25th Sunday After Pentecost

November 15, 2026



A Reconciling in Christ Congregation

Bethany Lutheran Church
6 Leo Moss Drive, Olean, NY 14760
716-372-1914
e-mail address: bethany1706@gmail.com
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Praise! *Share!* *Serve!*

Welcome to Bethany!

Bethany recognizes that each of us is a unique creation made in the image of God. We celebrate and give thanks for the many diverse gifts that God has bestowed on us. We proclaim ourselves to be an open and affirming congregation to all of God's people; welcoming into our midst persons of every race, culture, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, and economic status. We believe that our openness will allow us to grow in our faith through Christ's teaching to love one another as God loves us.

You may place your gifts and offerings in the offering plate as you enter the sanctuary. We will not be passing the plate. Thank you and God Bless

Ringing of the Bells
Announcements:
Prelude:

We Gather as God's People

(Please stand as you are able)
Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
our dwelling place for all generations,
whose compassion never slumbers.
Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

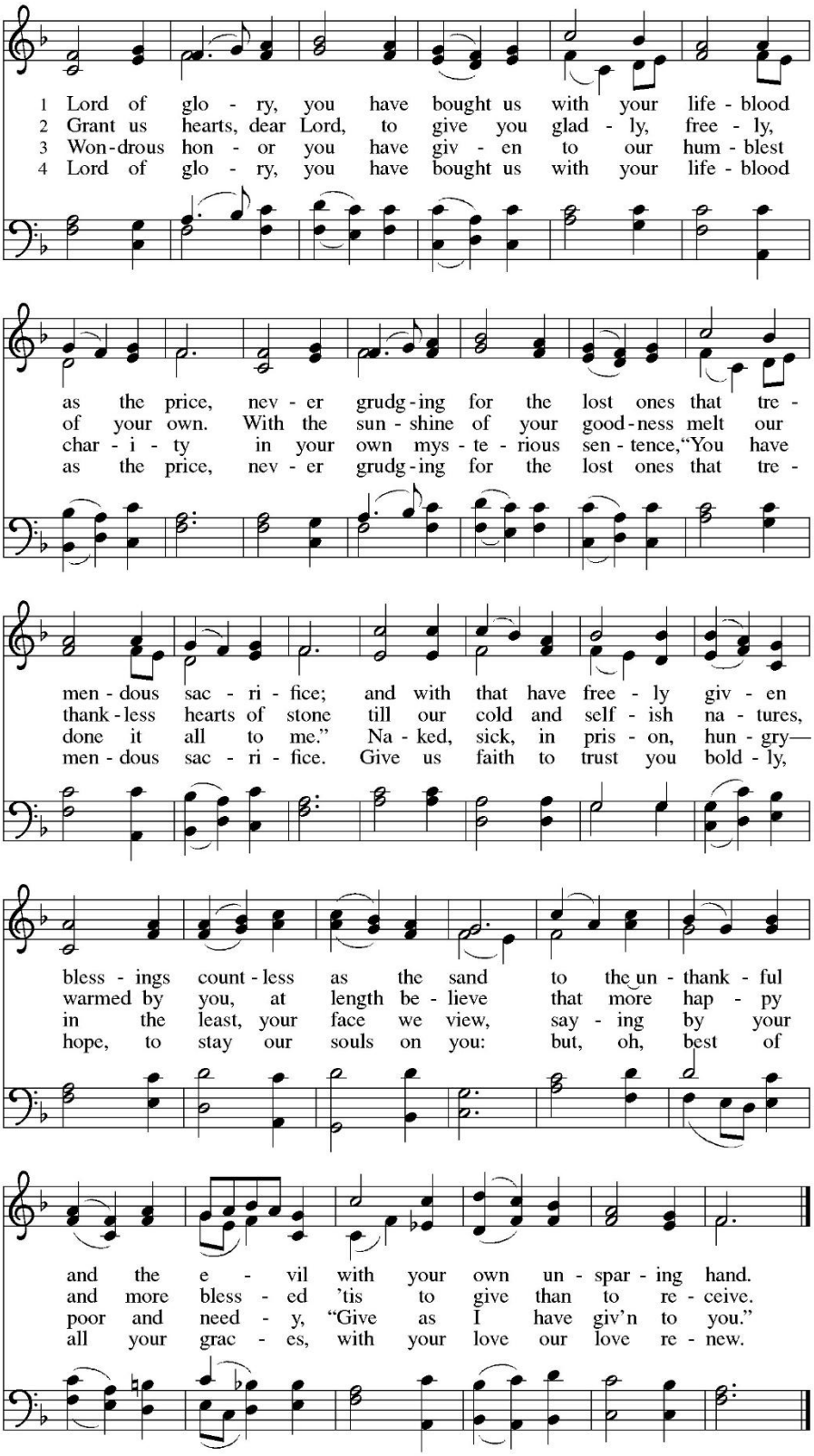
Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,
we confess that we have trusted in our preparation
instead of your invitation.
We prioritize our piety over care for your beloved.
We trust the voice of our shame and fear,
which keeps us from entering fully
into relationship with you and others.
We are not awake to the coming of your reign.
Rouse us and rescue us,
that we may enter into your joy.
Amen.

Inherit the riches of God's grace.
☩ Jesus, the good shepherd, feeds you with his mercy.
You are forgiven.
Blessed are you.
Amen.

