

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES

PRELUDE

WELCOME

GATHERING HYMN

I'm So Glad Each Christmas Eve ELW 271

I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve

Jeg er så glad hver julekveld

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 of music. The first system contains five verses of lyrics. The second system contains the concluding lines of the hymn. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a clear harmonic structure. The lyrics are in both English and Norwegian.

Jeg er så glad hver ju - le - kveld, ti da blev Je - sus født;
1 I am so glad each Christ-mas Eve, the night of Je - sus' birth!
2 The lit - tle child in Beth - le - hem, he was a king in - deed!
3 He dwells a - gain in heav - en's realm, the Son of God to - day;
4 I am so glad each Christ-mas Eve! His prais - es then I sing;
5 And so I love each Christ-mas Eve, and I love Je - sus too;

da lys - te stjer - nen som en sol, og eng - ler sang så sødt.
Then like the sun the star shone forth, and an - gels sang on earth.
For he came down from heav'n a - bove to help a world in need.
and still he loves his lit - tle ones and hears them when they pray.
he o - pens now for ev - 'ry child the pal - ace of the king.
and that he loves me ev - 'ry day I know so well is true.

CALL TO WORSHIP

We come with wonder in our hearts at the mystery that God's grace is for us.

C: We wonder if God can really do all the work.

We come with wonder in our hearts at the mystery that God's grace is for us.

C: We are focused on getting everything accomplished by a deadline.

During this season of Wonder, let us remember that God, in love, brought salvation down to the ground floor for us.

C: God's grace is found in a manger.

God's Grace is for Us.

C: God says, "I will keep my promises."

God's grace is for us.

C: God is our righteousness.

God's grace is for us.

C: God teaches us God's way.

We light the Christ candle to bring light to the world that no darkness can overcome.

C: God's grace brings new beginnings to the world.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

CHRISTMAS EVE

Leader 1: 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 Christ Candle, astounded that the Word has become flesh and dwells among us.

All: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it. Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING SONG – CHRIST *To the tune of "Away in a Manger"*

All candles now burning, the Christ light is here,
Emmanuel dwelling in grime and in cheer.
From manger to cross, God's grace never strays—

Still shaping our lives in Ground Floor ways.

PRAYER:

**God of light and love, Emanuel, calm our hearts and spirits.
Let us experience and fully appreciate the celebration of the
birth of your ultimate love, who is with us. Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

On this holy night, we gather in the light of Christ, who was born not in a palace but on the ground floor of a crowded inn. He came into the dirt and straw, into the noise and the mess, to be God-with-us. We come, then, to confess our sins, trusting that God's grace meets us right where we are.

Gracious God,

We confess that we have tried to climb ladders of success and worthiness, thinking that if we just get higher, we will be closer to you. We have forgotten that you came down, that you meet us in the lowest places of life.

We confess that we hide the messy corners of our lives, ashamed of our brokenness.

Yet tonight/today, we remember that you chose the grime of a manger and the roughness of a stable. You are not afraid of our mess.

We confess that we sometimes turn away from those who live on the ground floor of society—the poor, the forgotten, the ones the world overlooks.

Forgive us, Lord. Teach us again that Christmas begins in the straw, among shepherds and animals, in the places we often ignore.

(Silent Reflection)

People of God, hear the good news of Christmas: From the ground floor of a Bethlehem stable, grace was born into the world. In Jesus Christ, God has come to you—not after you have cleaned up, not once you've

climbed higher, but right here, right now. By the manger, by the cross, and by the empty tomb, you are forgiven. You are made new. You are held in God's Ground Floor Grace.

The peace of Christ is with you tonight and always.
And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, 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 9:2-7

A reading from Isaiah.

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³ You have multiplied exultation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,

as people exult when dividing plunder.
⁴ For the yoke of their burden
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
⁶ For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ Great will be his authority,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 96

Theme of the Psalm: Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. (*Ps. 96:11*)

¹ Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
² **Sing to the Lord, bless the name of the Lord;
proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**
³ Declare God's glory among the nations
and God's wonders among all peoples.

⁴ **For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised,
more to be feared than all gods.**

⁵ As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;
but you, O Lord, have made the heavens.

⁶ **Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;
power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

⁷ Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord honor and power.

⁸ **Ascribe to the Lord the honor due the holy name;
bring offerings and enter the courts of the Lord.**

⁹ Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
tremble before the Lord, all the earth.

¹⁰ **Tell it out among the nations: “The Lord is king!
The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be
moved will judge the peoples with equity.”**

¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful
and all that is therein.

¹² **Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your
coming, O Lord,
for you come to judge the earth.**

¹³ You will judge the world with righteousness
and the peoples with your truth.

