable.

HYMN OF THE DAY **FREEDOM IS COMING** **ACS 903**

Congregation	**Choir**
Freedom is coming!	Oh, freedom,
Freedom is coming!	Oh, freedom,
Freedom is coming, oh, yes, I know!	Oh, freedom!
Freedom is coming!	Oh, freedom,
Freedom is coming!	Oh, freedom,
Freedom is coming, oh, yes, I know!	Oh, freedom!
Oh, oh, yes, I know!	Oh, yes, I know!
Oh, oh, yes, I know!	Oh, yes, I know!
Oh, oh, yes, I know, oh, yes, I know!	Oh, yes, I know!
Oh, oh, yes, I know!	Oh, yes, I know!
Oh, oh, yes, I know!	Oh, yes, I know!
Oh, oh, yes, I know, oh, yes, I know!	Oh, yes, I know!
Verse 2:	*Verse 2:*
Jesus is coming!... Oh, yes, I know!	*Oh, Jesus!... Oh, yes, I know!*

APOSTLES' 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.

Please be seated.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

United with the great cloud of witnesses, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

As the nights grow longer in the northern hemisphere, make us mindful of the earth's need for rest. Provide for fallow fields and hibernating animals; show us how to curb human impact on vulnerable lands and species. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Rescue all nations and peoples from violence, displacement, or famine. Disrupt complacency among national and local leaders. Recommit our communities to transforming the systems that divide and oppress into those that empower and unite. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

In your embrace, we find refuge from all trials and troubles. Care for families who are separated or estranged, accompany all undergoing medical procedures or mental health treatment, and reassure any who are ill or despairing .
God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

The faithful of every age trust in the hope of your saving grace. In thanksgiving for the ways our ancestors have journeyed before us, we remember all who have entered eternal life in you. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Into your steadfast love, faithful God, we entrust all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus, your beloved.
Amen.

PEACE
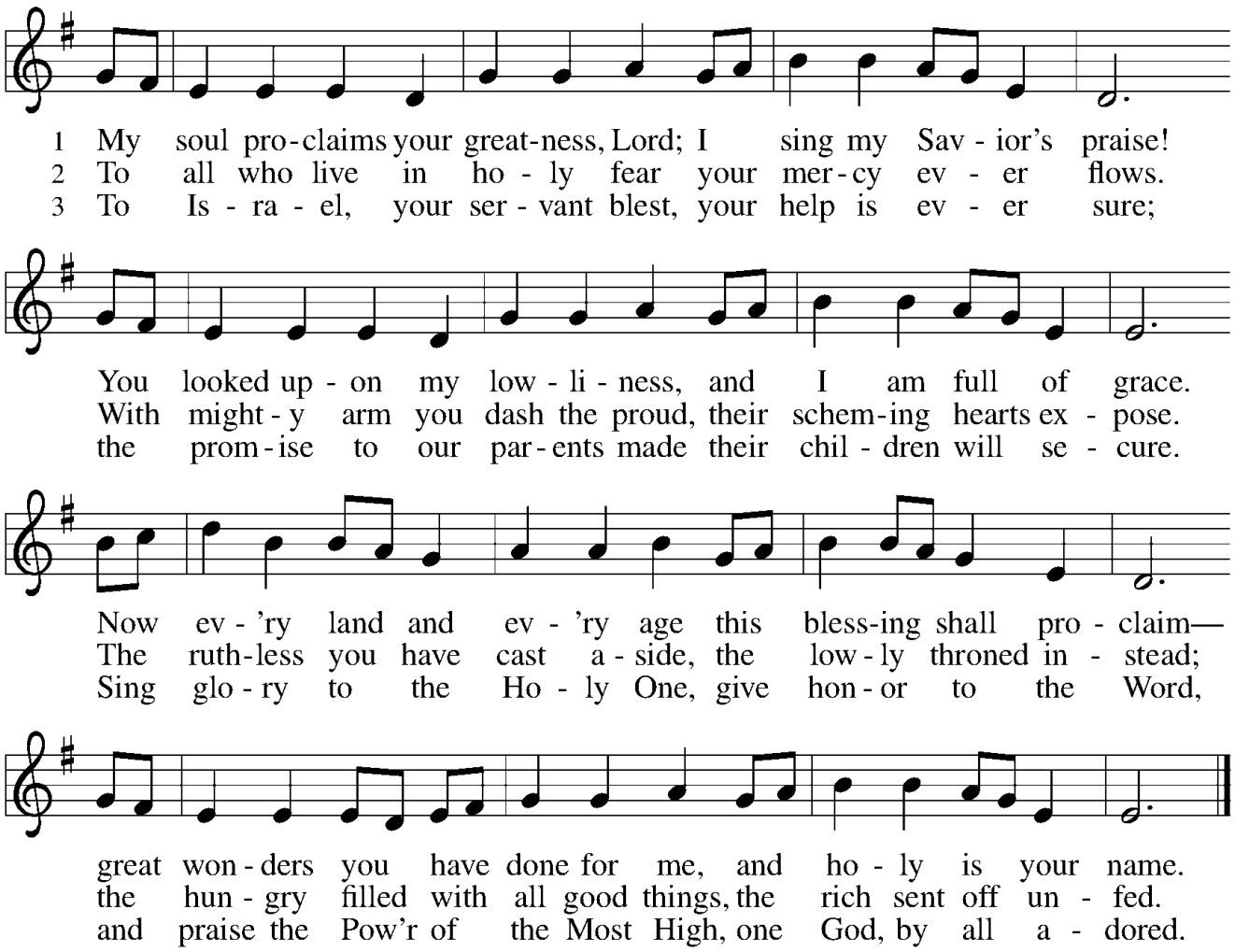
The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need. Offering plates are located by the entrances to the sanctuary. Your gifts support St. Mark, its mission, and its partnerships with local, statewide, and national partners.