Gathering Hymn ELW 707

Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us

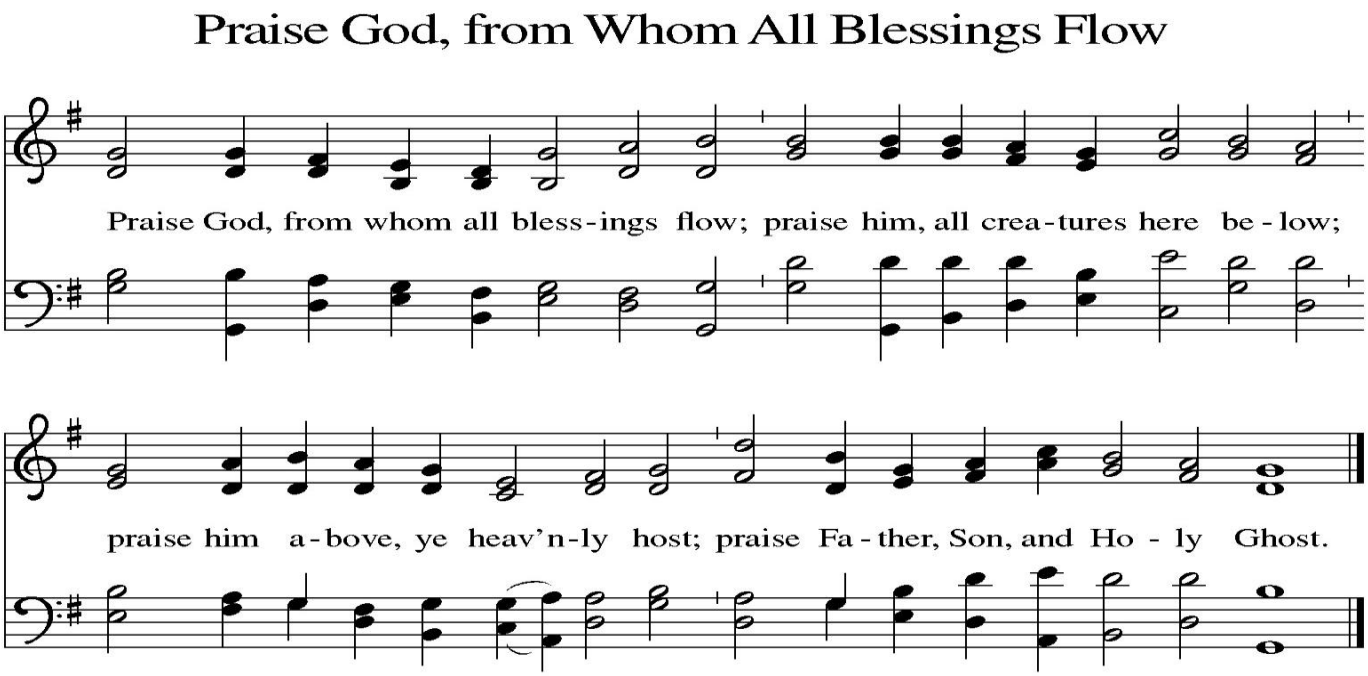


Text: Eliza S. Alderson, 1818–1889, alt.
Music: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard, 1811–1887

Greeting

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

Hymn of Praise: "Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow"



Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711
Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

Prayer of the Day

Righteous God, our merciful master, you own the earth and all its peoples, and you give us all that we have. Inspire us to serve you with justice and wisdom, and prepare us for the joy of the day of your coming, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

(Please be seated)

We Hear God's Word for Us.

First Lesson: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

Zephaniah (like the prophet Amos in last week's first reading) presents the day of the LORD as one of judgment and wrath. Descriptions of the last day in the New Testament include details taken from Old Testament accounts of the day of the LORD.

7 Be silent before the Lord GOD,
for the day of the LORD is at hand!
The LORD has prepared a sacrifice;
he has consecrated his 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 he 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 his passion
the whole earth shall be consumed,
for a full, a terrible end
he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

The Word of the Lord **C; Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 90:1-8 [9-11] 12

(SPOKEN responsively. Organ side starts, **piano side is in bold)**

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 children 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.
[9 When you are angry, all our days are gone;
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.
10 **The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength even eighty;**
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away quickly and we are gone.
11 Who regards the power of your wrath?
Who rightly fears your indignation?
] 12 **So teach us to number our days**
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

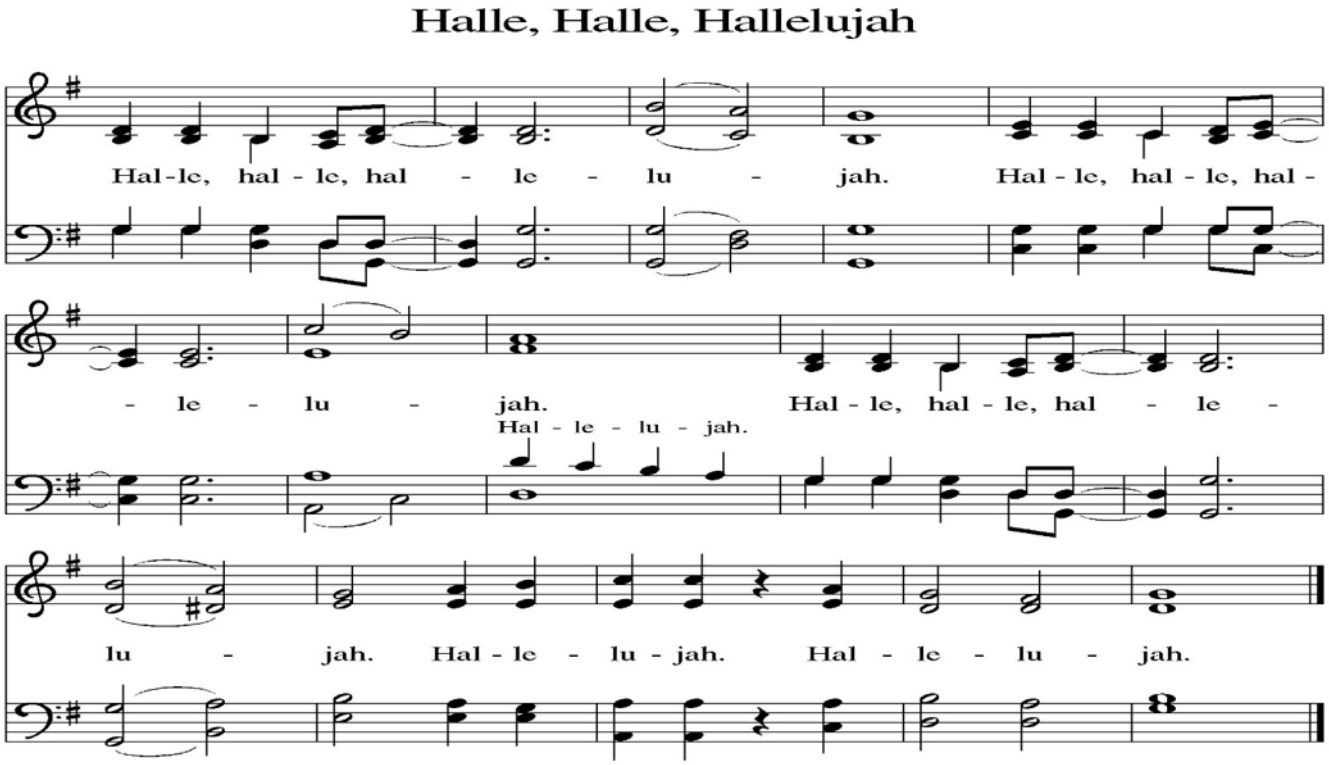
Second Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Though we do not know and cannot calculate the day of Christ's return, we live faithfully in the here and now as we anticipate the day when we will be given eternal salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, 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 **C; Thanks be to God.**

