



**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent**  
**Sunday, December 7, 2025**

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**300 Queen Street**  
**Northumberland, PA 17857**  
**570-473-3770**  
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# WELCOME

## GATHERING

This is our Advent, the time when we remember God is urgently waiting to finally arrive.

God, we have been waiting for you, too.

**Yet you often arrive before we notice: in the place we did not expect, in the word we did not hear.**

Right before you change a life, your angels always say, “Do not be afraid.”

**You are here to change this place. We are not afraid.**

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

God is here, and God sees through every defense that fools the world. Since we cannot hide from God, there is nothing left to do but to be honest with each other and humble before God. So, in humility, we confess our sins.

**God, we have acted helpless, even when you called us to action. We have resisted your truth, even when our lies were exhausting. We have behaved as though we were alone, even when you were beside us. God, we have believed we were dying, even when you helped us grow.**

God knows we can never undo the sins of this world.

**The stories of a painful past still echo here today.**

Yet before our first mistakes, God perfected the plan for salvation. God forgives your sins, all of them. Even when signs of our old lives remain, God’s forgiveness is still at work.

**God sets us free to chart a new path.**

## **GREETING**

Peace to you and welcome, from the God who grows severed trees, the Savior who healed withered bodies, the Spirit who gives wild new growth.

**And also with you.**

## **SECOND WEEK IN ADVENT**

This week we adorn our worship space with evergreens on our doors, windows, and the Narthex. For Christians evergreens are a sign of life, renewal, and new growth as they retain their leaves throughout the winter. They bring the promise of everlasting life with God. And we add the second Advent Banner of Peace.

When deep blue darkness steps aside for softly spreading flame, we take comfort from the warmth of living light. This candle on our Advent wreath represents the joy of life, which spreads as we share it. The unpredictable flicker of life brings comfort even when the future remains a mystery.

In time every person will know the warmth of God's love. But not yet, not fully.

## **ADVENT HYMN**

*God of the Starlight and Moon*    **by Linnea K. Clark**

# God of the Starlight and Moon

1. God of the star - light and moon, mys - ter - y God of the  
2. Beau - ty be - yond what we know, shap - ing a world that we  
3. Out of the blue you ar - rive, weav - ing our lives with your

mid - night blue skies. Love draw - ing near,  
can - not quite see. Form of a child,  
con - stant sur - prise. Flick - er - ing flame,

dream-ing new fu - tures: fire of our hearts, a - rise.  
reach-ing to greet us: time in e - ter - ni - ty.  
spark-ling with prom - ise: God of the star - lit skies.

Text and music: Linnéa K. Clark

OUT OF THE BLUE

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## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
Amen.**

## WORD

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

## FIRST READING

Isaiah 11:1-10

*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> 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 72:1-7, 18-19

read responsively

**REFRAIN:** *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. R**

<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. **R**

## SECOND READING

## Romans 15:4-13

*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**

*Alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord.\* All flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia. (Luke 3:4, 6)*

## **GOSPEL**

**Matthew 3:1-12**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*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.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **TIME WITH THE CHILDREN**

### **SERMON**

**HYMN OF THE DAY**   **Comfort, Comfort Now My People**   **ELW 256**

### **APOSTLES CREED**

Do you believe there is a God who made us?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe this God sent a child named Jesus to save this world?

**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.**



Do you believe the Holy Spirit animates our faith and empowers the church today?