SECOND LESSON: Titus 2:11-14

A reading from Titus.

The appearance of God’s grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior’s final appearance.

¹¹ The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹² training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation

of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-5 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars
go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee
tonight.

Luke 2:6-7 ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger No crib for His bed
The little Lord Jesus Lay down His sweet head
The stars in the sky Look down where He lay

The little Lord Jesus Asleep on the hay

Luke 2:8-14 ⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

The First Noel

The First Noel, the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel!

Luke 2:15-20 ¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Go, Tell It On the Mountain

Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere

Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!
While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light
Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!

MESSAGE

HYMN OF THE DAY

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming ELW 272

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath
2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in
3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the
4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man

sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as
mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the
air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the
woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who

seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -
vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she
dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from
dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to

mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load,
the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

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

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Gathering God, you bring your people from every corner of the earth together before the manger that you have made a throne. Unite the church in love as we rejoice in the news of your coming. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creating God, you brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Join our voices with the roaring seas, the exulting fields, and the trees of the forest singing for joy on this holy night. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Transforming God, the world trembles amid violence and war. Empower our hands, feet, and hearts with your Spirit to shatter the rod of the oppressor and turn swords into plowshares. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Shepherding God, you lead us to your love in the face of our neighbor. Send us into the world to find your Word made flesh in one another, especially those who are sick or struggling. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Nurturing God, you dwell with us in humble places. Sustain housing and clothing ministries in this community, that all find shelter and warmth. We pray especially for youth seeking safety and care. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Abiding God, you remain at the side of all the departed. Grant all who mourn hope in the resurrection and peace in Christ Jesus. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of the Christ child be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY – *What Child is This* ELW 296

What Child Is This



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an-gels sing;
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!



OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of the manger and the mud, We give thanks that you are not a god at a distance but God who came to live with us. You have never been far off— from creation's first breath to the cries in Bethlehem's stable, you've chosen the ground floor, the messy places, the ordinary lives, to reveal your extraordinary grace. Receive these gifts as signs of our gratitude and trust. Take what we offer today— our coins, our commitments, our cracked hearts— and mold them with your holy hands. Infuse them with your mercy, multiply them with your love, and use them to build your kingdom right here, in the muck and miracle of everyday life. In Jesus' name, who meets us where we are,

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.

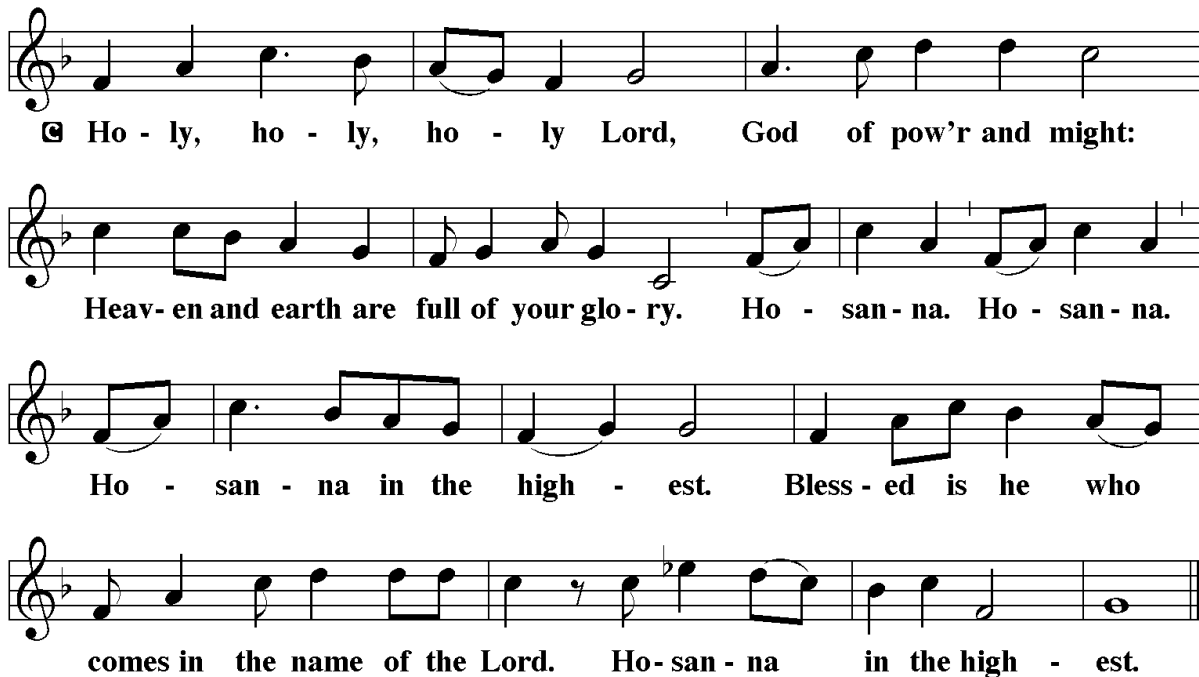
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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.
In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh
you have opened the eyes of faith
to a new and radiant vision of your glory,
that, beholding the God made visible,
we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.
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,



wom-an or man, no more,
one in the Lord of all,
gath-ered to one for all.

