

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
SUNDAY December 15th, 2024



WELCOME

To our Church Family

We're Glad You're Here.



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

We are so glad that you chose to worship with us today. If you are visiting with us for the first time, please visit our Welcome Center in the North Narthex. As our way of saying thank you, you will receive a St. Paul's Welcome Bag with a coffee cup and information about our church. You may also want to download our new St Paul's App and visit our website. Information on both is in the Welcome Bag.

For our young worshipers we have children's packets to play and color with during the service. These are on the white stand near the east entrance to our sanctuary.

You are Welcome at the table!

If you have been baptized and believe Christ is present in the Eucharist (Holy Communion), you are welcome to join us at the table. Please come forward at the direction of the ushers and return to your seats using the side aisles. If you do not wish to partake in the Sacrament but would like to receive a blessing, please just cross your hands over your chest when you come forward.

Grape juice and Gluten-free wafers are available on request. Grape juice is in the colored glasses in the center of the communion tray. If you are not able to come forward and would like to receive communion, please inform an usher and the pastor will bring communion to you.

Altar Flowers

The **altar flowers** were given today by Sue Reid in memory of her brothers Bobby & Jim Mullen.

Introduction

Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

Readings and Psalm

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Rejoice, the LORD is in your midst

Isaiah 12:2-6

In your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (*Is. 12:6*)

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice, the Lord is near

Luke 3:7-18

One more powerful is coming, baptizing with fire

Today's Hymns from The Tower
The Westminster Strike
Welcome and Announcements

Church Carillon

Prelude: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel arr. Kevin McChesney (b. 1963)
Handbell Choir

Third Sunday in Advent: Joy

Watch and wait for Christ's coming! Light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

We light this candle in hope. Light the first candle.

We light this candle for peace. Light the second candle.

We light this candle in joy! Light the third (pink, if used) candle

Rejoice! For our Lord is coming into the darkness of oppression's exile to lead us home, as we hear in Isaiah 35:1-10:

Reader 1: *The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God.*

Reader 2: *Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."*

Reader 1: *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.*

Reader 2: *A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*


Let us pray. O Lord, our redeemer, you lead us from languishing in sorrow's shadows into laughter's joy over your abundant restoration. Thank you that you are coming for us to lead us home along your Way, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come.

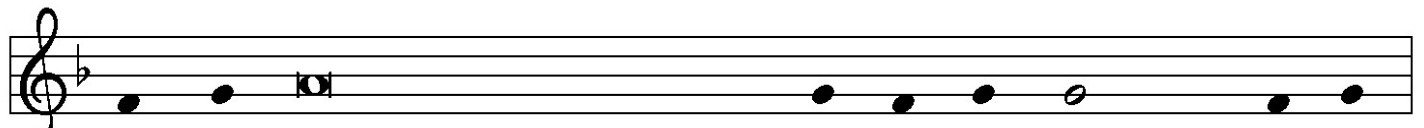
GREETING

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.


KYRIE



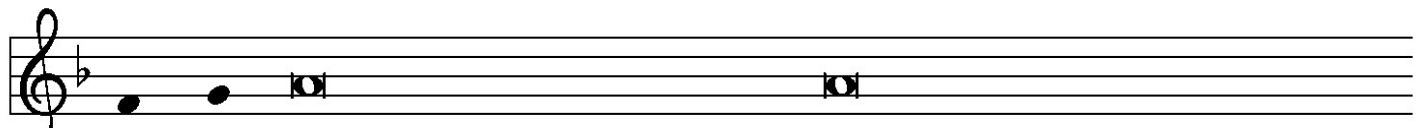
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