**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**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

*A brief silence.*

With wisdom and understanding, inspire the faithful around the world. Unite hearts and minds in work to address poverty, access to housing, and equity among peoples. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

With counsel and might, move us to care for creation. As we dream of the day when all creatures will flourish alongside one another, guide us in ways humanity and all creation will mutually thrive. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

With righteousness and faithfulness, encourage nations to live in harmony with one another. We pray for international student and teacher exchanges, for our partner churches, and for the shared mission of Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Disaster Response. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

With steadfastness and encouragement, strengthen those who have lost hope in the face of grief, depression, or disease (*especially*). Renew the spirits of those recovering from surgery and medical procedures. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

With welcome and hospitality, embolden us in our shared ministry to overcome all that divides. In acts of repentance, reconciliation, and reparation, may we serve in the way of Christ. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

With joy and peace, we remember our ancestors in the faith (*especially Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, whom we commemorate today*). Fill us with the hope of the Holy Spirit now and into the ages of ages. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.  
**Amen.**

## **PEACE**

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

*You may share a sign of peace with your neighbor.*

## **MEAL**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

## **OFFERING**

*Thank you for your continued support with your offering. Offering may be placed in the offering plate on the table in the rear of the sanctuary, by mail or our on-line giving.*

# We Are Waiting for Jesus



1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.  
Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

## OFFERING PRAYER

Please pray with me.

**God, we cherished what we thought belonged only to us:  
our money, and our time, and our families, and our freedom.**

Yet in a moment, we recognize that every truly good thing was a treasure we had taken from your open hand. We thought such treasures were ours to earn and to own.

**You grow what we give away. So we give you these gifts as a sign of  
your love and faithfulness. Amen.**

## DIALOGUE

Holy Jesus, be our guest. For you are already here.

God is with you.

**And also with you.**

People of God, lift up your hearts in praise.

**We lift them to our God.**

Let us give thanks to the God of our salvation.

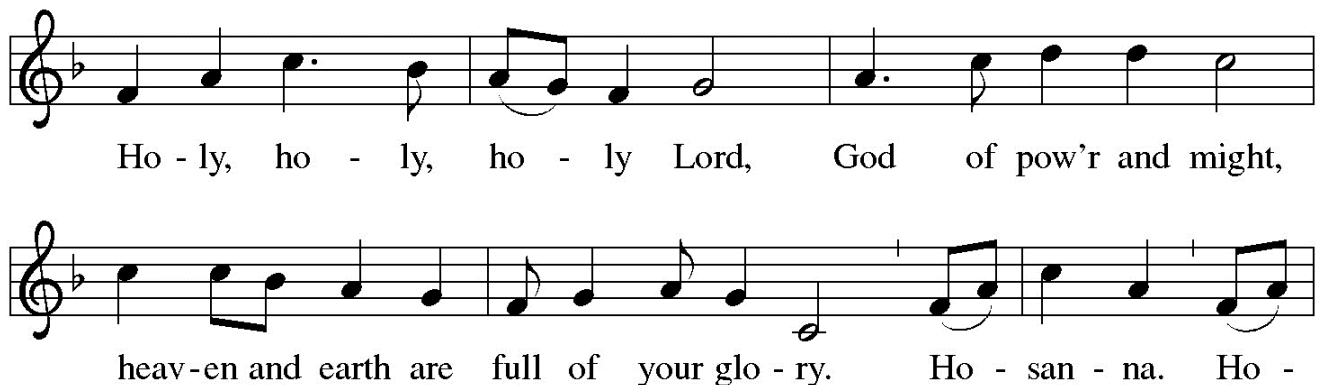
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## PREFACE

Holy God, once you made humankind you could not help but love them. From the first human mistake, you planned the path to salvation. Yet even when you set clear signs of promise in sky or stars, in the mouths of prophets or the faces of a newborns, people still felt astonished to receive your goodness. Jesus, at your birth your parents greeted you with wonder. On the cross, your enemies crushed you, then marveled as you exuded grace. Again and again we tell the age-old story of your grace. Yet still we sing with wonder when you appear out of the blue.

