REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Serving Absecon - Galloway Township
Rev. Heidi Link – Pastor
Brian Conover - Music Director

Sunday, November 15th, 2026
THE TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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.

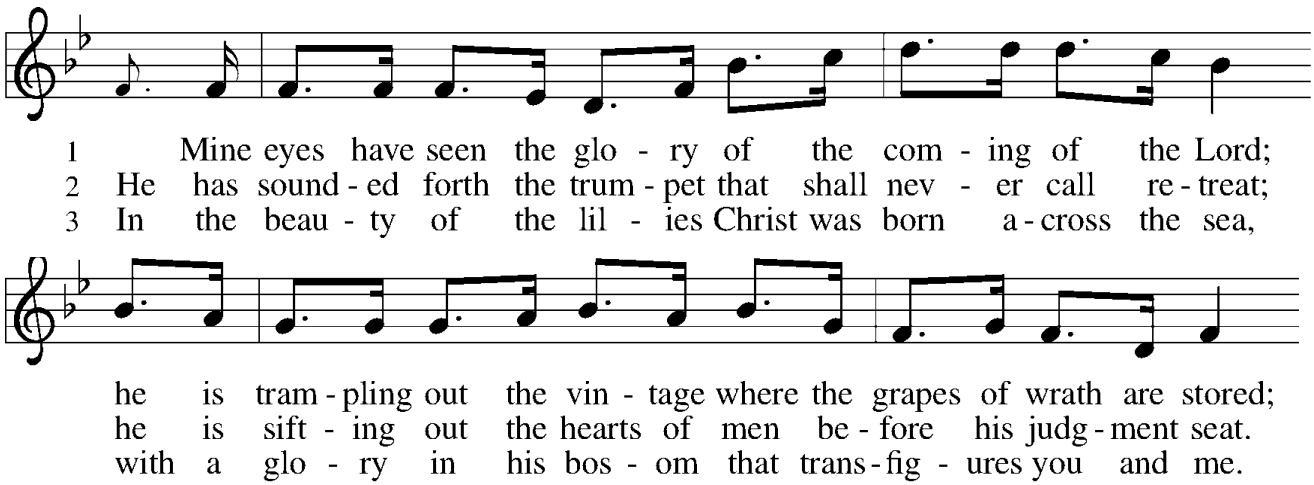
Holy God,

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.**

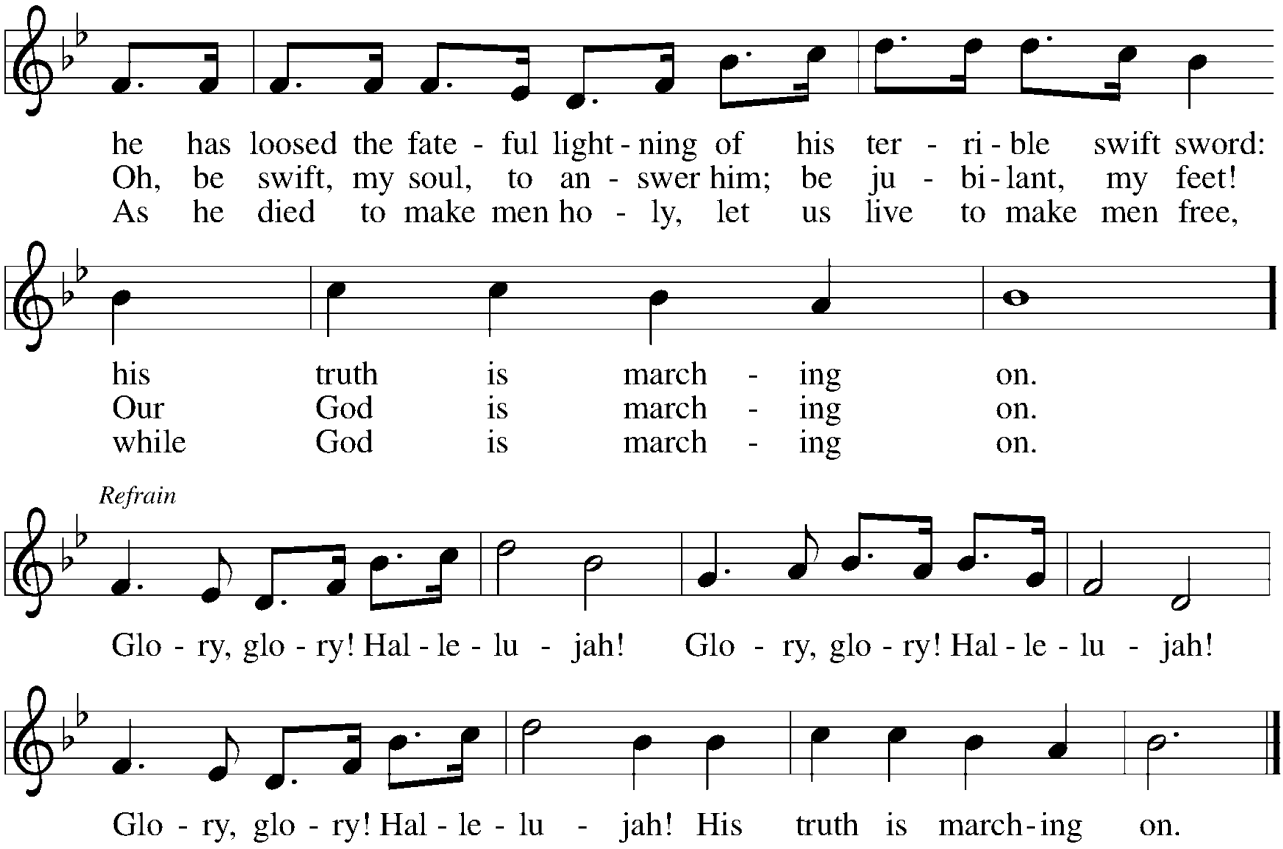
*** OPENING SONG**

Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory



… song continues…

*** - Congregation Stands (If for any reason you are unable to stand during the service, please remain seated.)**



Text: Julia Ward Howe, 1819–1910
Music: BATTLE HYMN, North American, 19th cent

*** APOSTOLIC GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us pray: 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**

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18

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.