Please stand as you are comfortable.

OFFERING HYMN **MY SOUL PROCLAIMS YOUR GREATNESS** **ELW 251**



OFFERING PRAYER

God of all who hunger,

Feed all who need food today. Whether what we have to offer is little or great, help us to offer it willingly and with hope. No matter how small, let it bring a bit of your justice and keep us hungry for more. Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

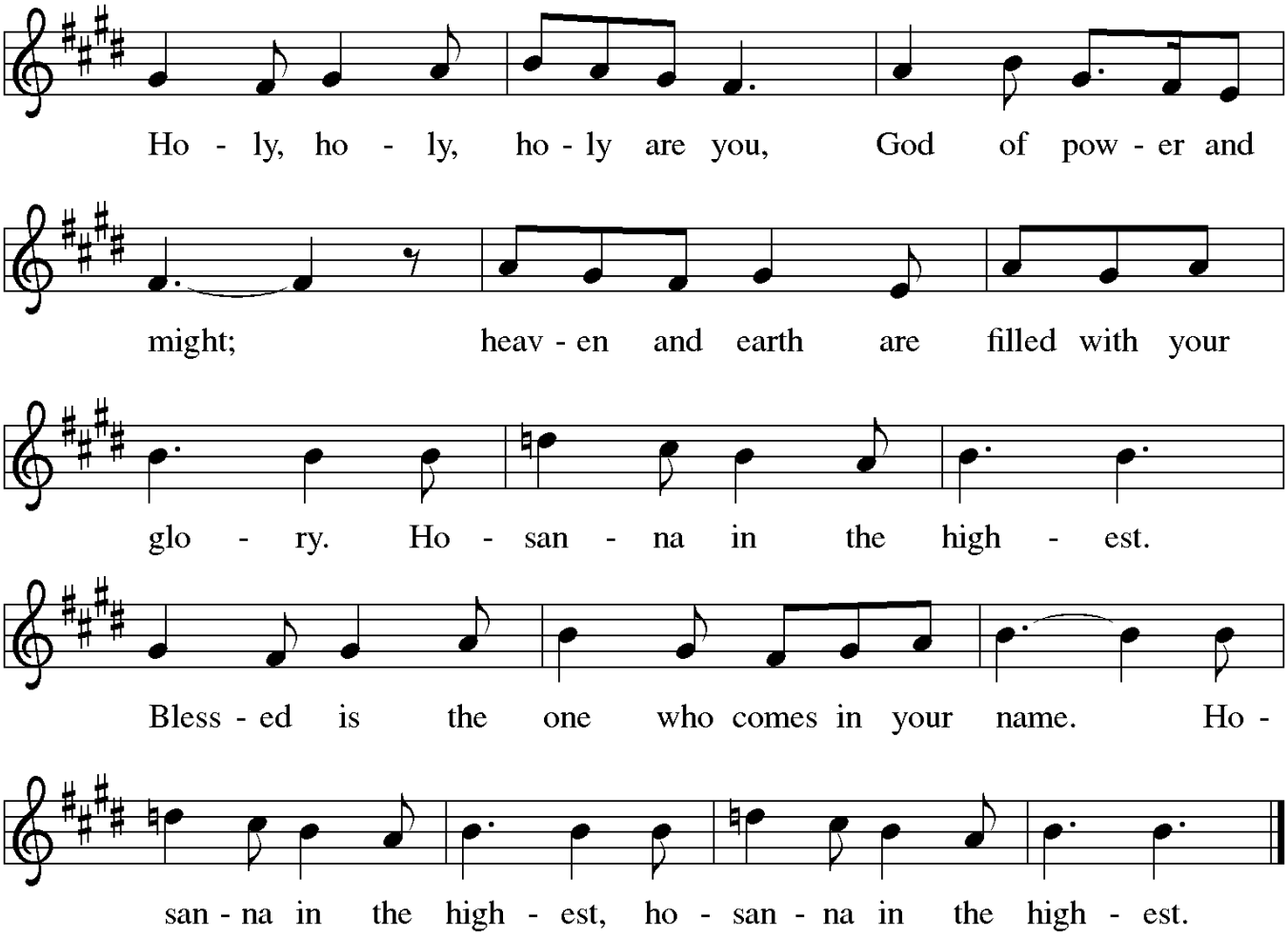
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right to give you thanks and praise,
composer of the Universe,
through Jesus Christ, your only Son.
His victory song has shattered death
and resounds to every corner of creation,
filling us with the hope for his coming again.
Even as we wait for that trumpet blast,
we join our voices with earth and sea and their chorus of creatures;
with angel bands and rolling spheres;
with saints who stand by a crystal sea,
in one unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY **ELW 191**



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Great God, Alpha and Omega, in the songs of every prophet,
you tell us how your chosen endings harmonize with new beginnings:
where the hungry are fed
the powerful are cast down
the imprisoned are freed
and the world is turned.

In the cacophony of this and every age,
your people have heard snatches of divine melody.
We have tried to join, but our voices tremble
with fear, sin, and failure.
So in the fullness of time
you sent to us your own Son, Jesus Christ,
whose birth was announced by a choir of angels,
whose life reverberated with healing and liberation,
and who opened the gates of death
so that we could open our lips at last
and join in your redeeming song.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, 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 to them to drink saying,
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering his life, death, and resurrection,
we proclaim the mystery of our faith with audacious expectation:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Filled with confidence in his promise,
we dare to look for signs of his coming
and of his presence already here:
in bread and wine,
in this gathered Body,
in this yearning world,
in this meal, where he is Host and Guest.
Come, Lord Jesus!
Come, Lord Jesus!

And come, Holy Spirit, to prepare his way.
Straighten what is crooked in our hearts and in our world.
Bless these gifts and let us taste the glory of God.
Come, Holy Spirit!
Come, Holy Spirit!

All honor and glory are yours,
God in Trinity and Unity,
God of songs and silences,
God of beginnings and endings,
from now until the end of time.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us, saying:

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.

