SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

The First Sunday in Advent
First Presbyterian Church
Tallahassee, Florida
November 29, 2026, 11:00 AM



GATHERING

"If only you would tear open the heavens and come down!" begs the prophet. But the living, free, loving God rarely does. More often God comes to us in a glimpse, a whisper, a shadow moving in the darkness, and we, whose lives are so full of noise, sights, and sounds, lights and thunder of our own creation, miss heaven's opening up for us. So maybe that's why the Church, in its wisdom has the season of Advent in the weeks before Christmas. If we are to see the fragile light that dawns among us in Christ, we must sit a while in the darkness. If we are to hear the songs of the angels, we must first be silent. — William Willimon

Ringing of the Zimbelstern

Voluntary — Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, Op. 67 No. 29 — Max Reger

Choral Introit — Creator of the Stars of Night — CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM

Creator of the stars of night, Your people's everlasting light,
O Christ, redeemer of us all., we pray you hear us when we call .

Lighting of the First Advent Candle

Response Hymn 85 — Light One Candle for Messiah (verse one) — TIF IN VELDELE

Call to Worship

Across the universe creation waits for the prophets to speak their words of expectation and their vision of renewal.
May we gather round them today once more and let their longing grip us and lead us into birth and blessing.
So come now my friends this is the meeting place of promise and prophecy let us listen through the ancient words that we might be ready to hear a baby's cry.

*Hymn 347 — Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence — PICARDY

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

Holy God of Advent, you come near to us, yet we continue to seal our hearts with indifference to a suffering world.
Tear open our hearts, and make us more compassionate.
You approach us with bundles of mercy to kindle our hope, but we continue to build our lives with the bricks of bitterness. Tear open our anger, so we might become more forgiving. You draw near, longing to embrace us, but we fold our arms, closing ourselves off from those all around us.
Tear open our souls, so we might become children of Advent.
God, shaper-of-our-lives: have mercy; Jesus, Word-which-does-not-pass-away: fill us with your grace; Holy Spirit, Giver-of-the-Light-of-peace:
Shine through our lives.

Asterisks indicate to please rise in body or spirit. Congregational responses are in **bold print.*

*Silent Confession

*Assurance of Pardon

Even now, God approaches us, mercy transcending anger, hope overcoming despair, life triumphing over death. This is good news, my friends; this is news of great joy for each of us.
Enriched in every grace, blessed with joy and hope, transformed by love, we will live as people of Advent. Thanks be to God. Amen.

*Response Hymn 95 Prepare the Way of the Lord PREPARE THE WAY

*The Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you all.
And also with you.

Welcome and Announcements

WORD

Prayer for Illumination Rebekah Circle

Scripture Reading Isaiah 64:1–4, 8

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn 355 O Hear Our Cry O Lord (Psalm 80) VINEYARD HAVEN

Epistle Reading 1 Corinthians 1:3–9

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading Mark 13:24–37

The Gospel of the Lord. **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Sermon Dear God, Help! Rev. Mark Phillips

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down. — Isaiah 64:1

*Hymn 92 While We Are Waiting, Come WAITING (Cason)

*Affirmation of Faith

We are an Advent people, a people of hope. For us, Advent is a time of waiting, and so we wait. We wait for the coming of the One who is the fulfillment of God's promise, the fulfillment of hope, the declaration that we have been redeemed. Even so, we are not a naïve people. We know that the world in which we live will continue to be filled with pain and sorrow. We know that hatred and violence will continue to exist. We know that death and separation will continue to be a part of our lives. But because we are an Advent people, we know that none of these things will win in the end. The Holy One is coming, to make holy once again all that was, is, and ever will be. And in our waiting and our hoping, we work and worship, pray and play, in all things hoping that peace, love and joy will reign in our lives and in our world, now and forever.