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

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. *(psalm continues…)*

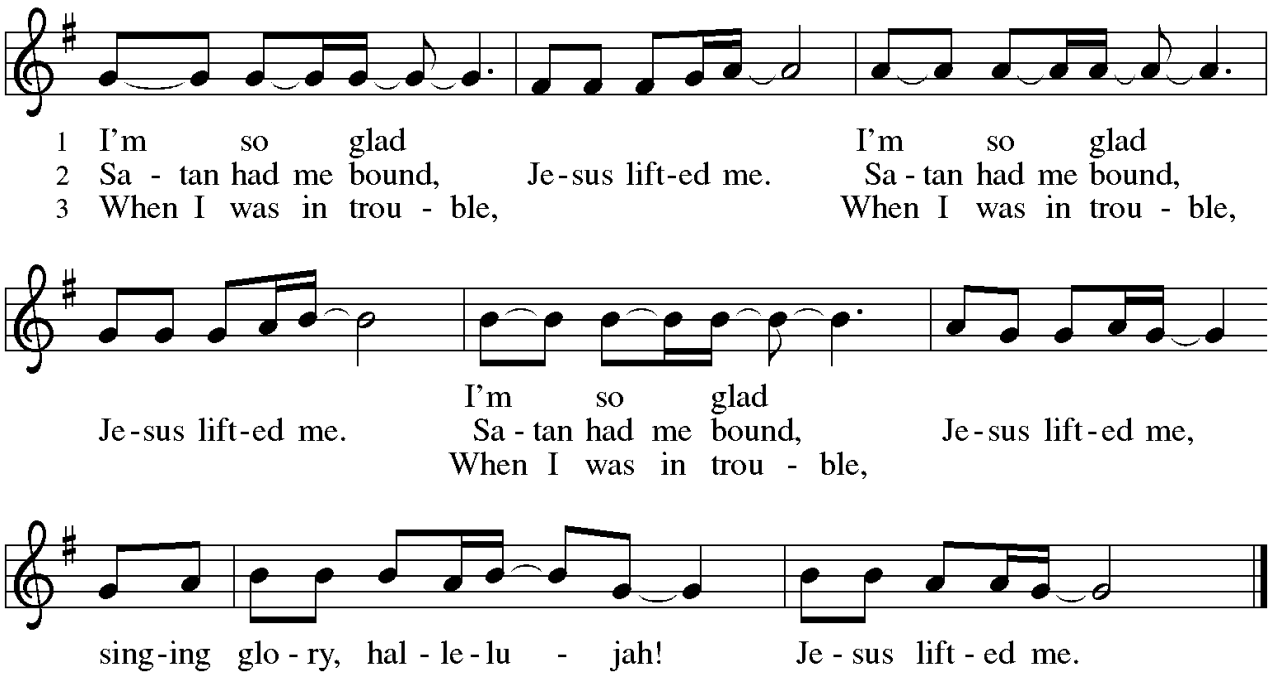
[9 When you are angry, all our days are gone;
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.
10 **The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength even eighty;**
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow, for they pass away quickly and we are gone.
11 Who regards the power of your wrath?
Who rightly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