(*Please stand as you are able*)

Gospel Acclamation



Music: Caribbean traditional; arr. Mark Sedio, b. 1954
Arr. © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

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The Gospel of our Lord according to Matthew 25:14-30
C: Glory to you O Lord

Jesus tells a parable about his second coming, indicating that it is not sufficient merely to maintain things as they are. Those who await his return should make good use of the gifts that God has provided them.

[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.' "

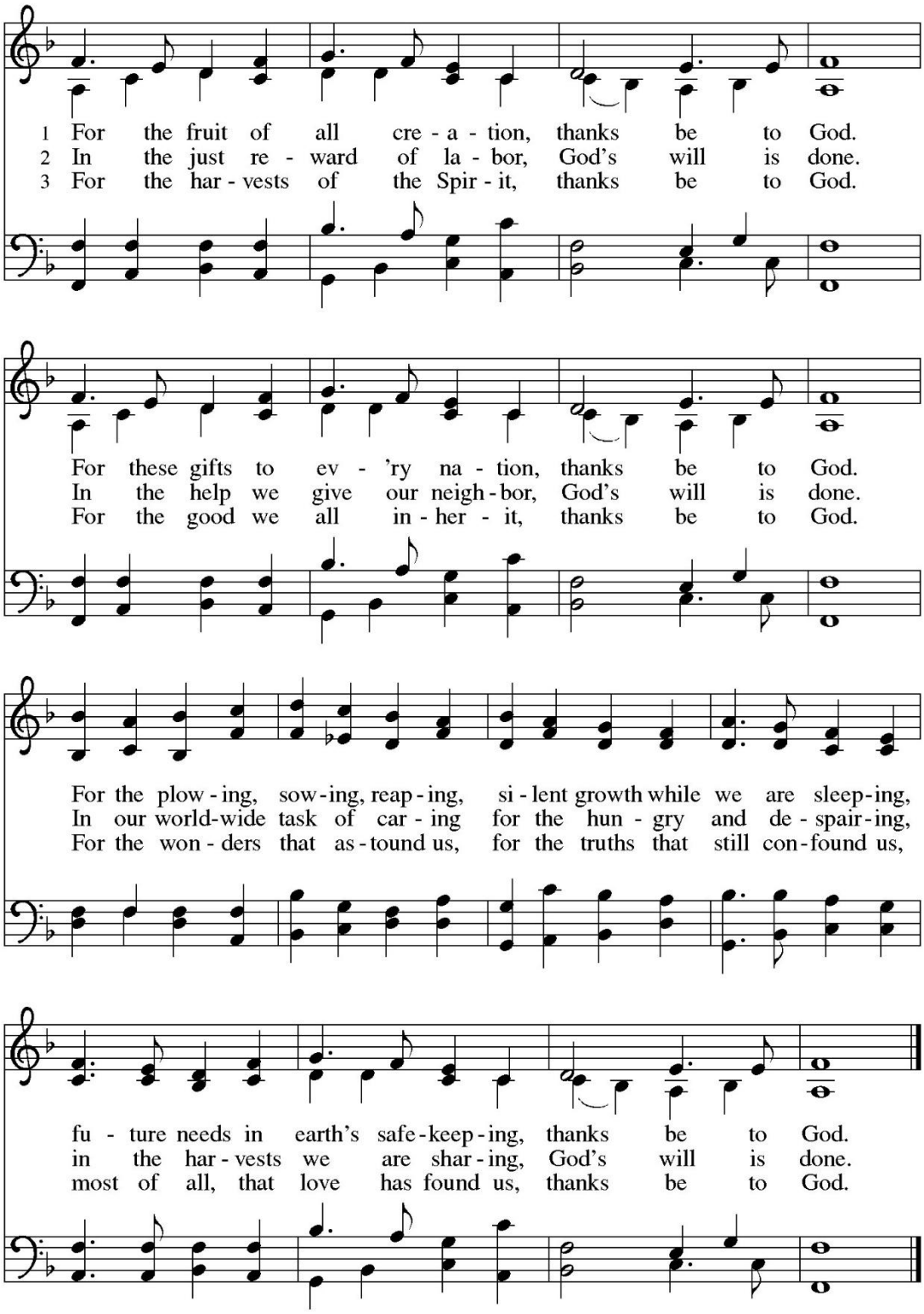
Gospel of our Lord **C: Praise to you O Christ**

(Please be seated)

Reflection

(Please stand as you are able)

For the Fruit of All Creation



Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000
Music: AR HYD Y NOS, Welsh traditional; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872–1958
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Outside USA: Arr. from *The English Hymnal*, © Oxford University Press 1906.