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kindom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kindom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

THANKSGIVING

Call For Offering

Presentation of Gifts, Tithes and Offerings

Anthem — Advent Prophecy — Tom Mitchell

You Bethlehem, Ephrathah! How small you are among the families of Judah.
And yet from you will come for me a ruler over Israel from before the dawn of time.
Israel will be abandoned, until his mother's time has come And she who is in labor gives birth and all
God's people are one. In the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the lord He shall stand and shepherd
his flock. And they will live securely, for his greatness will reach to the bounds of the earth, And he will be their peace.

*Presentation Hymn 606 — Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow — OLD HUNDREDTH

*Prayer of Dedication

SENDING

*Hymn 93 — Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates — TRURO

*Charge and Benediction

*Benediction Response — The Lord Bless You and Keep You — Jim Strathdee

The Lord bless and keep you,
The Lord make his face to shine on you,
And be gracious.

The Lord bless and keep you,
The Lord lift his countenance on you,
And give you peace. Shalom, Amen.

Voluntary — Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, Op. 67 No. 41 — Max Reger

IN WORSHIP TODAY

Prayer Concerns and Celebrations — We offer prayers for healing for Juana Maria Diaz Perez (mother of Ruben Diaz), Bob Rackleff, Rich Peyton, Martha Kutter, Joyce Crawford, Bev Breedlove, Tara Reynolds, Sandra Sherrard, Martha Snowden, Wayne Friedemann, John Cole, Father Lonnie Lacy, Rector at St. John's Episcopal Church, and Rev. Brant Copeland. **We offer prayers for strength and mercy** for Patricia McCoy Delancey and Jeannetta Hoekman. **We pray for the staff and volunteers** of Second Harvest of the Big Bend as well as those of all our mission partners. **We pray for victims of gun violence** in our community and our country. **We pray for the Presbyterian Reformed Church** in Cuba, Pastor Izett Samá Hernández, and Pastor Alison Infante. **We pray for peace** in Israel, Gaza, Ukraine, Iran and around the world. **We also pray for those in military service**, including Ross Yeilding, David DelRossi, and Owen Elzie.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Children are welcome in this service as full members of God's family. Parents and children are invited to use whatever is useful in the basket by the door to the Narthex. Childcare for children under the age of kindergarten is in the Education Building, Room 205. Please note that during worship the Education Building is locked. Please enter through the breezeway door.

Restrooms are located in this building through the door at the end of each ground floor aisle of the sanctuary.

An induction loop system is available in the sanctuary. To use the system, switch your compatible hearing aid to the T–telephone mode or request a wireless headset from an usher.

Large Print Versions of the *Glory to God* hymnal and worship bulletin are available from ushers.

Visitors: We are glad you are here this morning! If you have questions about our congregation or membership, please let us know by using the friendship registers or speaking to one of the greeters so we can connect you with the right people. We welcome new members after worship on the second Sunday of each month.

This Advent season, our study begins on Monday, November 30 and concludes on Monday, December 21, at noon in the John Calvin room. For our study, we will use the book *Light of the World: A Beginner's Guide to Advent* by author, professor, and biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine. Copies of the book are available for $10.00. Please see Rev. Mark Phillips for yours. All are welcome! Feel free to bring lunch with you to enjoy during the study.

Stewardship Campaign Update: As of Tuesday, November 24, we have received 59 pledges totaling $416,892. Our goal for this year's campaign is 70 pledges totaling $475,000. If you have not submitted your pledge card, please remember to do so as soon as possible. Additional pledge cards are available in the narthex. We greatly appreciate the many pledge cards already received! Thank you!

The Bell Choir plans to perform on Christmas Eve! If you are interested in ringing this year, please speak with Bryan Stenson.

