

**ADVENT WORSHIP SERVICES**

**PRELUDE**

**WELCOME**

**GATHERING HYMN**

*Prepare the Royal Highway ELW 264*

## Prepare the Royal Highway



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!  
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!  
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!  
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!  
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!  
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.  
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!  
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:  
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



*Refrain*  
Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

### WEEK 2: PEACE

Leader 1: We gather in the season of Advent, waiting and watching for the One who comes not in splendor, but in humility. The God of the universe has changed addresses—leaving heaven’s throne to dwell among us in a manger. This is grace: not earned, not expected, but freely given.

Leader 2: We light the candle of Peace, remembering that God invites us into restored relationship. We are invited to sit next to the babe in the manger, the one who comes as the prince of peace to restore all creation.

**ALL: O Prince of Peace, in our busyness settle our hearts and minds. Slow us down to see all that you give us. Let your peace reign in our hearts and minds.**

### **ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING SONG – PEACE** *To the tune of “Away in a Manger”*

A second flame dances, a whisper of Peace,  
Not lofty or distant, but born in the least.  
The manger, God’s dwelling, so humble, so low,  
Is where Ground Floor Grace begins its soft glow.

### **PRAYER:**

**God of peace, settle our restless spirits. Teach us that true peace is not found in control, but in surrender to your grace. Amen.**

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*Based on Matthew 3:1-12*

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” The same voice

cries out to us today, calling us to turn back, to prepare, to walk in God's way.

Let us confess our sin and hear the promise of God's mercy.

*(Silence for reflection)*

Merciful God,

**We confess that our hearts are often far from you.**

Our paths are crooked.

**Straighten them, Lord.**

Our words have been careless.

**Purify them with your mercy.**

Our hands have clung to selfishness.

**Open them to serve in love.**

We have relied on our strength.

**Teach us to rely on your grace.**

We have resisted change.

**Transform our journey, O God.**

We have grown weary of waiting.

**Awaken us with your Spirit.**

Forgive us, Lord.

**Renew us in hope. Shape us into people who bear fruit worthy of repentance.**

People of God, hear the good news! John proclaimed, *"I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me."* That One is Jesus Christ.

He comes not to condemn but to save.

**He comes with Spirit and fire.**

The fire of judgment becomes the fire of mercy.

**The Spirit that convicts also restores.**

In Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Your burden is lifted. Your path is made new. Walk now in the light of Christ. Bear fruit in every step. For God's grace is not far away—it has come near, and it transforms the journey.

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; prepare each of us to receive your grace through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **READINGS**

### **FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-10**

A reading from Isaiah.

*Isaiah describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David's royal line (the stump of Jesse). Gifted by the spirit of God, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peaceful coexistence.*

<sup>1</sup> The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

<sup>2</sup> The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

<sup>3</sup> His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see  
or decide by what his ears hear,

<sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor

and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

<sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist  
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

<sup>6</sup> The wolf shall live with the lamb;  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;  
the calf and the lion will feed together,  
and a little child shall lead them.

<sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze;  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

<sup>9</sup> They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.

<sup>10</sup> On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the  
peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be  
glorious.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM:** Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Theme of the Psalm: May the righteous flourish; let there be an  
abundance of peace. (*Ps. 72:7*)

<sup>1</sup> Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to the king's son;

<sup>2</sup> **that he may rule your people righteously  
and the poor with justice;**

<sup>3</sup> that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,  
and the hills, in righteousness.

<sup>4</sup> **Let him defend the needy among the people,  
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**

<sup>5</sup> May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,  
from one generation to another.

<sup>6</sup> **Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,  
like showers that water the earth.**

<sup>7</sup> In his time may the righteous flourish;

and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be  
no more.

<sup>18</sup> **Blessed are you, Lord God, the God of Israel;  
you alone do wondrous deeds!**

<sup>19</sup> And blessed be your glorious name forever,  
and may all the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. Amen.

## **SECOND LESSON:** Romans 15:4-13

A reading from Romans.