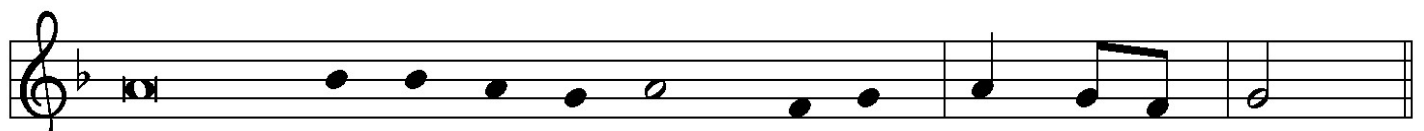
For the peace from above, and for our sal - va - tion, let us




pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



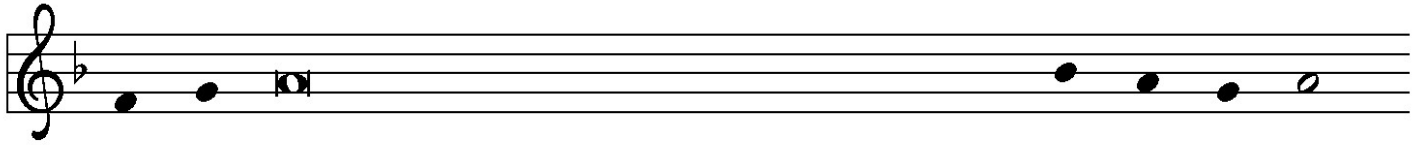
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



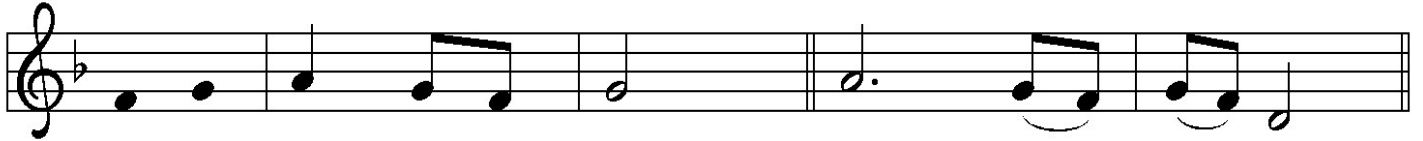
and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



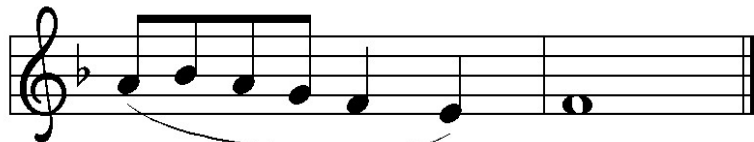
For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The LORD, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing

¹⁸ as on a day of festival. will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹ I will deal with all your oppressors at that time.

And I will save the lame and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

²⁰ At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes

before your eyes, says the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6



In your midst is the Ho - ly One of Is - ra - el.

² Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not | be afraid,
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might, and has become | my salvation.

³ **With joy you | will draw water
from the wells | of salvation. R**

⁴ And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call | on God's name;
make known the deeds of the LORD among the nations; proclaim that this name | is exalted.

⁵ **Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done | gloriously;
let this be known in | all the earth.**

⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, O | royal Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy | One of Israel. **R**

Second Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. *Repeat alleluia*

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

GOSPEL: Luke 3:7-18

The holy gospel according to Luke, the 3rd chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

⁷ John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin 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. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” ¹¹ In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³ He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

The Gospel of our Lord

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Rev. Mark Kreemer

APOSTLE'S 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.**

*Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

After each petition the following response is given:

Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

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

Offertory Anthem:

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
Handbell Choir

arr. McChesney

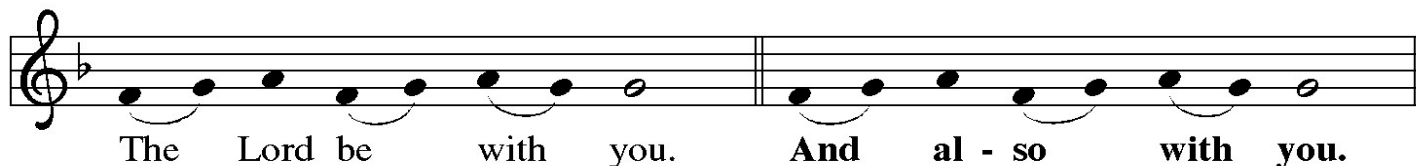
OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