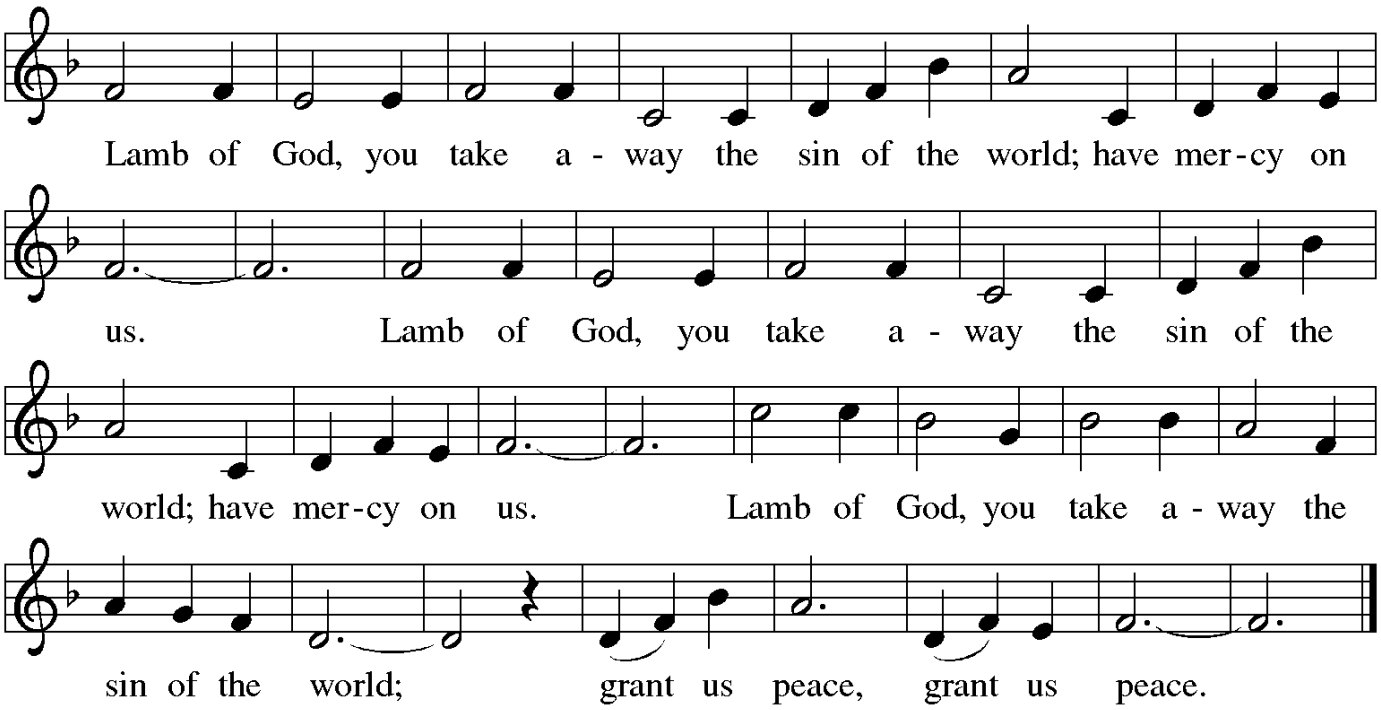
INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Christ invites you to this table. These are the gifts of God for the people of God, holy things for holy people, and they are for you.