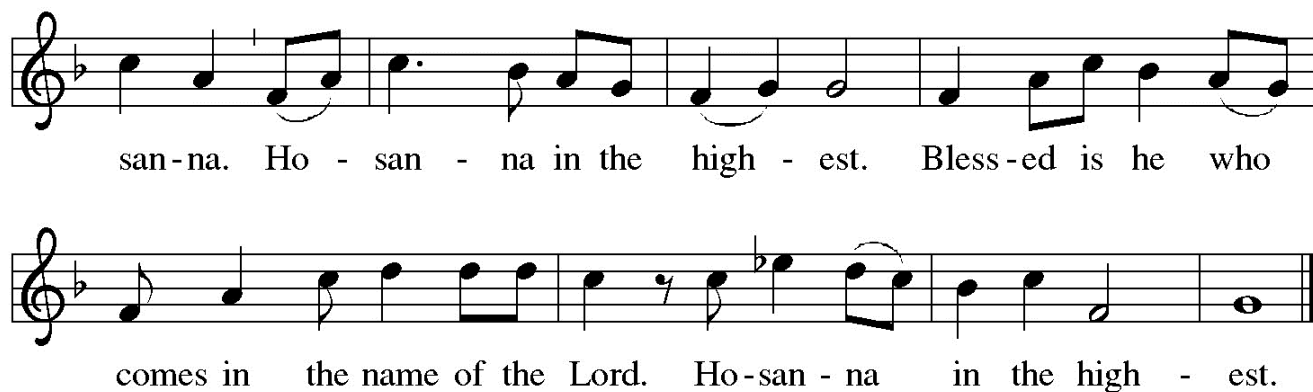
## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW 144



The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the hymn, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes.

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 -



## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

One night, long ago, the enemies of Jesus put an evil plan in motion. In hours, they would imprison Jesus, try him, and unjustly put him to death.

Jesus' friends hardly expected the sudden betrayal, the quickness of injustice. But God knew. So Jesus set the table for the long-awaited banquet of God's grace.

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

That night long ago has come to us today. At this table we find the same bread, Christ's body; the same cup of Christ's blood.

So we say the same prayer Jesus taught his friends...

**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.**

Holy Spirit, we may not feel the fire of your presence, but pour yourself out upon this bread and this cup. And suffuse those gathered here with your holiness so we may be crumbs of your mercy and drops of your goodness.

Make us your people, who can never separate from you again.  
Holy Spirit, we may not feel the fire of your presence, but pour yourself out upon this bread and this cup. And suffuse those gathered here with your holiness so we may be crumbs of your mercy and drops of your goodness. Make us your people, who can never separate from you again.

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

People of God, you are Christ's people: tied to Jesus in his death and made new in his resurrection. So listen to the promise prepared for you in this moment: Even when you feel dead, you are alive; even when you have done wrong, God forgives you. And even when you feel unwelcome or unworthy, Jesus brings you to the table where you can find new friends. Come and take your place at the feast that never ends.

*The assembly may be seated. Communion will be served at the altar rail.  
Wine or grape juice are available.*

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Please pray with me.

**Jesus, the world looks different from your table. Here, there are no strangers, and grace is never a surprise. Life always thrives in the desert, and a promise never shades with doubt. Soon as we rise from this table, our memories of this goodness fade. Bring us back every day to your promises: astonish us again. Amen.**

## **SENDING**

As you leave from this place, adjust your expectations to God's promises.

There is friendship after loneliness,  
**there is hope after every last breath.**

There is already life in the desert. There is even delight in decline.

**For we tell the story of new life from the grave.**

In the world drained of color  
**God arrives out of the blue.**

**SENDING SONG     Light Dawns On A Weary World     ELW 726**

## **DISMISSAL**

We go now to be a light in our community, **to make Christ known to all through nourishing, serving, and faith. Thanks be to God.**

**Pastor**  
Rev. Karla S. Leiby

**Director of Music**  
William Jacavage

**Greeter**  
Trish Long

**Lector**  
Julie Shearer

**Acolyte**  
Paige Billman

**Communion Assistant**  
Brenda and David Herbert

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are presented by June Diehl in memory of Derl Kauffman, whose birthday is remembered today.

THE BULLETINS are presented in memory of Derl Kauffman by Brenda and David Herbert.

Thank you to everyone who helped set up and clean up after the bazaar, to all who donated items and food for the bazaar, and to everyone who came and supported this event.