CHECK-IN ➡

Let us know you came

QR CODES

GIVE ONLINE ⬅

Online Offerings &

MEMBERS OF SESSION 2026–28

CLASS OF 2026	CLASS OF 2027	CLASS OF 2028
Daniel Bruno	Kay Crowell	Carolyn Herrington
Eleanor Cleveland	Jon Dodrill	Sue Hightower
Janet Fixel	Caitlin James	Bob McVety
John Mayo	Mary Kutter	Donnie Watts
Greg Riccardi, Clerk	Deb Whisnant	Shirley Zahn

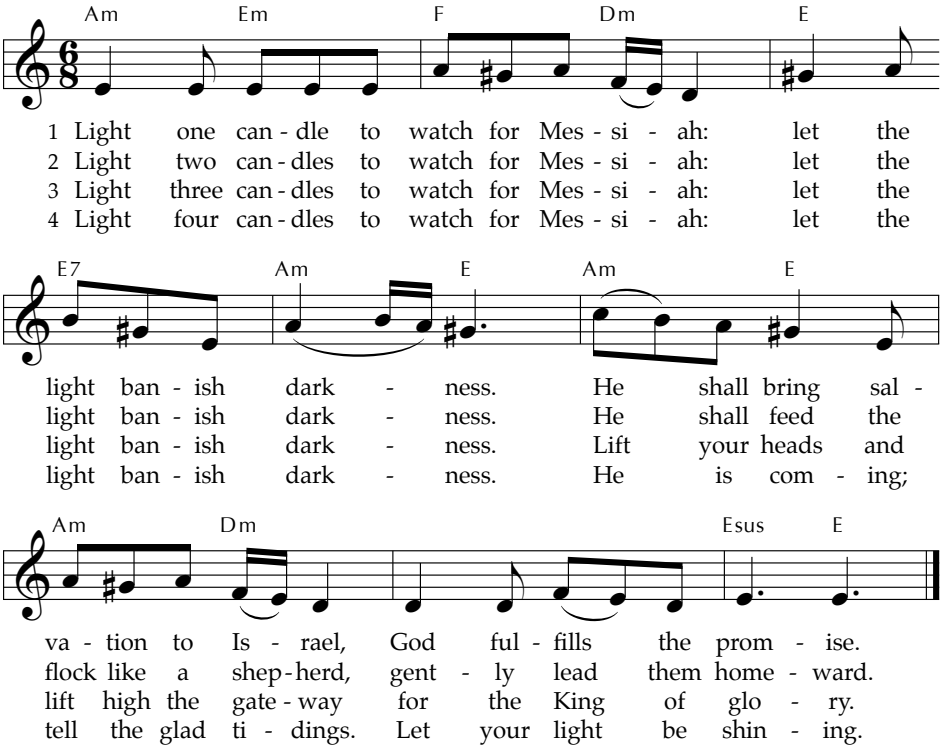
SERVING IN THE LITURGY

MINISTER	Rev. Mark Phillips
SCRIPTURE READERS	Rebekah Circle
CHOIR	The Adult Choir
CHOIR DIRECTOR	Bryan Stenson
ORGANIST	Victoria Coey
VIDEO TEAM LEAD	Carl Morse
SUNDAY HOST	Becky Brown

First Presbyterian Church
110 North Adams Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
Email: office@oldfirstchurch.org

Phone: (850) 222-4504
Fax: (850) 222-2215
www.facebook.com/oldfirstchurch
Website: www.oldfirstchurch.org