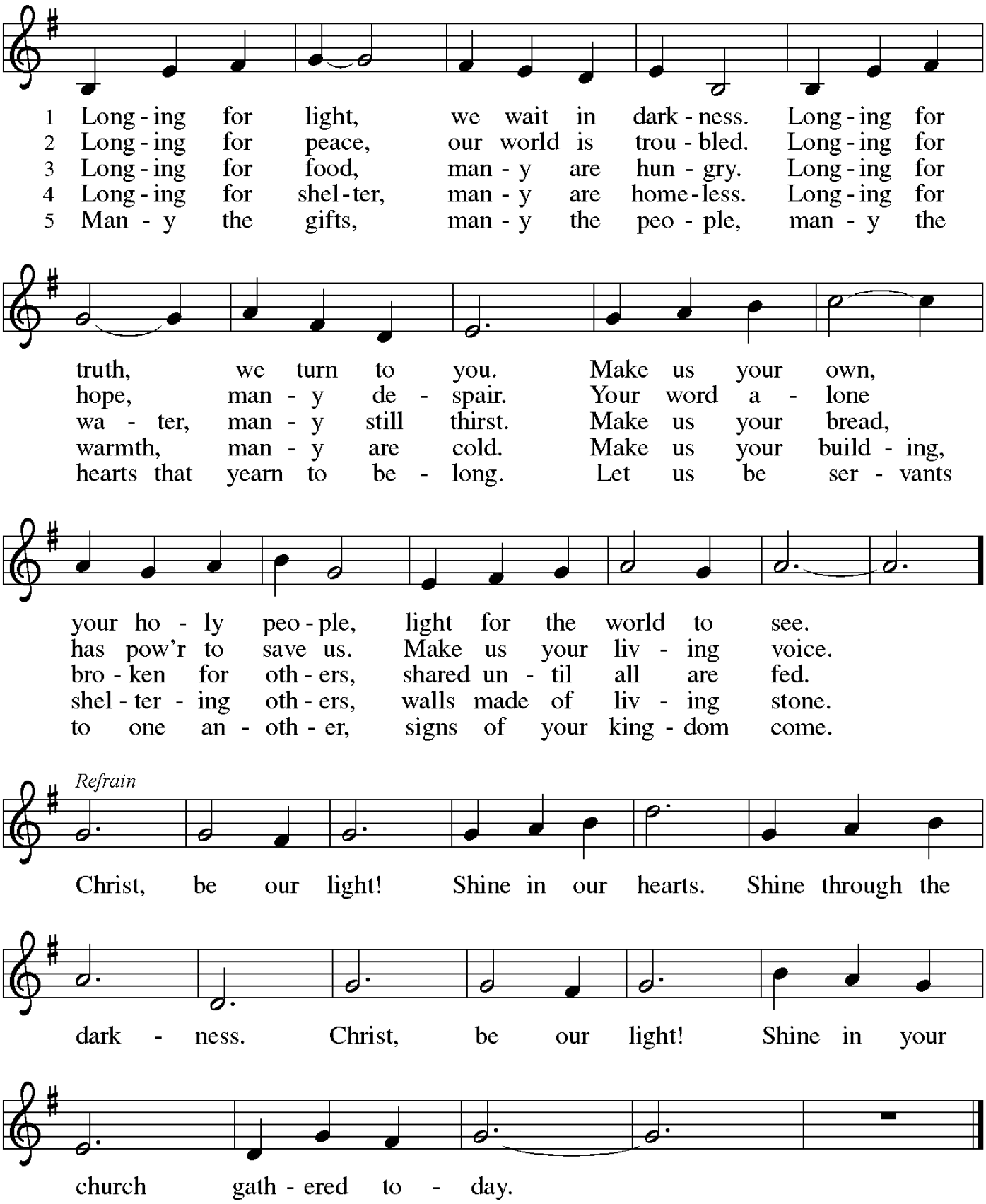
We share communion with wheat and gluten-free wafers, red wine, and red grape juice. Everyone is welcome to receive communion, regardless of religious background or age.