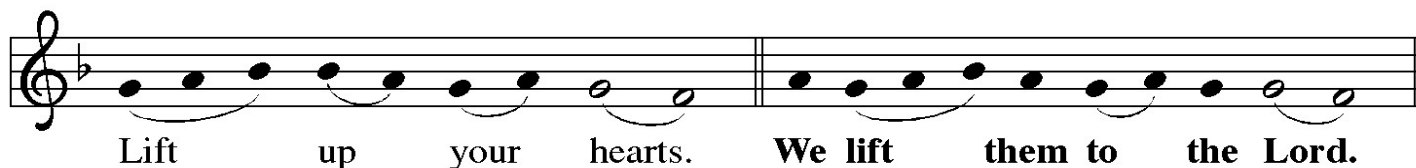
Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

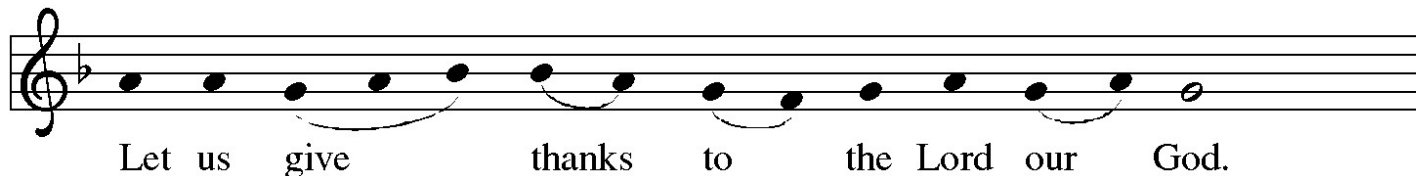
GREAT THANKSGIVING



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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 our duty and delight that we should everywhere and always offer thanks and praise to you, O God, through Jesus Christ, and so with the church on earth, all creation and the host of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
 heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. 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. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

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

God feeds us with tender mercy.
 Come to the table.

COMMUNION SONG

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on
 us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
 world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
 take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace.

COMMUNION Noel on “Once in Royal David’s City” Larry Visser (b. 1962)

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

May the body and blood of our lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.
 Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN Prepare the Royal Highway ELW 264

BLESSING

God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light,
 God, our hope for the journey, ✠ bless and keep you now and forever.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude: Proclamation on WACHET AUF Aaron David Miller (b. 1972)



In our prayers today we will remember

Amy Williams, Phyllis Wilson, Jackie Whitman, Jessie Shaffer, Mark King, Sue Rodgers, Rick Theiss, Jim Loveday, Rosemary Stephen, Ariane Roberts, Shane Reed, Chrissy Sturtz, Donnie Whitman, Mary Martin.



Adult Sunday School Class

The Promise of His Coming

But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. (2 Peter 3:13)

You might wonder what the book of Genesis has to do with the Season of Advent. Actually, more than you might think! Join us as we continue our study in Genesis and prepare our hearts for Christ's coming and ultimate fulfillment of all his promises. The class meets at 11:30 each Sunday morning, upper level of Parish Hall. An elevator is available for your convenience.



Thursday Bible Study

Awaiting the Already: An Advent Journey Through the Gospels

Why do we spend four weeks of Advent pretending that Jesus has not been born when we know full well that he has? "Awaiting the Already" is a 5-session study that addresses that question. During this study, you'll discover what parts of the Christmas story come from which Gospel and uncover the tension between the past and the future in your own life.



Christmas Eve Worship

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Traditional Family Service with Candlelight | 7:00 pm |
| Preservice Christmas Brass Quintet | 10:00 pm |
| Traditional Candlelight Service | 10:30 pm |



Art Show in Gleitsman Lounge

Come see the beautiful photos by Peg Gibbs in the lounge. Sign up for which photos you would like to purchase (\$25 each), and then payment and pick up days will be December 15 or January 12. A portion of the proceeds will go to the church.