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

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.

*** SONG OF PRAISE**

I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me



Text: African American spiritual
Music: JESUS LIFTED ME, African American spiritual

*** THE WORD OF GOD: Matthew 25:14-30**

A reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew.

[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.' "

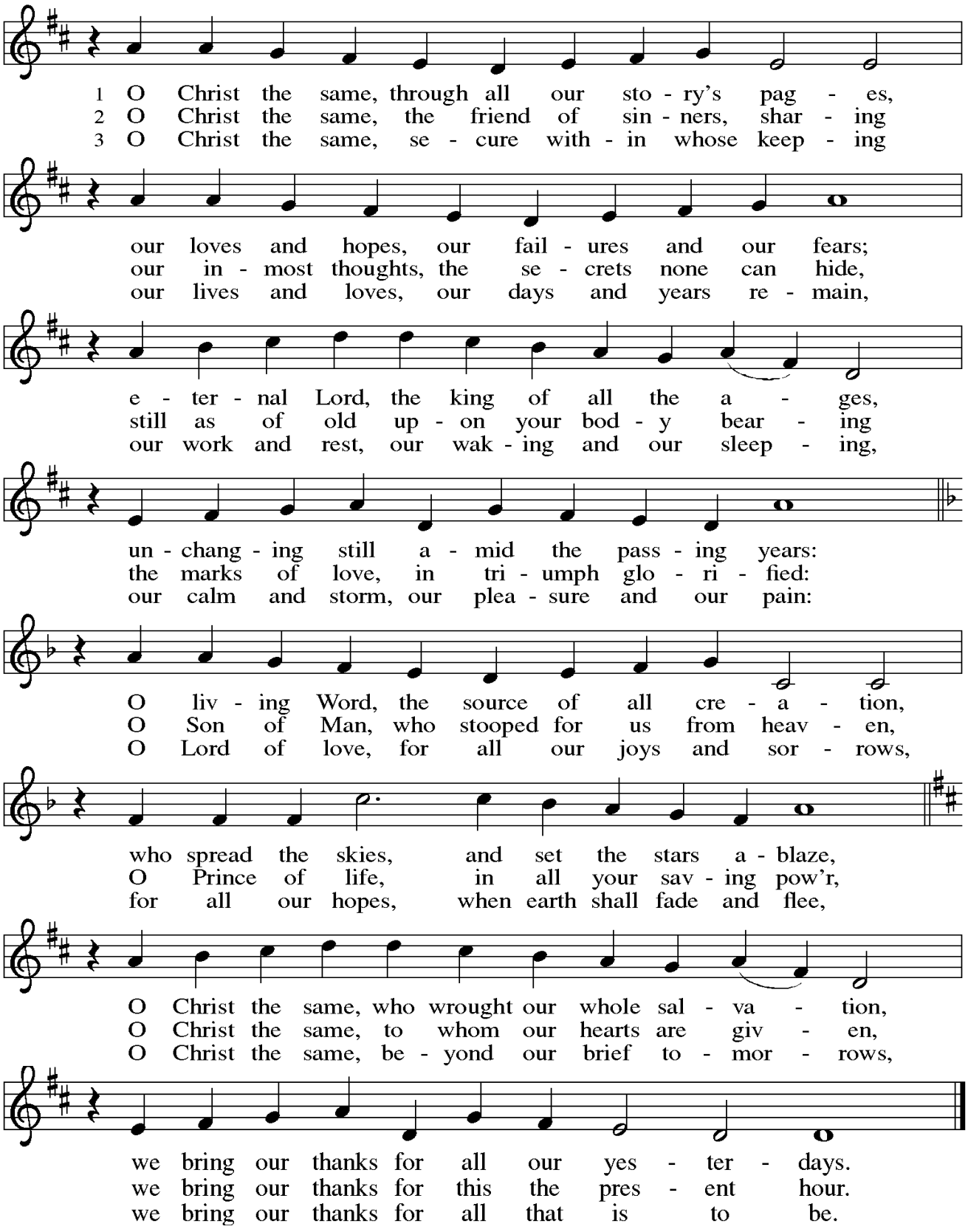
Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