Please be seated.
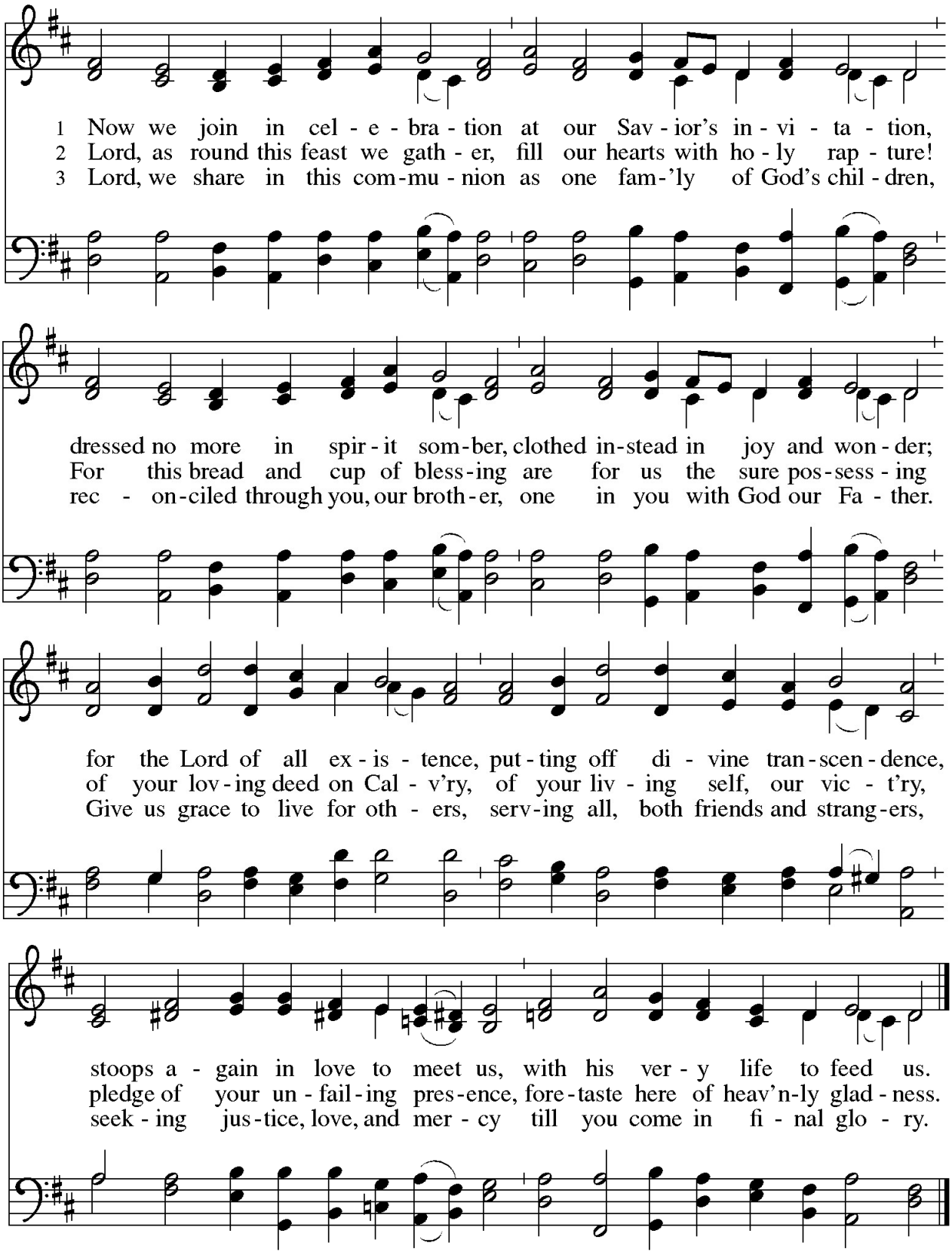
COMMUNION SONG **LAMB OF GOD** **ELW 195**



COMMUNION HYMN **CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT** **ELW 715**



COMMUNION HYMN **NOW, WE JOIN IN CELEBRATION** **ELW 462**



Please stand as you are comfortable.

TABLE BLESSING

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

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Sustaining God,

With this bread and cup, you sing life back into our bones. Send us to share your song of hope with a world that waits for you in the name of Jesus, the long-expected one. Amen.