Choir singers needed for Christmas Eve. Everyone is welcome to join us. We will be singing two songs, and practicing on Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. after Bell Choir. If you are interested but unable to make it to choir practice, please see Bill for copies of the music. Similar to the Every Voice Choir that sings during the month, you will be able to sit with your family during the service and come forward at the singing time.

Children and youth singers are needed for Christmas Eve. They will be practicing during Sunday School on Dec. 7, 14, and 21.

The Pink Envelope collection for December is designated for Birthright. The Quiet Cash/Noisy Coin collection is designated for Camp Mount Luther.



Sunbury City Band will present their Christmas Concert in Fellowship Hall on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to join us as we take a break from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and enjoy some wonderful music.

***Mitten Tree gifts need to be returned to the church no later than December 14<sup>th</sup>*** in order to get them distributed. Please return the mitten tag with the gift. They do not have to be wrapped, boxes would be appreciated, if possible. Birthright Tree gifts are to be wrapped in white tissue paper and returned to the church prior to Christmas Eve, or you may bring them along to the Christmas Eve Worship Service.

As we approach the end of the year, please be reminded that if you want your financial contributions to be recorded on your “Statement of Giving for calendar year 2025, they must be received by Sunday, December 28<sup>th</sup>. Any contributions received after this date will be credits in 2026.

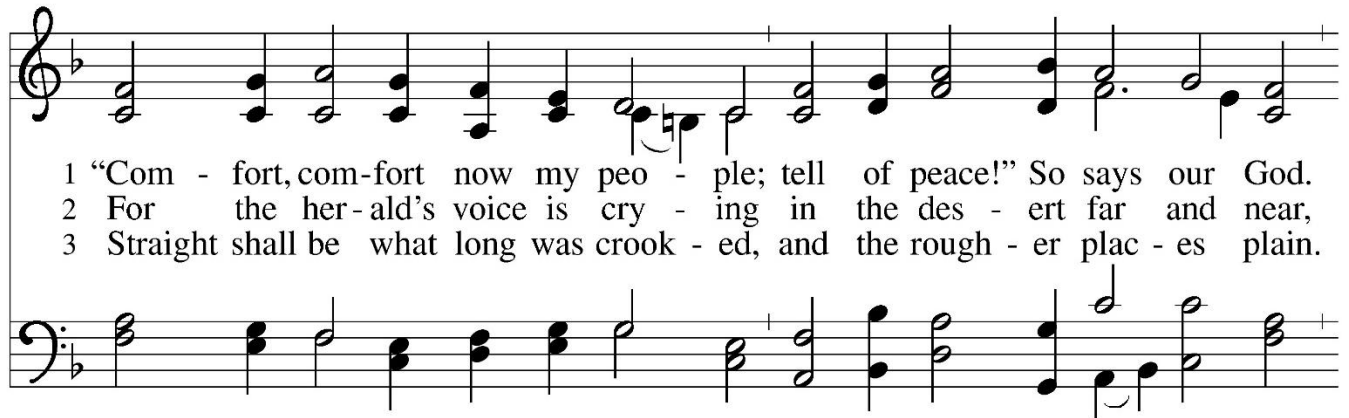
***Christmas Eve Service*** – Wednesday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m. Festive music will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Worship bags for Christmas Eve will be available for pickup inside church office entrance steps December 16, 17 and 18.