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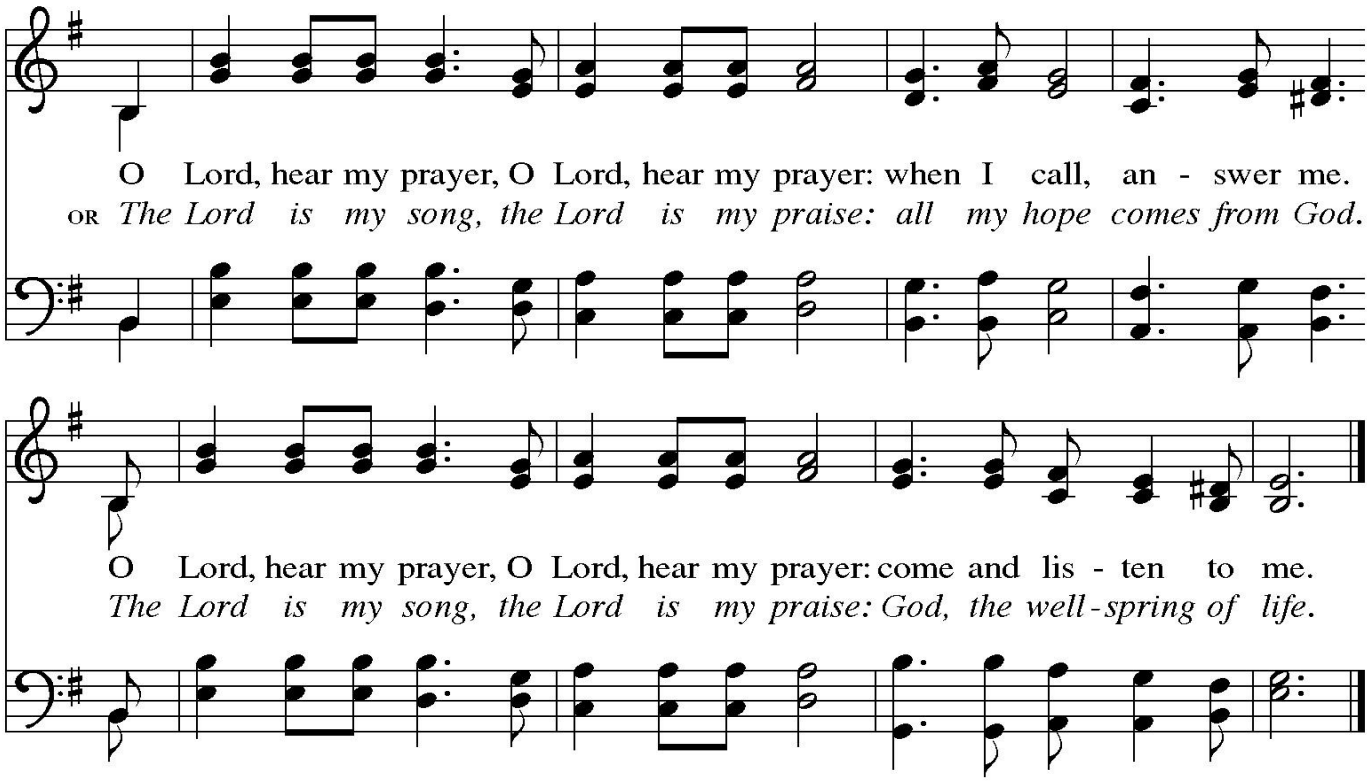
Apostles Creed
I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the 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.

O Lord, Hear My Prayer

The Lord Is My Song



Text: Psalm 102:1–2; Taizé Community, adapt.
Music: HEAR MY PRAYER, Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994
Text and music © 1982, 1991 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent. 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638.
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(*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.

You build up the church as a community of faithful witnesses throughout the generations. Enliven the worship, outreach, and service work of our congregations and ministries with the hope of your good news. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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, **hear 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, **hear 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 *especially*). from **Bethany**. Joanne Hitchcock, Kay Backhus, Kristen Clemens Keenan, Nancy Rebeyro, Ron Aaron, Steve, Louise Koenig, Barb Franklin, Marcia Wray, Merrill & Muriel Frable, Robert Keenan, Dorothy Porter, Sylvia Subject, Gail Cross, Heather Miller, Carl Zimmerman, Tim Johnson, Jamie Molyneayx, Fran Wilson, Kevin McClelland, Lynne Smith, Pastor Dan Hoffman, Bob Skudlarek and those from **St. Stephens** Audrey Childs, Nancy Consedine, Amanda Piccirillo, Betty Linderman, Linda Giardini, Gail Olson, Gloria Preston, Dick Mulaski, Ethan Johnson, Steven, Colt Matz, Dave and Donna Briggs, Rev. Max Meyers, Millie Piccirillo, Martha Edwards, Jim and Kathy, Priscilla and Nelson Griffith, Carolyn Wolfe, Denise, Helen Stritoff, Kienen Duggan, David Styles, Carol Snyder, Adam Wolfe, Jim Fragle, Don Sosnowski, Dave Dorson and those we name either silently or aloud God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless all who serve in congregational leadership: council members, finance committees, volunteer coordinators, and property teams. Encourage healthy stewardship of time, talents, and resources for the mission of the gospel. God, in your mercy,**hear 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, **hear our prayer.**