*God's promise to include Gentiles within the circle of God's  
blessed people has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christians live  
out their unity by welcoming and encouraging each other just as  
Christ has welcomed them into God's family.*

<sup>4</sup> Whatever was written in former days was written for our  
instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement  
of the scriptures we might have hope. <sup>5</sup> May the God of  
steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony  
with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> so that  
together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our  
Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>7</sup> Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has  
welcomed you, for the glory of God. <sup>8</sup> For I tell you that Christ has  
become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God  
in order that he might confirm the promises given to the

ancestors<sup>9</sup> and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.  
As it is written,

“Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles  
and sing praises to your name”;

<sup>10</sup> and again he says,

“Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people”;

<sup>11</sup> and again,

“Praise the Lord, all you gentiles,  
and let all the peoples praise him”;

<sup>12</sup> and again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse shall come,  
the one who rises to rule the gentiles;  
in him the gentiles shall hope.”

<sup>13</sup> May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



### **GOSPEL Matthew 3:1-12**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 3rd chapter.





*Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.*

<sup>1</sup> In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, <sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” <sup>3</sup> This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

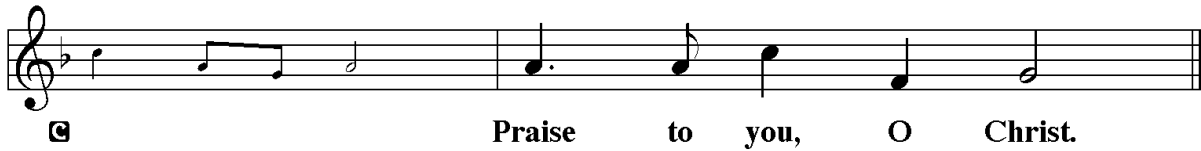
“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
‘Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight.’ ”

<sup>4</sup> Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? <sup>8</sup> Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, <sup>9</sup> and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>10</sup> Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The gospel of the Lord.



## MESSAGE

## HYMN OF THE DAY

*Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding* ELW 246

### Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!

Musical notation for the first system of the hymn. The notation is on two staves, treble and bass, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the staves.

1 Hark! a thrill-ing voice is sound-ing! "Christ is near," we hear it say.  
2 Wak-ened by the sol - emn warn - ing, from earth's bond-age let us rise;  
3 See the Lamb, so long ex - spect - ed, come with par - don down from heav'n.  
4 So, when next he comes in glo - ry and the world is wrapp'd in fear,  
5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, and bless - ing to the Fa - ther and the Son

Musical notation for the second system of the hymn. The notation is on two staves, treble and bass, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the staves.

"Cast a - way the works of dark-ness, all you chil-dren of the day!"  
Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling, shines up - on the morn-ing skies.  
Let us haste, with tears of sor - row, one and all, to be for - giv'n;  
he will shield us with his mer - cy and with words of love draw near.  
with the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it while un - end - ing a - ges run!

## NICENE CREED

Together, we profess our faith with the words of the Nicene Creed.

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

**Week 2 - (Promise and) Peace**

As we wait for you, O loving God, we place before you our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

*Silence for reflection.*

Peace comes from you, O Lord. As we face times of uncertainty, show us your path of peace. Enable the church to build bridges of peace. We especially pray for our partners in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Central African Republic. God of promise,

**Receive our prayer.**

Peace comes from you, O Lord. We marvel at the diversity of your creation, from sheep and wolves to coyotes and calves. Your hand of mercy is on all creation as we navigate life together. God of promise,

**Receive our prayer.**

Peace comes from you, O Lord. Enable world leaders to see that peace is possible. We pray for local, state, national, and international governments. Open their hearts and fill them with peace, hope, joy, and love in abundance. God of promise,

**Receive our prayer.**

Peace comes from you, O Lord. In times of depression and anxiety, walk beside us as only you can. God of promise,

**Receive our prayer.**

Peace comes from you, O Lord. We pray for the leadership of the church: especially SAMs, deacons, pastors, and bishops. We pray for each person connected to our congregation. Sustain and fill us with your peace that surpasses human understanding. God of promise,

**Receive our prayer.**

Peace comes from you, O Lord. Guided by your peace, our ancestors in the faith followed your path. Lead us in that same way so that we might join in their songs of praise. God of promise,

**Receive our prayer.**

Trusting in your promise of peace, we lay these prayers before you  
knowing that you will answer.