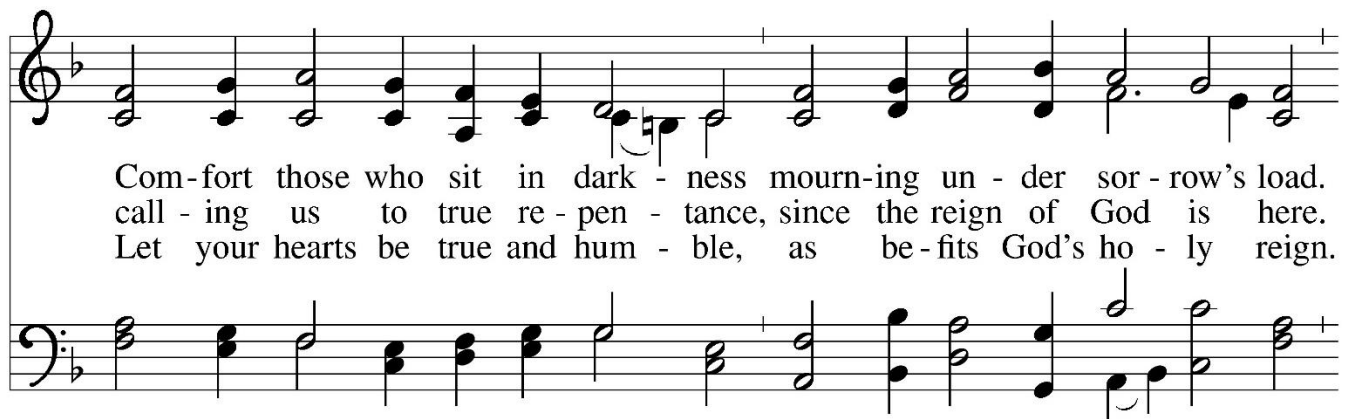
**PRAYERS:** Pat Propst

**CONTINUED PRAYERS & HOMEBOUND** Jason Gulden; Mike Payne; Doug Manning; Kathryn Lebo; Jason Gulden; Helen Snyder; June Diehl; Mary Rogers; Nevin Brungard; Elaine Kohl; Nancy Hendricks; William Wagner; Betty Yerg; Jane Ressler; David Bartholomew; Marti Row; Jeremy Hoffman

# Comfort, Comfort Now My People



1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.  
2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,  
3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.  
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.  
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!  
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.  
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for-ev - er.  
Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.  
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

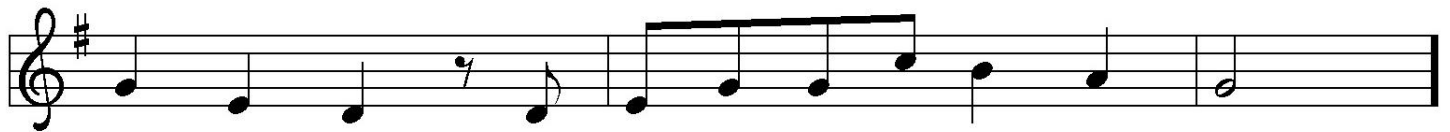
# Light Dawns on a Weary World



1 Light dawns on a wea - ry world when eyes be - gin to  
2 Love grows in a wea - ry world when hun - gry hearts find  
3 Hope blooms in a wea - ry world when crea-tures, once for -



see all peo - ple's dig - ni - ty. Light dawns on a  
bread and chil - dren's dreams are fed. Love grows in a  
lorn, find wil - der - ness re - born. Hope blooms in a



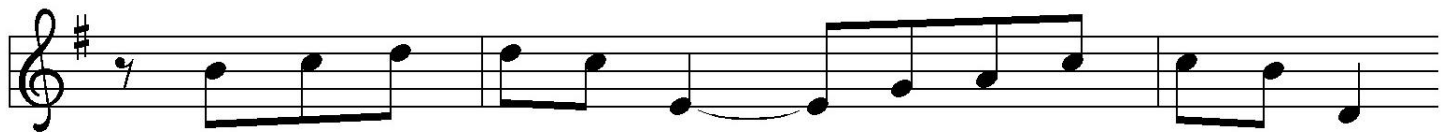
wea - ry world: the prom-ised day of jus - tice comes.  
wea - ry world: the prom-ised feast of plen - ty comes.  
wea - ry world: the prom-ised green of E - den comes.



The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs;



the hills and moun-tains shall break forth with sing - ing!



We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,



as all the world in won-der ech - oes sha - lom.