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

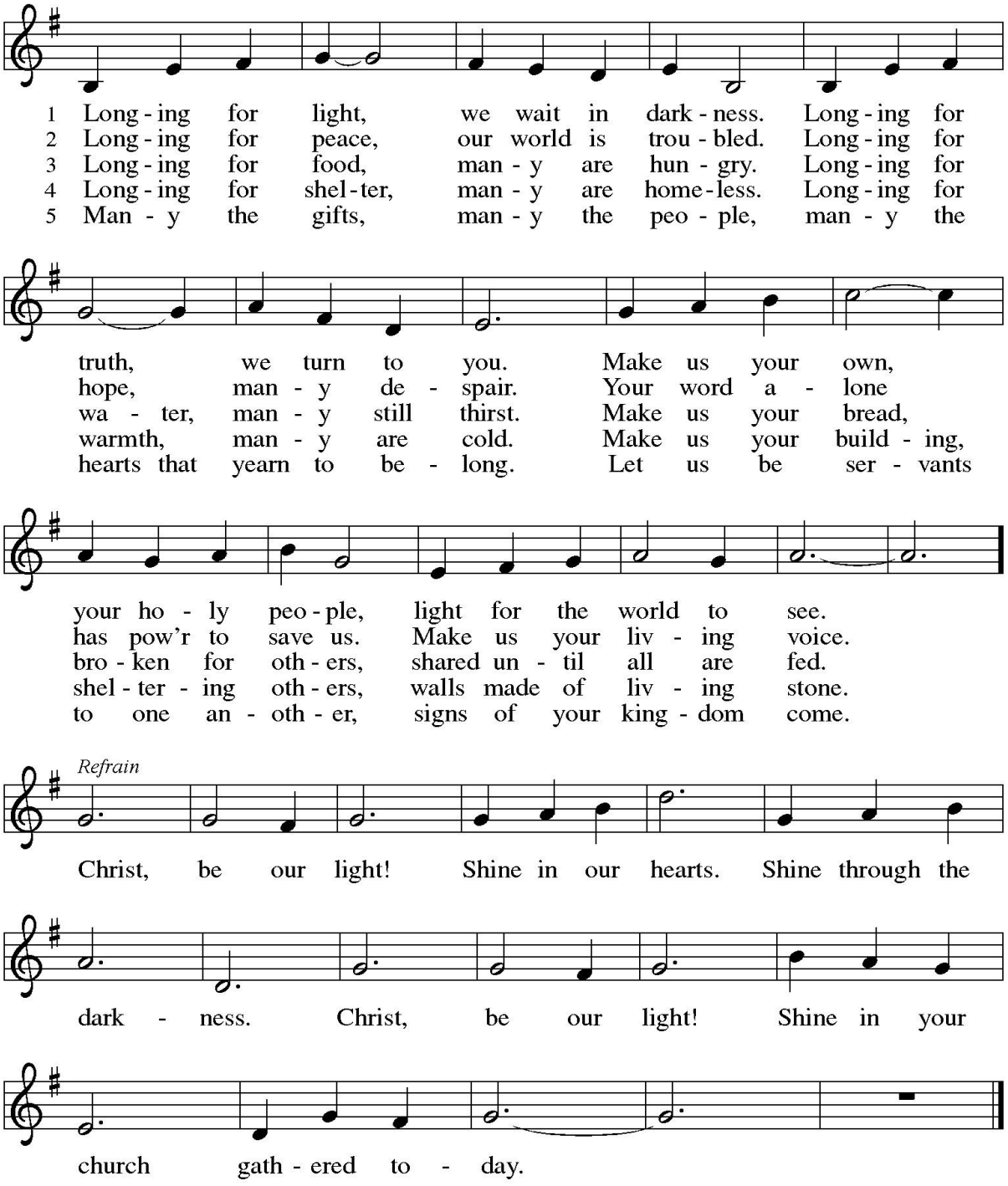
Brief silence.

(Please stand as you are able
The Sharing Of the Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C: And also with you.
P: Please greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

Please be seated for the hymn:

Christ, Be Our Light



Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957
Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell
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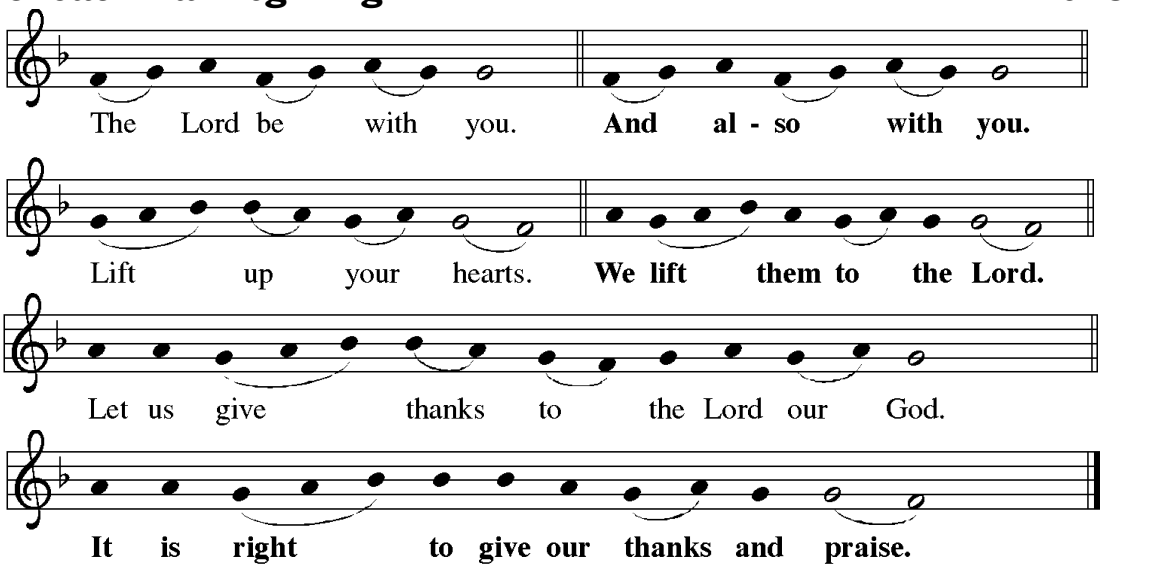
Please stand