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

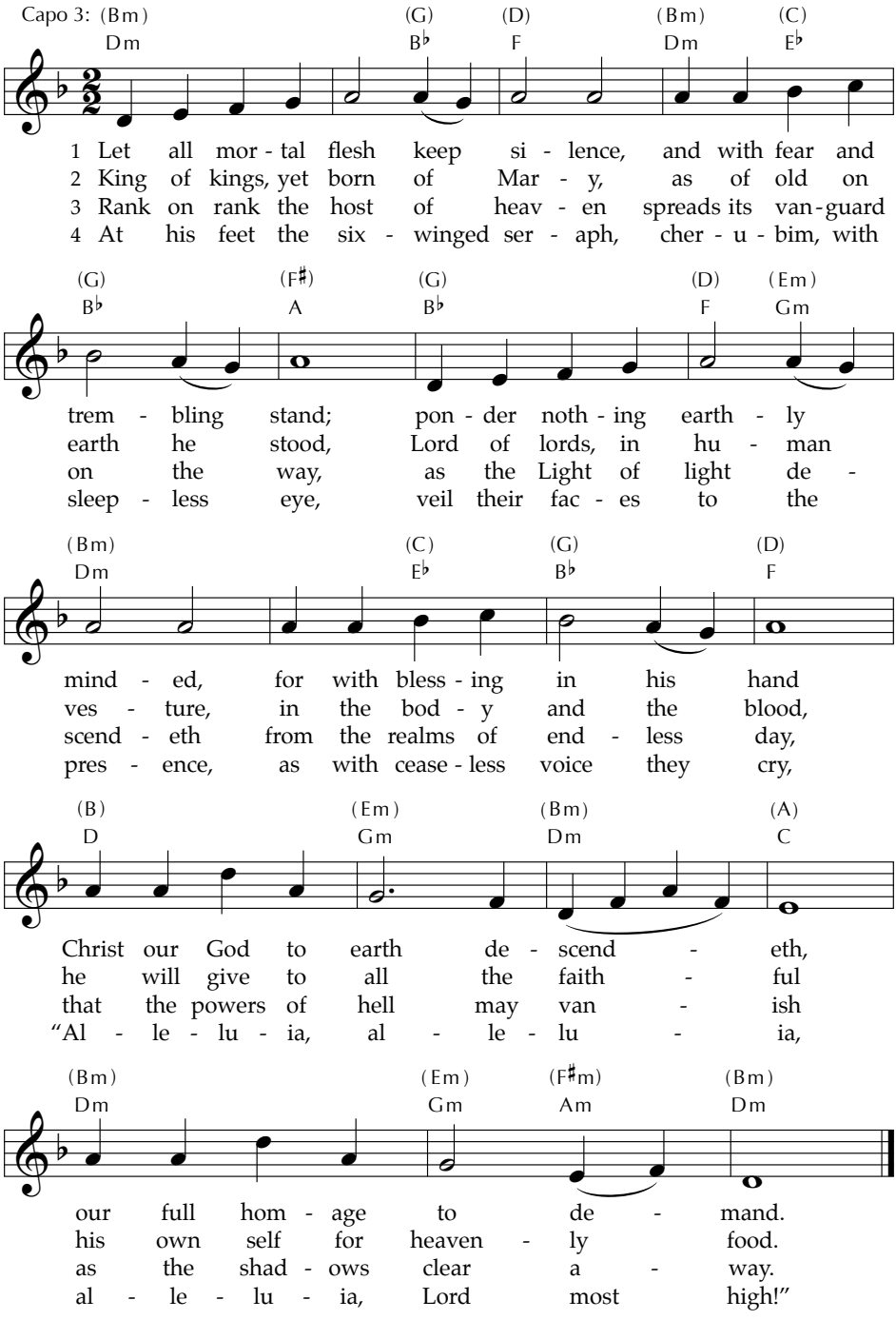


This text works best when used incrementally during the four weeks of Advent. It underscores the "waiting" theme of the season and concludes appropriately with reference to Matthew 25:1–13. The tune name meaning "deep in the forest" comes from the opening of a Yiddish love song.