Refrain

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We thank you, wondrous God, for Jesus, God with us, in these gifts of bread and wine. As we have shared this feast of love, strengthen us to share your love with all the world. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Lighting of the Candles

The minister lights their candle from the Christ candle, which symbolizes Christ, the Light of the world of whom John's gospel speaks. The ushers light their candles from the minister's

*candle, then light the candle of each worshipper nearest the aisle. **The lighted candle is never tilted, but is held upright when giving light to another.***

The Gospel of the Incarnation: John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

SILENT NIGHT

Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
'Round yon virgin Mother and Child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night
Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Al-le-lu-ia!
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night
Son of God, oh, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth Jesus, Lord at Thy birth

BLESSING

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary,
and know that God's grace is for all people.
May you follow with the obedience of Joseph,
believing that God is preparing us for grace.
May the joy of the angels pull us together
as a community of grace-filled people.
May the message of the shepherds give you joy
in the new beginnings that come to us this night.
And when you behold the child in the manger,
may you be blessed in knowing
the grace of God made flesh,
living among us so that we would know the wondrous power
of God: Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

The Bells of Christmas ELW 298

The Bells of Christmas

Det kimer nu til julefest



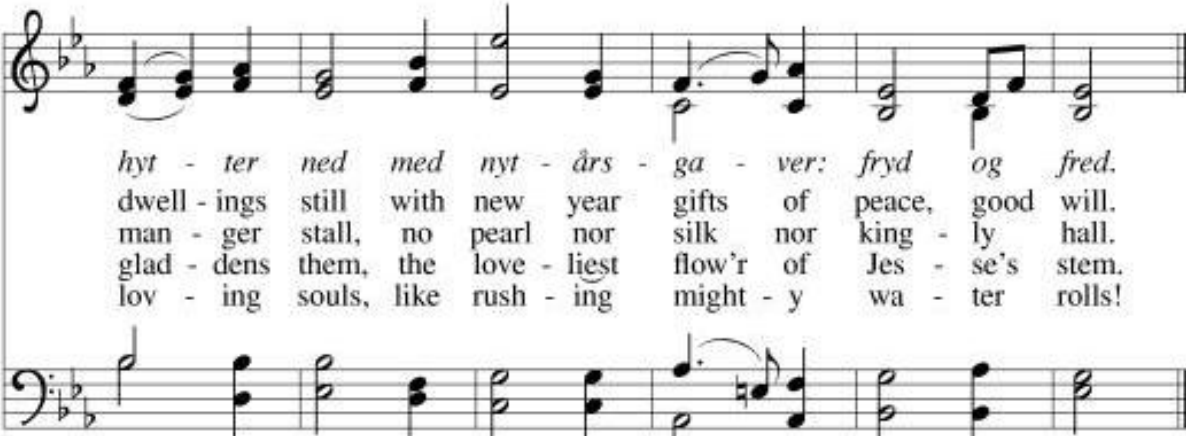
Det ki - mer nu til ju - le - fest, det ki - mer

1 The bells of Christ - mas chime once more; the heav'n - ly
2 This world, though wide and far out - spread, could scarce - ly
3 Now let us go with qui - et mind, the swad - dled
4 Oh, join with me, in glad - ness sing, to keep our



for den høj - e gæst, som steg til la - ve

guest is at the door. He comes to earth - ly
find for you a bed. Your cra - dle was a
babe with shep - herds find, to gaze on him who
Christ - mas with our king, un - til our song, from



hyt - ter ned med nyt - års - ga - ver: fryd og fred.

dwel - ings still with new year gifts of peace, good will.
man - ger stall, no pearl nor silk nor king - ly hall.
glad - dens them, the love - liest flow'r of Jes - se's stem.
lov - ing souls, like rush - ing might - y wa - ter rolls!

5 O patriarchs' Joy, O prophets' Song,
O Dayspring bright, awaited long,
O Son of Man, incarnate Word,
great David's Son, great David's Lord:

6 Come, Jesus, glorious heav'nly guest,
and keep your Christmas in our breast;
then David's harpstrings, hushed so long,
shall swell our jubilee of song.

The candles are extinguished; lights are turned on.

DISMISSAL

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