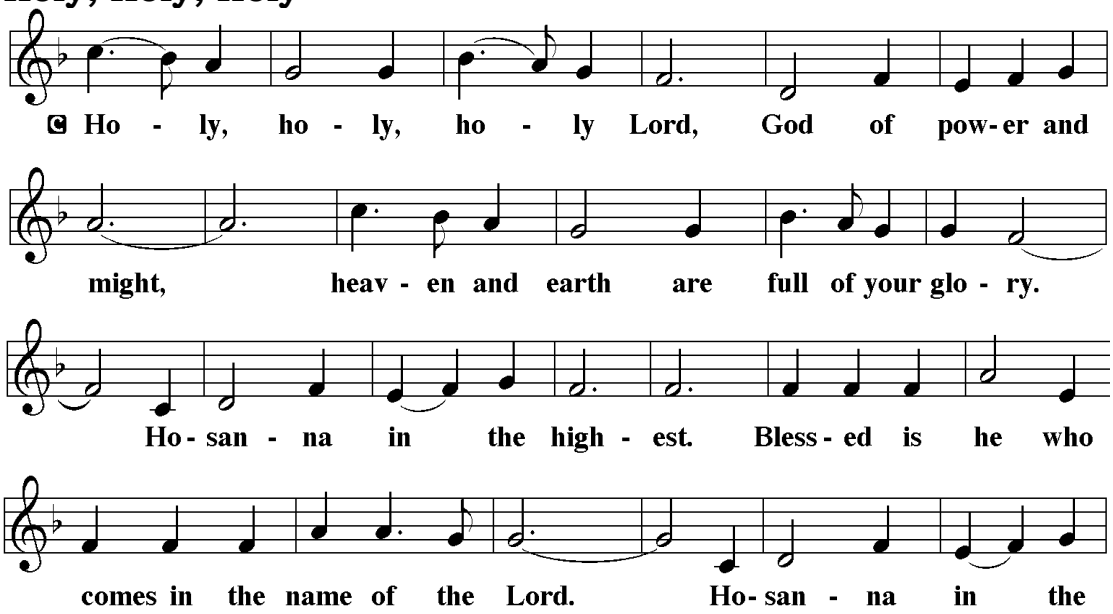
We Share the Holy Meal at God's Table

Great Thanksgiving s161



P: 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, for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin; who in dying has destroyed death, and in rising has brought us to eternal life. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy



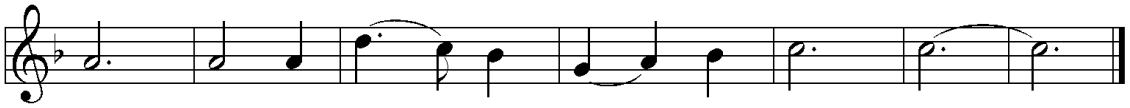


Table Prayer

P: We give you thanks, Father, through Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, whom you sent in this end of the ages to save and redeem us and to proclaim to us your will. He is your Word, inseparable from you. Through him you created all things, and in him you take delight. He is your Word, sent from heaven to a virgin's womb. He there took on our nature and our lot and was shown forth as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin Mary. It is he, our Lord Jesus, who fulfilled all your will and won for you a holy people; he stretched out his hands in suffering in order to free from suffering those who trust you. It is he who, handed over to a death he freely accepted, in order to destroy death, to break the bonds of the evil one, to crush hell underfoot, to give light to the righteous, to establish his covenant, and to show forth the resurrection, taking bread and giving thanks to you, said:

Take and eat; this is my body, broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This is my blood poured out for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's Passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Remembering, then, his death and resurrection, we lift this bread and cup before you, giving you thanks that you have made us worthy to stand before you and to serve you as your priestly people. And we ask you: Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your Church; gather into one all who share this bread and wine; fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth, that we may praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ. Through him all glory and honor are yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church both now and forever. **Amen**

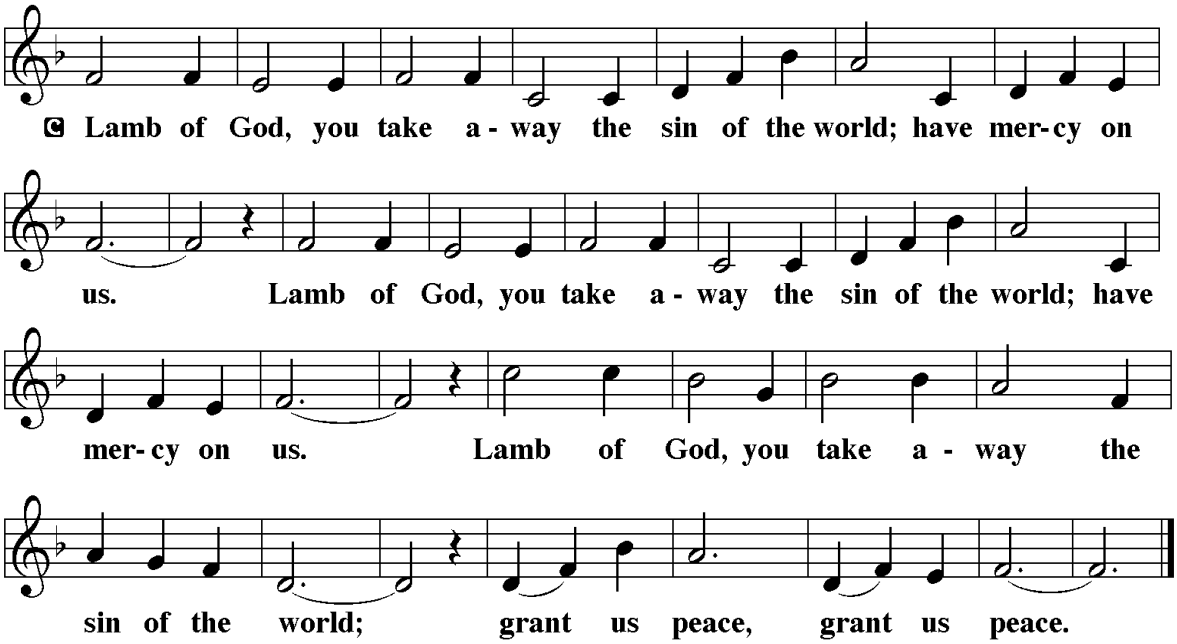
P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom as we pray . . .