TEXT: Wayne L. Wold, 1984
MUSIC: Yiddish folk song; arr. Wayne L. Wold, 1984
Text and Music Arr. © 1984 Fortress Press (admin. Augsburg Fortress)

TIF IN VELDELE
10.7.9.6

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence 347

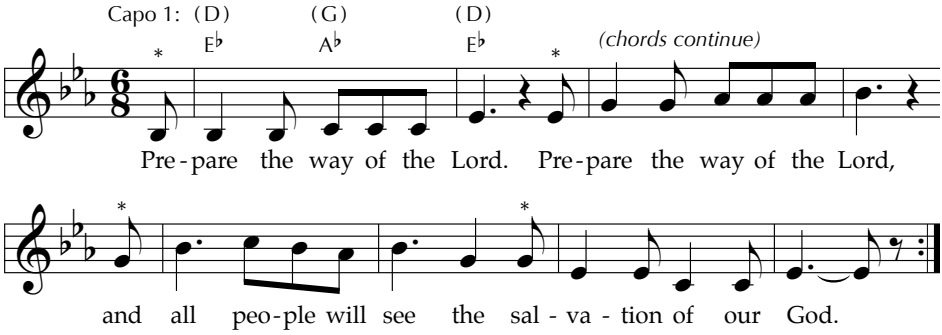


The flowering of English hymnody in the 19th century included the rediscovery, translation, and versification of ancient Christian hymns, such as this text from one of the earliest existing Christian liturgies. It is set here to an adaptation of a 17th-century French melody.

TEXT: From Liturgy of St. James, 4th cent.; trans. Gerard Moultrie, 1864, alt.
MUSIC: French melody; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

PICARDY
8.7.8.7.8.7

Prepare the Way of the Lord 95



**May be sung as a canon.*

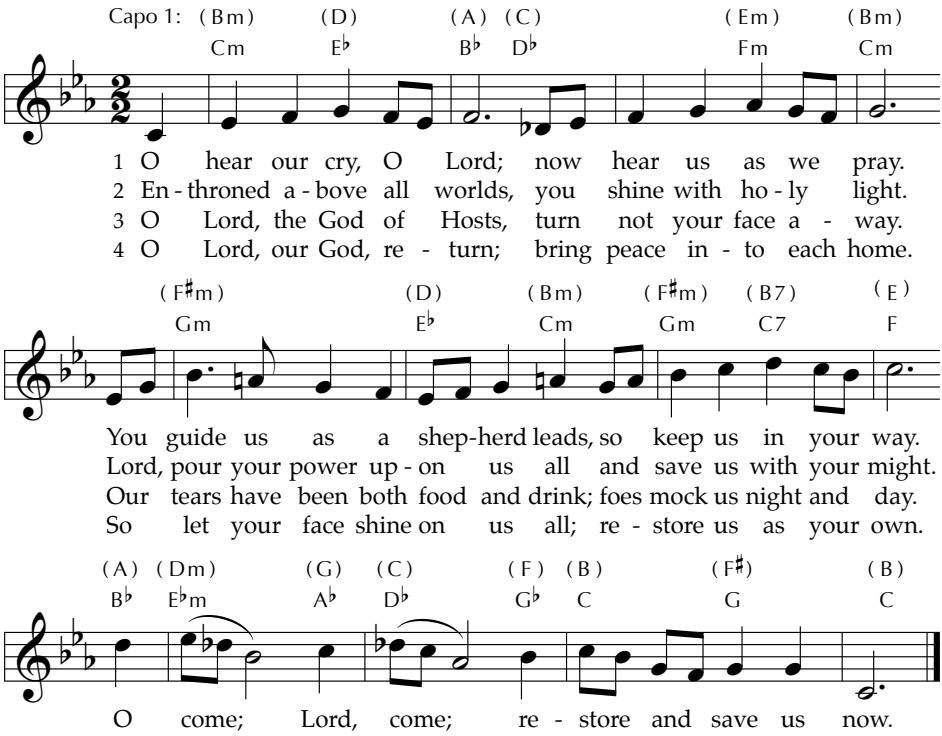
All three synoptic gospels identify John the Baptist as the forerunner of the Messiah (Matthew 3:3/Mark 1:2–3/Luke 3:4) in accord with Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 40:3b). Because the latter part of the text (Isaiah 52:10b) has yet to be accomplished, this is still our mission today.