O Christ the Same



Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith, b. 1926
Music: RED HILL ROAD, Carl F. Schalk, b. 1929
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Music © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

*** APOSTLE'S CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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

*** 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 (*especially*). 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*). God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.
Bless all who serve in congregational leadership: council members, finance committees, volunteer coordinators, and property teams (*other specific leaders or groups may be named*). Encourage healthy stewardship of time, talents, and resources for the mission of the gospel. God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.
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.

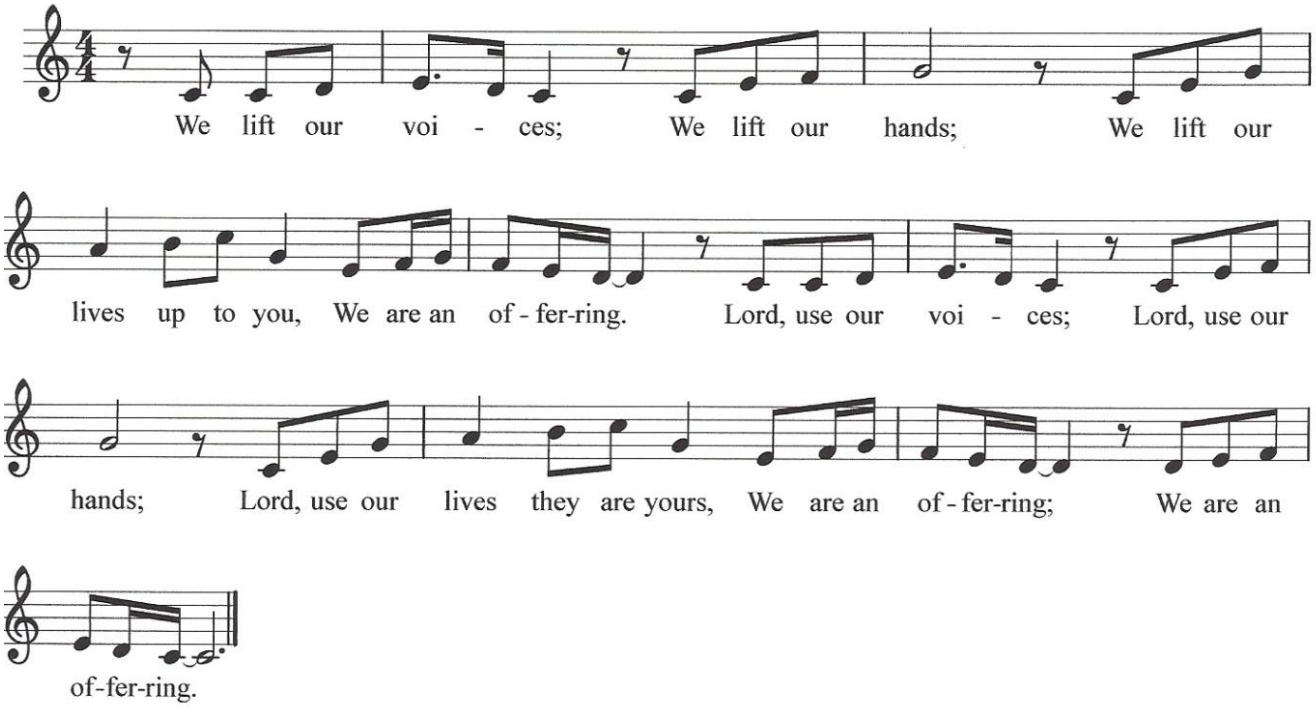
*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The Peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