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;
and 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

P: Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them.
Come to this meal of mercy.
(*Please be seated***)**
****As you come to the altar, please form a single line…individual cups are to the right, common cup is to the left and if intinction is preferred you may use either side…****

Invitation to Communion
(Christ is our host and Our Communion Table is open to anyone who wishes to partake of the Lord's Supper. *As Lutheran Christians we believe Christ to be really present in the bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins.)*

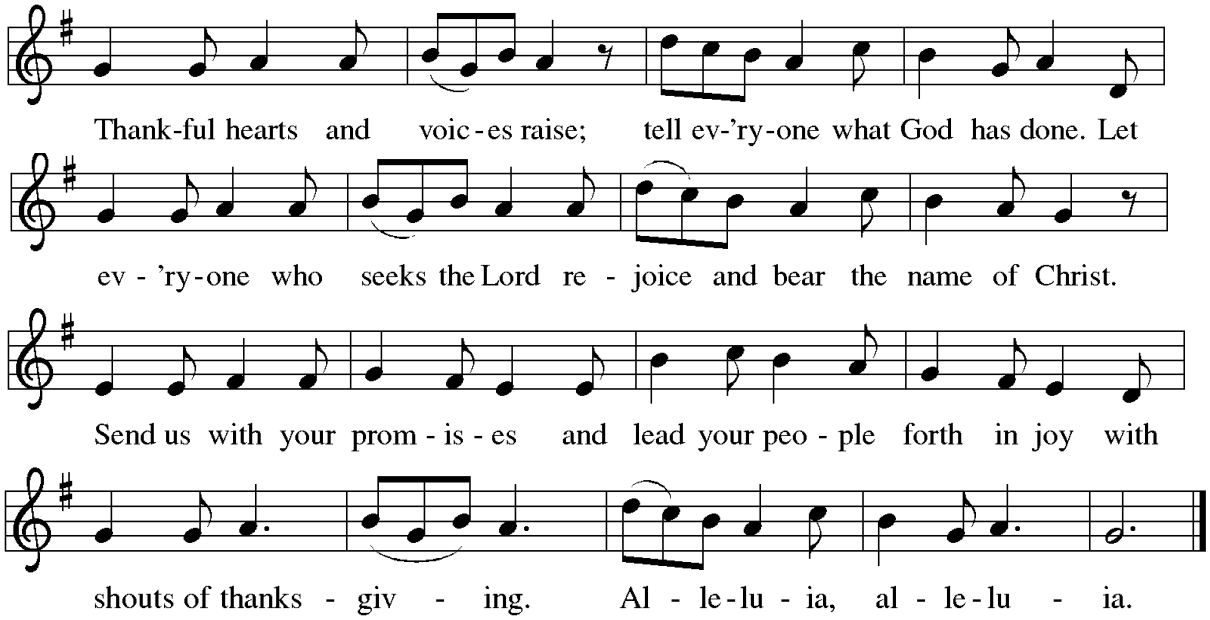
Communion: ***"Lamb of God"***



Communion Music:
(Please stand as you are able)

Post Communion Prayer
Holy God,
we have received your never-ending mercy in this meal.
You continuously seek the lost,
bind the injured,
and feed your people abundantly.
Now send us out,
awake to your presence,
now and forever.
Amen.

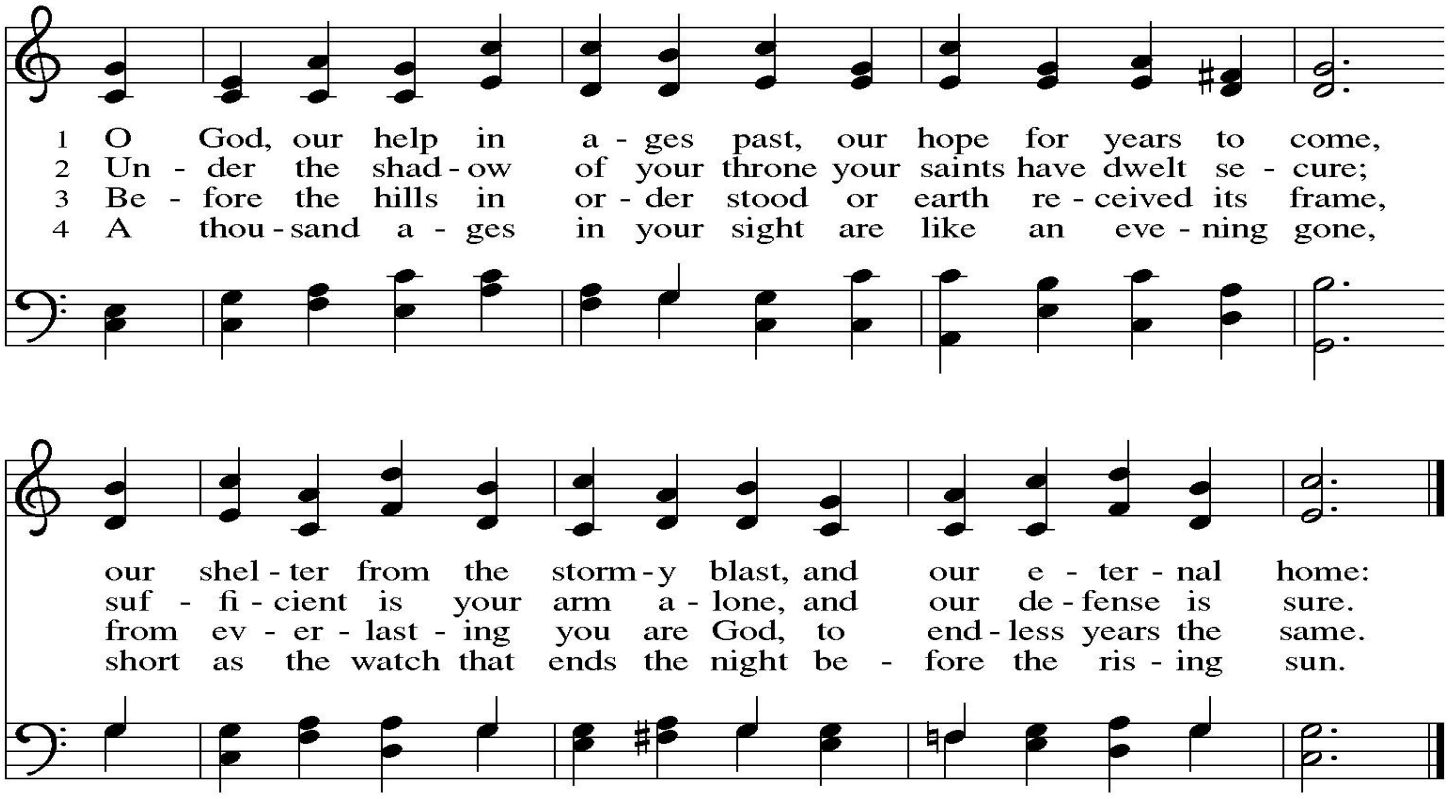
Post Communion Canticle: Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise" ELW 207