**Amen.**

## PEACE

May the peace of God be with you and reassure you that Christ has  
come, is here, and will come again.

## OFFERING

### OFFERTORY

**Love Came Down at Christmas**

*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God.... In this was manifested the love of God toward us,  
because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 1 Jn. 4:7-11; Jn. 13:35*



1. Love came down at Christ - mas, Love all love - ly, Love di - vine;  
2. Wor - ship we the God - head, Love in - car - nate, Love di - vine;  
3. Love shall be our to - ken, Love be yours and love be mine,

Love was born at Christ - mas, Star and an - gels gave the sign.  
Wor - ship we our Je - sus: But where with for sa - cred sign?  
Love to God and for all Love for plea and gift and sign.

WORDS: Christina G. Rossetti, *pub.* 1885. MUSIC: "Gartan"; Irish melody. Public Domain.

### OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

**We pause to remember that you are God. All that we have comes as a gift from you.**

Pause

**Each breath we take, each item in our home, each dollar in our pocket, is only ours for the moment. We pause and give thanks for all that you have provided, grace upon grace.**

Pause

**Now, we offer ourselves that we might do good in this world. We offer our money that it might be used for good in this world. Receive us and what we offer now, in Jesus' name.**

**Amen.**

## **COMMUNION**

## **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

### **DIALOGUE**

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.**

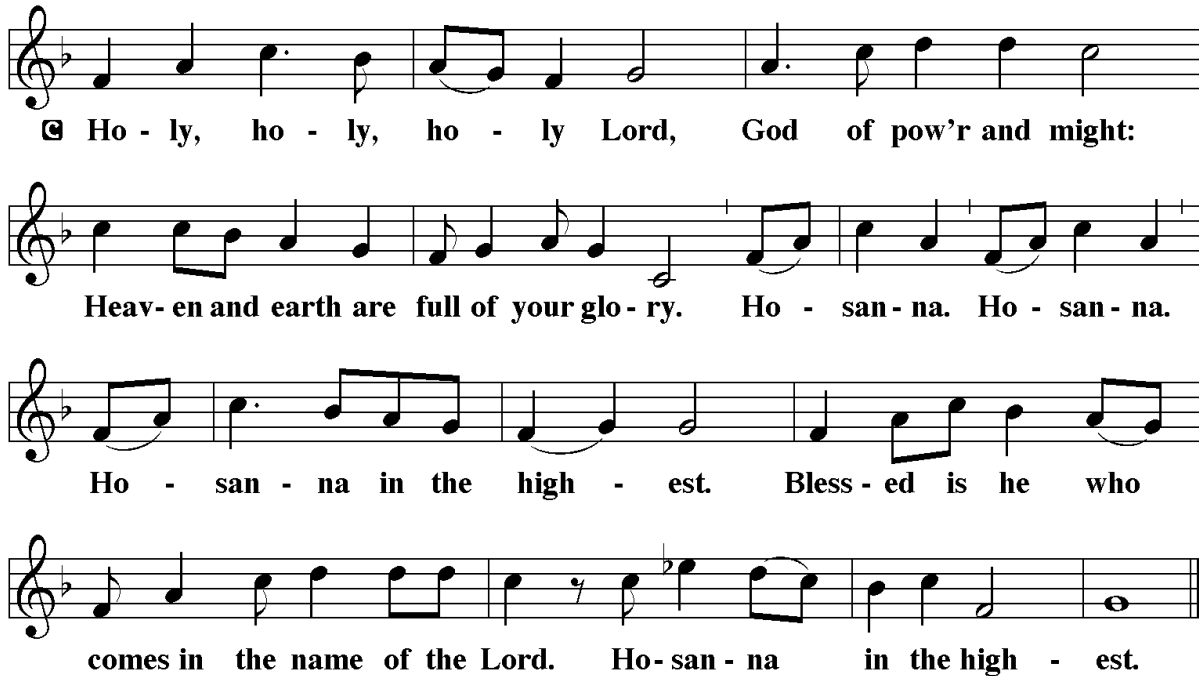
### **PREFACE**

It is indeed right, 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:

### HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:  
Heav- en and earth are full of your glo- ry. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na.  
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho- san - na in the high - est.

### THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
you have brought us this far along the way.

In times of bitterness you did not abandon us,  
but guided us into the path of love and light.  
In every age you sent prophets  
to make known your loving will for all humanity.  
The cry of the poor has become your own cry;  
our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.  
In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant

to preach good news to the afflicted,  
to break bread with the outcast and despised,  
and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

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 all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup  
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection,  
we await the day when Jesus shall return  
to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.  
Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen.

**Amen.**

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate,  
to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup  
with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the  
world.

Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen.



**Amen.**

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age,  
that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection,  
we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son.  
Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

**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.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

## COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*Each person responds*

**Amen.**

## COMMUNION SONG

*One Bread, One Body* ELW 496

### One Bread, One Body

*Refrain*



One bread, one bod-y, one Lord of all; one cup of



bless-ing which we bless, and we, though man-y



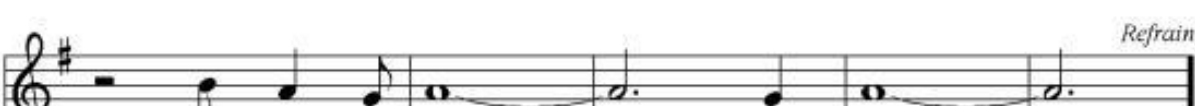
through-out the earth, we are one bod - y in this one Lord.



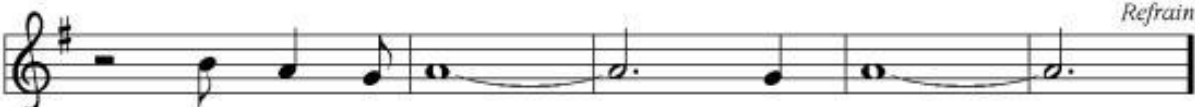
1 Gen - tile or Jew, ser - vant or free,



2 Man - y the gifts, man - y the works,



3 Grain for the fields, scat-tered and grown,



*Refrain*  
wom - an or man, no more.



one in the Lord of all.



gath - ered to one for all.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Holy and gracious God, who shaped the stars and stooped to cradle dust, we give thanks that you meet us not in lofty heights, but on the ground floor—where life is raw, real, and aching for redemption. In this holy meal, You have fed us with mercy that took on flesh, with love that changed addresses and moved into a manger. You have entered our brokenness, not with distant judgment, but with hands dirtied by creation, by carpentry, by cross-bearing grace. You meet us there—again and again—with bread, with wine, with grace. Send us now, nourished and renewed, to be your people: to serve, to love, to lift, to listen. Let our lives echo your humility, and let our hands bear your healing.

In the name of Jesus, who came down to raise us up.

**Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

May God who comes down to meet us where we are,  
Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,  
and good news to share today and always.

**Amen.**

## **SENDING HYMN**

*The King Shall Come* ELW 260

## The King Shall Come

1 The King shall come when morn-ing dawns and light tri - um-phunt breaks,  
2 Not as of old a lit - tle child, to bear and fight and die,  
3 Oh, bright - er than the ris - ing morn when Christ, vic - to - rious, rose  
4 Oh, bright - er than that glo - rious morn shall dawn up - on our race  
5 The King shall come when morn-ing dawns and light and beau - ty brings.

when beau - ty gilds the east - ern hills and life to joy a - wakes.  
but crowned with glo - ry like the sun that lights the morn-ing sky.  
and left the lone - some place of death, de - spite the rage of foes.  
the day when Christ in splen - dor comes, and we shall see his face.  
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your peo - ple pray: come quick - ly, King of kings.

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems. The first system contains five verses of lyrics. The second system continues the lyrics. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a clear harmonic structure. The lyrics are printed below the vocal staves.

### DISMISSAL

Go in joy. God's grace meets you where you are.  
**Thanks be to God.**