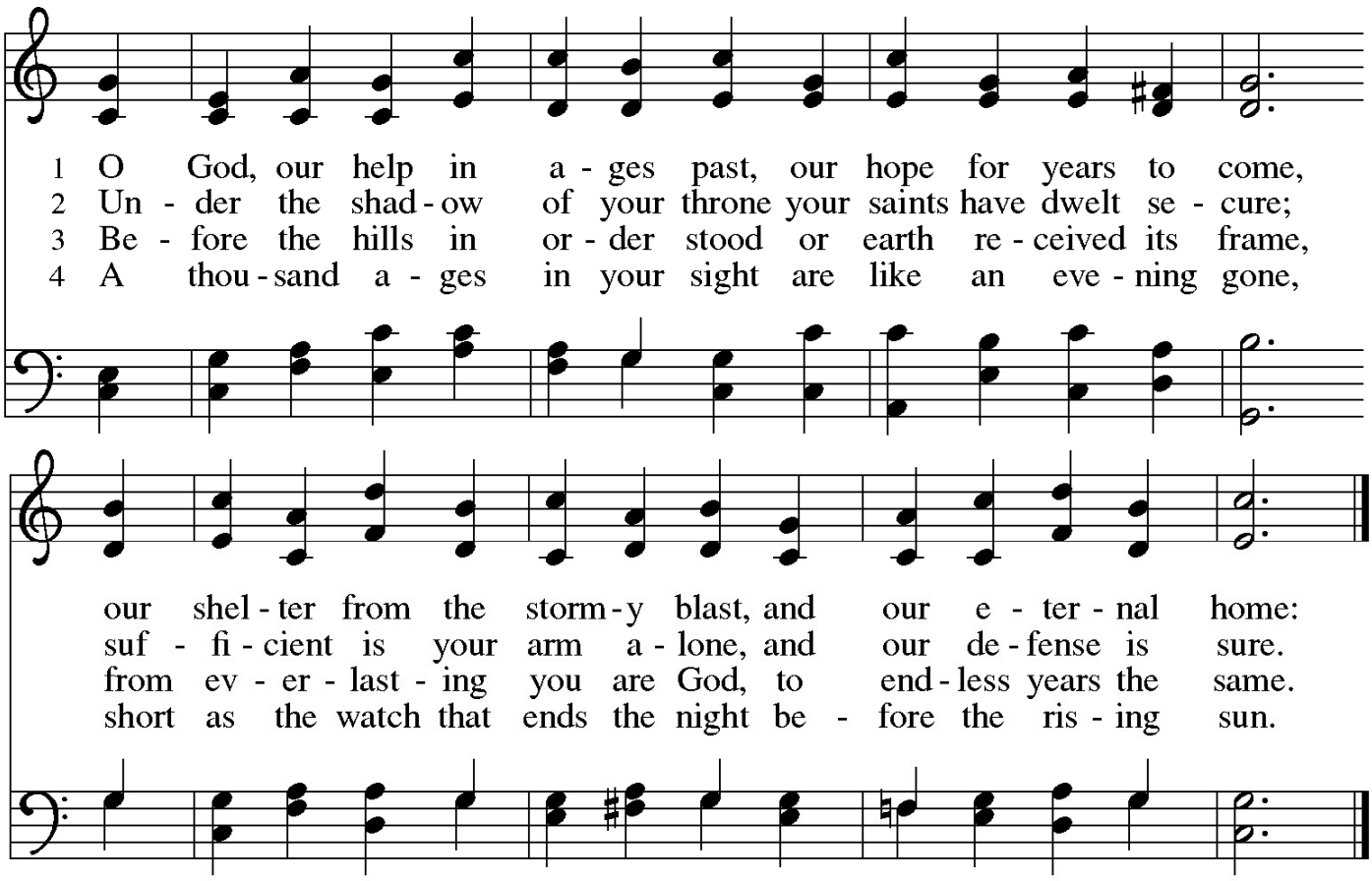
SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

The God who sang creation into being,
the Christ whose life was a song of peace,
the Holy Spirit whose breath sings out for justice,
bless you and keep you in the heart of grace. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN **O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST** **ELW 632**



5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
bears all our years away;
we fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the op'ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
still be our guard while troubles last
and our eternal home!

DISMISSAL

Go in peace to sing God's song.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Thank you to today's worship leaders!

Lector: Barbara Moonlight
Communion Assistant: Wayne Herpel
Ushers: Michaela Arzt and JoAnne Malta
Livestream Operator: Eileen Mansfield
Altar Guild: Karen Breninghouse and Nadine Mileski
Pastor: Rev. Linnéa Clark
Seminarian: Erin Brody
Minister of Music: John Kling
Office Administrator: Robin Harris
Ministers: People of St. Mark

Worship with Us

We gather for worship on Sundays at 9:30 am (a full-length, more formal service) and on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm (a shorter, more informal service). You are always welcome.

We host Peace of Mindfulness, a mindfulness meditation class, on Tuesdays at 6:30 pm in the sanctuary. Beginners and advanced practitioners alike are welcome.

Serve with Us

We welcome volunteers every Sunday after worship to help with Lunches with Love, which prepares lunches for clients of HomeFront. Recently, we shared our ***20,000th lunch!*** *Contact Karen Breninghouse (kbreninghouse@gmail.com) for more information.*

Contact Us

You can reach our office at admin@stmarkhamilton.org and at (609) 585-7087.

You can reach Pastor Linnéa Clark directly at pastor@stmarkhamilton.org or at (215) 620-4977 in case of emergency.

You can also find us online at stmarkhamilton.org and at facebook.com/stmarkhamilton.

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