We Are Sent to Share the Good News

Blessing:
The holy Trinity,
Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you with wisdom to welcome the reign of God,
today and always.
Amen.

O God, Our Help in Ages Past



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!

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.
Music: ST. ANNE, William Croft, 1678–1727

Dismissal:
Go in peace. Do not lose heart.
Thanks be to God.

Today's Worship Servants
Worship Leader--Rev. Pastor Laura Csellak

Ministers: the people of Bethany
Organists: Ray Sprout & Jack Bollman
Lay Lector: Gail Cross
Counter: Chris Brainard

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This week in our parish

Today 11/15	11:00 Worship @ Bethany ***
	5:30 AA Meeting
Wed 11/18	5:30 AA Meeting
Sun 11/22	11:00 Worship Service @ St. Stephens

***** There will be a Bethany congregational meeting today- Sunday, November 15, for the purpose of reviewing and voting on the 2027 Plan for Ministry – (budget)**

***Church Social – Christmas dinner*-------**
Tuesday, December 8th 6:00 p,m,
at
Tony's Napoli
671 E. State St.
Olean, N.Y.

There will be an optional $20. Gift exchange.
Contact Kara Stimson @ 717-790-2372

SMILES: God bless those with a sense of humor!

A Child's View

"How many women can a man marry:"
"Sixteen," the boy responded.
His cousin was amazed that he had an answer so quickly.
"How do you know that?"
"Easy," the little boy said.
"All you have to do is add it up, like the pastor said,
4 better, 4 worse, 4 richer, 4 poorer."

A little girl became restless as the preacher's sermon dragged on and on.
Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give her the money now, will she let us go?"

FORREST GUMP GOES TO HEAVEN

The day finally arrived. Forrest Gump dies and goes to Heaven..
He is at the Pearly Gates, met by St. Peter himself. However, the gates are closed, and Forrest approaches the gatekeeper. St. Peter said, 'Well, Forrest, it is certainly good to see you. We have heard a lot about you. I must tell you though, that the place is filling up fast, and we have been administering an entrance examination for everyone. The test is short, but you have to

pass it before you can get into heaven.' Forrest responds, 'It sure is good to be here, St. Peter, sir. But nobody ever told me about any entrance exam. I sure hope that the test ain't too hard. Life was a big enough test as it was.'
St. Peter continued, 'Yes, I know Forrest, but the test is only three questions.
First: What two days of the week begin with the letter T?
Second: How many seconds are there in a year?
Third: What is God's first name?

Forrest leaves to think the questions over. He returns the next day and sees St. Peter, who waves him up, and says, 'Now that you have had a chance to think the questions over, tell me your answers.'
Forrest replied, 'Well, the first one – which two days in the week begins with the letter 'T'? Shucks, that one is easy. That would be Today and Tomorrow..'
The Saint's eyes opened wide and he exclaimed, 'Forrest, that is not what I was thinking, but you do have a point and I guess I did not specify, so I will give you credit for that answer. How about the next one?' asked St. Peter. 'How many seconds in a year? Now that one is harder,' replied Forrest, 'but I thunk and thunk about that and I guess the only answer can be twelve.' Astounded, St Peter said, 'Twelve? Twelve? Forrest, how in Heaven's name could you come up with twelve seconds in a year:' Forrest replied, 'Shucks, there's got to be twelve: January 2nd, February 2nd, March 2nd…'
'Hold it,' interrupts St. Peter. 'I see where you are going with this and I see your point, though that was not quite what I had in mind…but I will have to give you credit for that one, too. Let us go on with the third and final question. Can you tell me God's first name?'
'Sure,' Forrest replied, 'it's Andy.' 'Andy?' exclaimed an exasperated and frustrated St. Peter. 'OK, I can understand how you came up with your answers to my first two questions, but just how in the world did you come up with the name Andy as the first name of God?'
'Shucks, that was the easiest one of all,' Forrest replied. 'I learnt it from the song…
ANDY WALKS WITH ME,
ANDY TALKS WITH ME,
ANDY TELLS ME I AM HIS OWN.'
St. Peter opened the pearly gates, and said: 'Run, Forrest, run.'