TEXT: Taizé Community, 1984
MUSIC: Jacques Berthier, 1984
Text and Music © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

PREPARE THE WAY
7.7.6.7

O Hear Our Cry, O Lord 355

(Psalm 80)



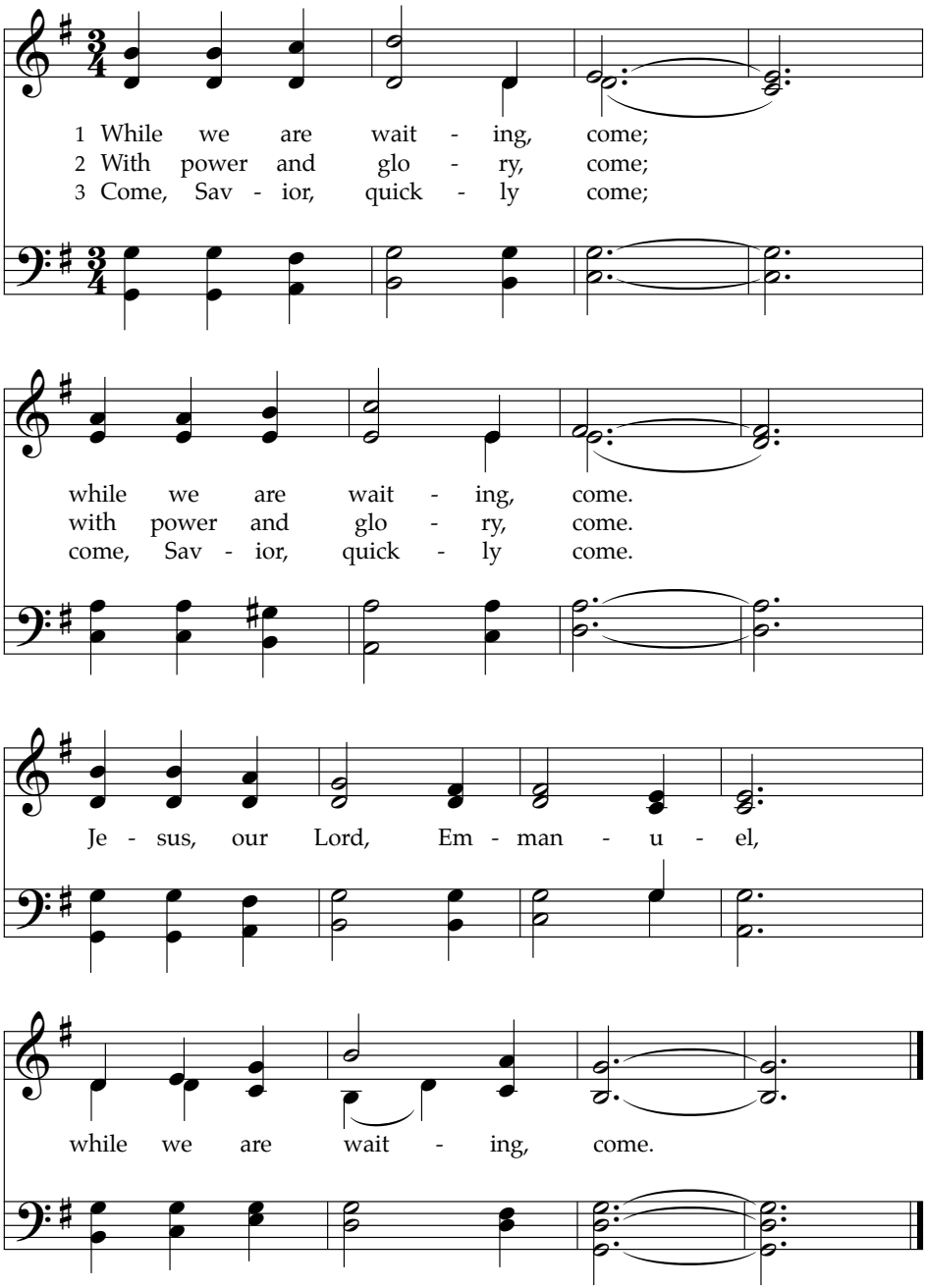
Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

The use of a refrain in this paraphrase of Psalm 80 effectively represents both the structure and the spirit of the original prayer for the restoration of God's favor. Even in the midst of feeling cut off from God, there remains a sense of confidence in God's unfailing mercy.