Capital Campaign Report

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Remaining Phase One Projects | \$377,000 |
| Funds raised | \$308,906 |
| <hr/> | |
| Remaining funds to be raised | \$ 68,094 |



Community Social Media Pages

Facebook & Instagram

Search "*Massillon Lutheran Churches*"

Facebook

Search "*St Paul's Lutheran Church in Massillon*"

Search "*Cathedral Concerts at St Paul's*"

Thank you to those serving today:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Presiding | Rev. Mark Kreemer |
| Director of Music | Dr. Abigail Haake |
| Lector | Sydney Johnson |
| Assisting Minister | Kathryn Myers |
| Communion Assistants | Tracie Schmolt & Carol Stoner |
| Greeter | Greg & Kynda Klein |
| Sacristy | Sandy Bennett |
| Ushers | Dan Farrar, Gary Collard, Jeff Akey, Dave Dourm |
| Soundboard | Jim Johnson |
| Video/Live-Stream | John Stanko |

Download the St. Paul's Phone APP

Go to your Google or Apple app store on your smart phone and download the "My Church" by Pushpay. It is a free download.

Open the app and search for St Paul's by typing STPLC APP.

Then click on the St Paul's logo—that's it.

To take advantage of all the app's features you must create an account. Get notifications and reminders of upcoming events, access our live stream worship and worship bulletins, send prayer requests, and see the church calendar. You can even give electronically.



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GATHERING HYMN Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness ELW 843
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HYMN OF THE DAY In Thee Is Gladness ELW 867
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SENDING HYMN Prepare the Royal Highway ELW 264
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Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness



- 1 Praise the One who breaks the dark-ness with a lib - er - at - ing light;
- 2 Praise the One who blessed the chil - dren with a strong yet gen - tle word;
- 3 Praise the one true love in - car - nate: Christ, who suf - fered in our place;



praise the One who frees the pris - 'ners, turn - ing blind - ness in - to sight.
praise the One who drove out de - mons with a pierc - ing, two - edged sword.
Je - sus died and rose for man - y that we may know God by grace.



Praise the One who preached the gos - pel, heal - ing ev - 'ry dread dis - ease,
Praise the One who brings cool wa - ter to the des - ert's burn - ing sand;
Let us sing for joy and glad - ness, see - ing what our God has done.



calm - ing storms and feed - ing thou - sands with the ver - y bread of peace.
from this well comes liv - ing wa - ter quench - ing thirst in ev - 'ry land.
Praise the one re - deem - ing glo - ry; praise the One who makes us one.

Text: Rusty Edwards, b. 1955

Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, *Repository of Sacred Music*, Part II, 1813

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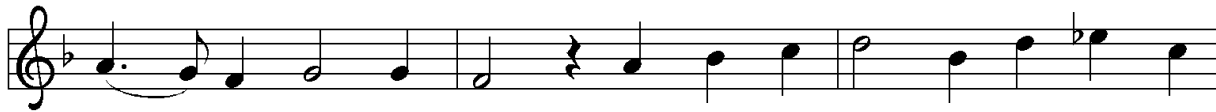
In Thee Is Gladness



1 In thee is glad-ness a-mid all sad-ness, Je-sus, sun-shine of my
 2 Je-sus is ours! . . . We fear no pow-ers, not of earth or sin or



heart. By thee are giv-en the gifts of heav-en, thou the
 death. He sees and bless-es in worst dis-tress-es; he can



true re-deem-er art. Our souls thou wak-est; our bonds thou
 change them with a breath. Where-fore the sto-ry tell of his



break-est. Who trusts thee sure-ly has built se-cure-ly
 glo-ry with heart and voic-es; all heav'n re-joic-es



and stands for-ev-er: Al-le-lu-ia! Our hearts are
 in him for-ev-er: Al-le-lu-ia! We shout for



pin-ing to see thy shin-ing, dy-ing or liv-ing,
 glad-ness, tri-umph o'er sad-ness, love him and praise him



to thee are cleav-ing; naught can us sev-er: Al-le-lu-ia!
 and still shall raise him glad hymns for-ev-er: Al-le-lu-ia!

Text: Johann Lindemann, 1549–1631; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
 Music: IN DIR IST FREUDE, Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi, 1556–1622

Prepare the Royal Highway



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

Refrain



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.
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