*** OFFERING SONG**



*** OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray: Eternal God, our time, talents, and treasures are gifts from you. Receive what we offer, and all that you entrust to us, until hungry no more, all the world is fed, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

*** THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

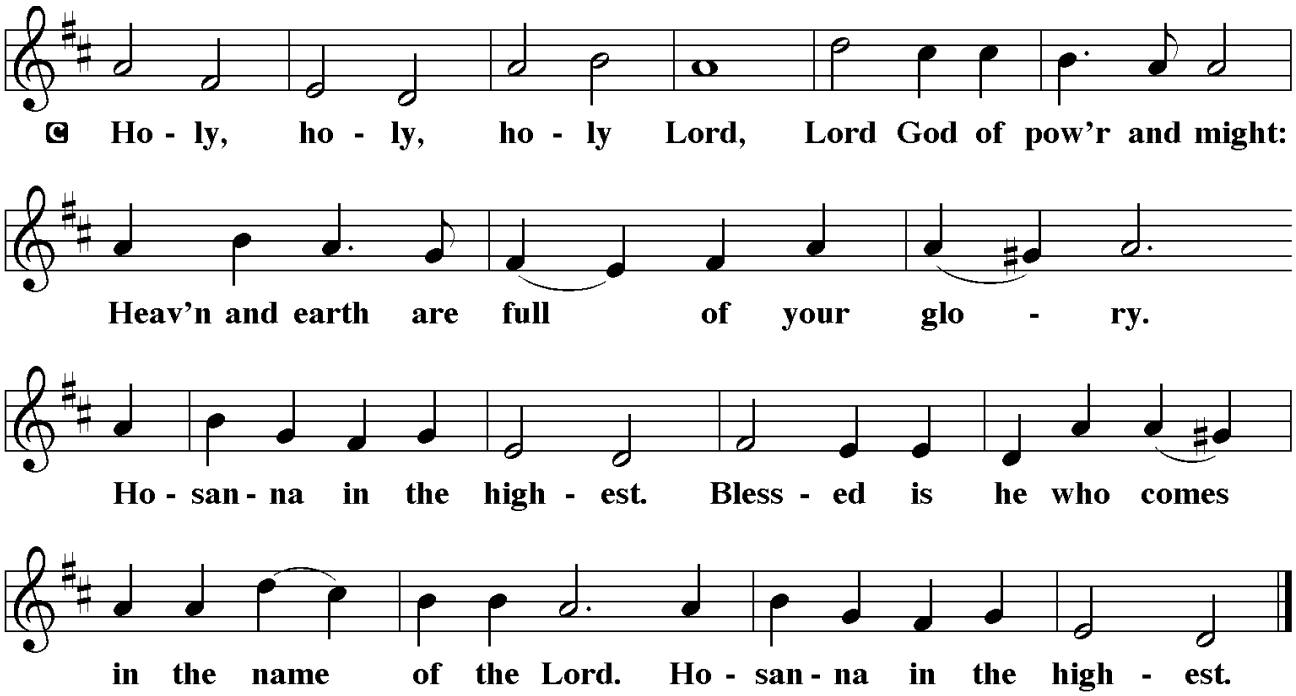
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and salutary…*(Here the minister continues with the preface appropriate to the day or season, concluding:)* we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



*** WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

With Thanksgiving, we remember that in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples saying: " Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this in 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 in remembrance of me."

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim:

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

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

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

*** INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

In bread and cup the reign of Christ is breaking in. Come, receive what Christ has prepared.

We come.

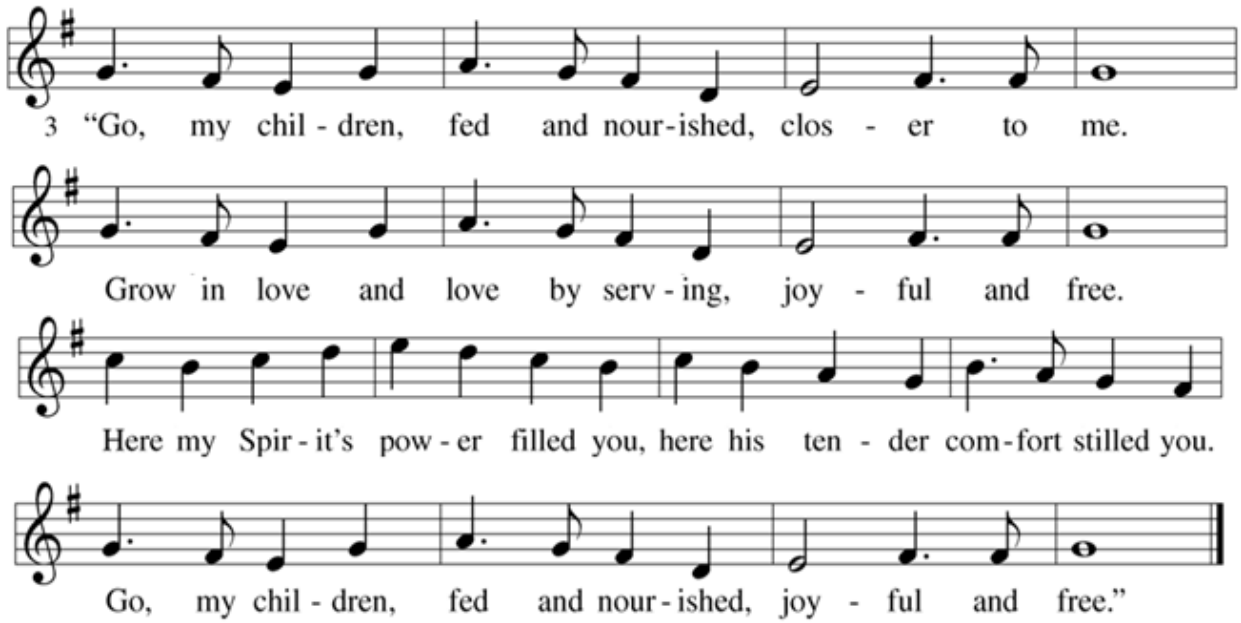
DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

(BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS who believe that the risen Christ is present in the Eucharist to forgive sin and renew life are invited to either come to the altar area for communion as directed or share at your pew. If you come forward, you will receive the elements. If you choose to receive at your seat, please remain there, kneel as you are able, and receive the elements using the communion packets available from the ushers. If there are other special needs, please speak to an usher.)