TEXT: Fred R. Anderson, 1986
MUSIC: Richard Wayne Dirksen, 1974
Text © 1986 Fred R. Anderson
Music © 1974, ren. Harold Flammer Music (a div. of Shawnee Press, Inc.)

VINEYARD HAVEN
SM with refrain

92 While We Are Waiting, Come



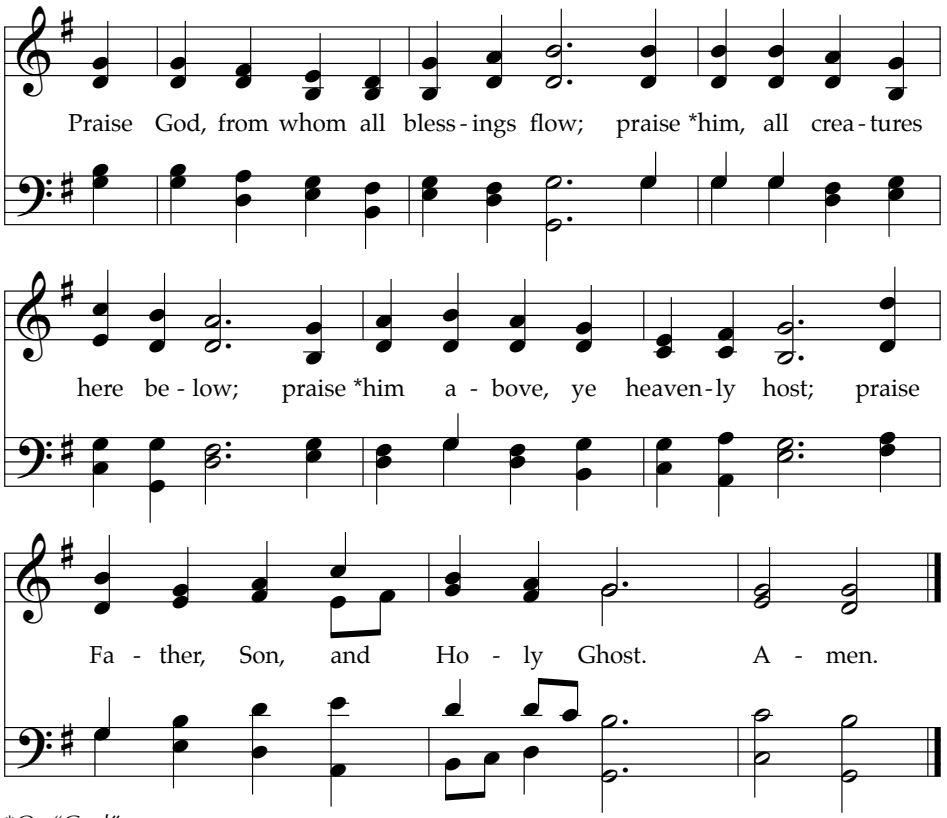
This simple and meditative Advent hymn is so uncomplicated in both text and tune that it can be learned quickly and sung without reference to a book, which might make it effective as a prayer response. It would also lend itself to improvised stanzas on appropriate occasions.

TEXT: Claire Cloninger, 1986
MUSIC: Don Cason, 1986
Text and Music © 1986 Word Music, LLC

WAITING (Cason)
SM

606 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Doxology

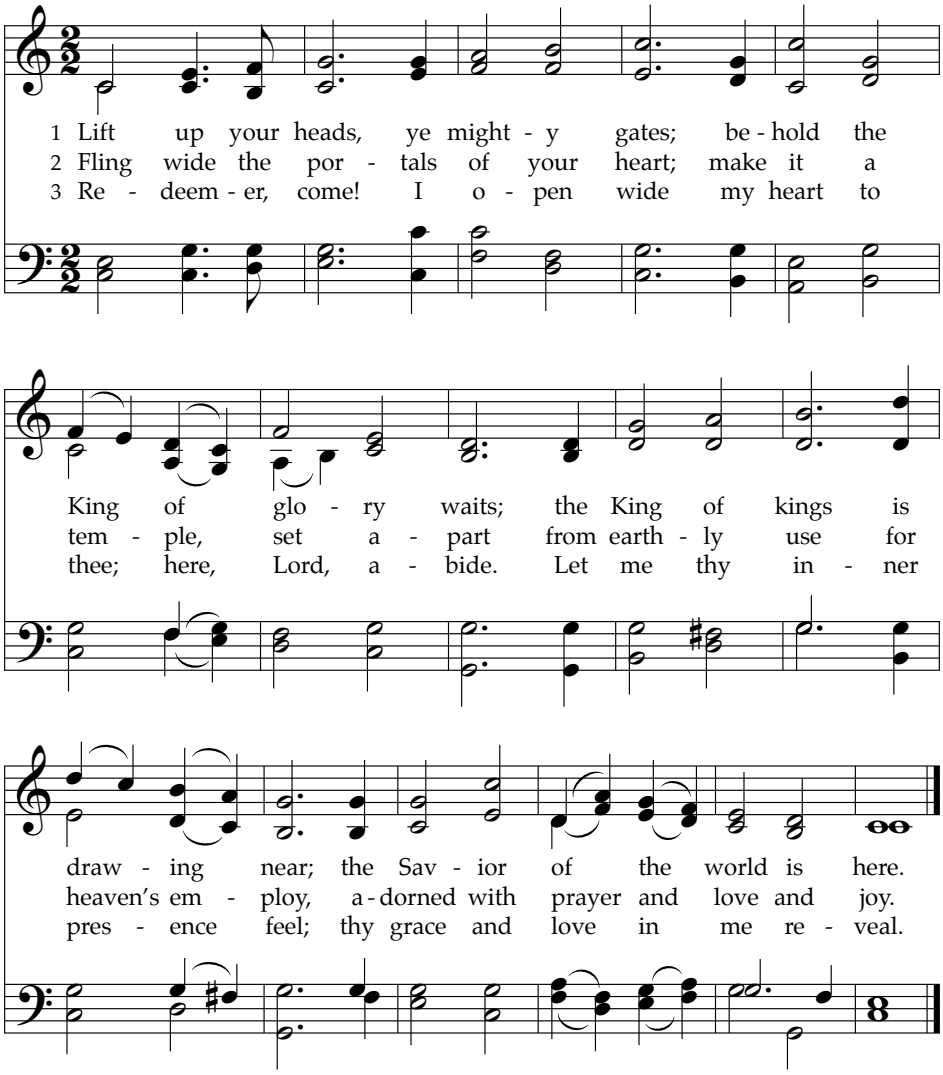


**Or "God"*

TEXT: Thomas Ken, 1695, 1709
MUSIC: Genevan Psalter, 1551

OLD HUNDREDTH
LM

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates 93



Beginning as a paraphrase of Psalm 24:7–10, this text then applies the door imagery to the singer's heart, and concludes with the individual's welcome of the approaching Savior. It is set to a very effective anonymous 18th-century English tune that has served many texts.

TEXT: Georg Weissel, 1642; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1855, 1863
MUSIC: *Musica Sacra,* c. 1778

TRURO
LM