*** POST COMMUNION BLESSING**
The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen

*** POST COMMUNION HYMN**

Go, My Children, with My Blessing



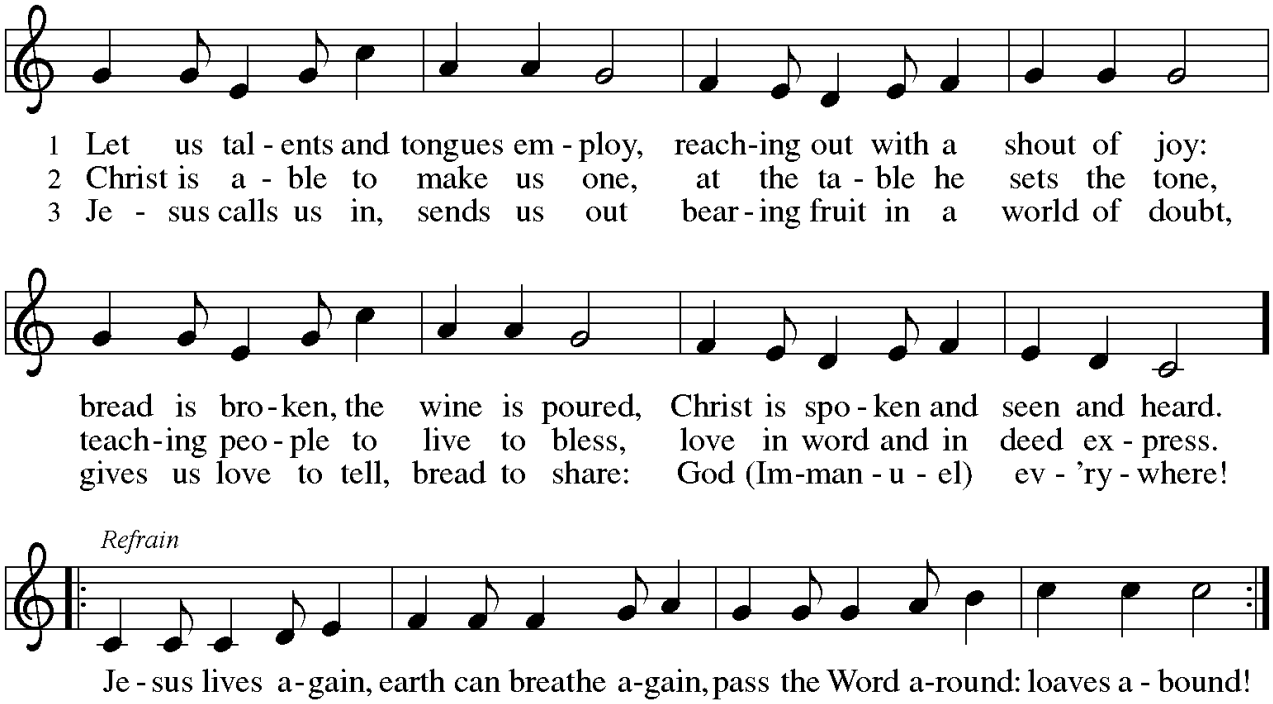
*** PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**
Let us pray: Holy God, we have received your never-ending mercy in this meal. You continuously seek the lost, bind the injured, and feed your people abundantly. Now send us out, awake to your presence, now and forever. **Amen.**

*** BLESSING**
And now a blessing: The holy Trinity, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you with wisdom to welcome the reign of God, today and always

*** CELEBRATIONS!**

*** CLOSING SONG**

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ



Text: Fred Kaan, b. 1929
Music: LINSTEAD, Jamaican folk tune; adapt. Doreen Potter, 1925–1980
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*** SENDING**

Go in peace. Encourage one another.

Thanks be to God.

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