

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
SUNDAY December 22nd, 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 Barb & Jim Starrett in memory of their parents' anniversary.

The Throne Flower were given by Carol Stoner in memory of her brother Billy Clark, who loved Christmas.

Today's Worship Theme and Readings

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and Mary's magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ's advent is for "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in holy communion—with high delight—"we proclaim the Lord's death."

Micah 5:2-5a

From Bethlehem comes a ruler

Luke 1:46b-55

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (*Lk. 1:52*)

Hebrews 10:5-10

I have come to do your will

Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

Blessed are you among women / My soul magnifies the Lord

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

Church Carillon

Prelude: O Little Town of Bethlehem arr. Douglas Court (b. 1959)
Dwight Butler, trumpet

Fourth Sunday in Advent: Love

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

We light this candle with love. Light the fourth candle is lit.

Out of love for the people of God, the Lord speaks through the prophet Isaiah, as found in the seventh chapter, verses 10-14:

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Let us pray.

God of hope, Prince of peace, Jubilee Judge, and Lord of love, your goodness is beyond our wildest imaginings. You give us more than we can think to ask, coming to us with impossible possibility in the union of flesh and spirit. Teach us to love this world and all people as you love us in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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

GATHERING HYMN

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus


ELW 254

GREETING

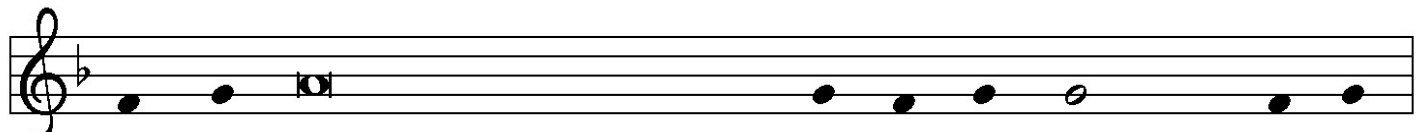
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.


KYRIE



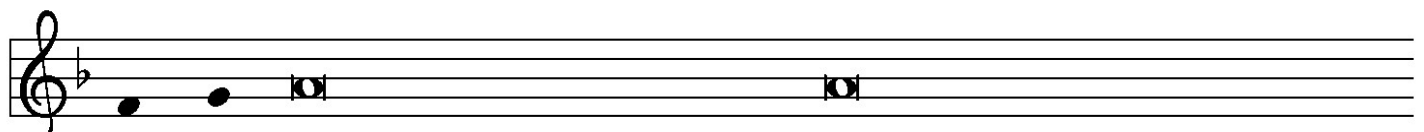
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



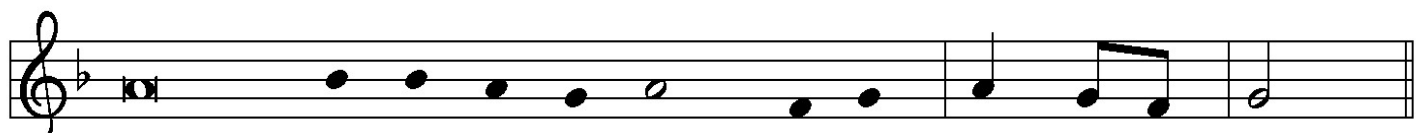
For the peace from above, and for our sal - va - tion, let us




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



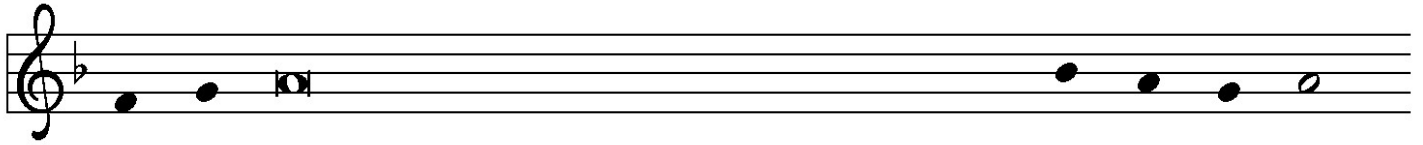
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



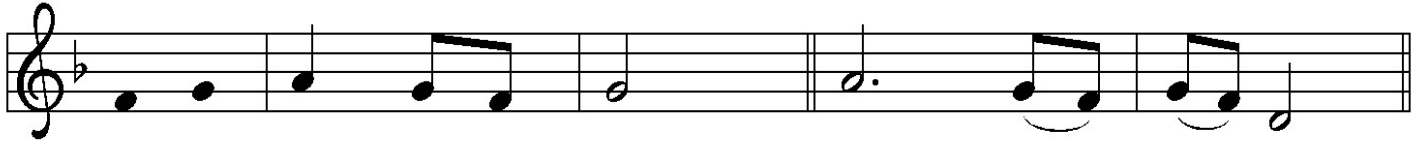
and for the u - ni - ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading: Micah 5:2-5a

² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;
^{5a} and he shall be the one of peace.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Luke 1:46b-55



You, LORD, have lift - ed up the low - ly.

^{46b} My soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord,

⁴⁷ my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior,

⁴⁸ **for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your | lowly servant.**

From this day all generations will | call me blessed:

⁴⁹ you, the Almighty, have done great | things for me
and holy | is your name.

⁵⁰ **You have mercy on | those who fear you,
from generation to | generation. R**

⁵¹ You have shown strength | with your arm
and scattered the proud in | their conceit,

⁵² **casting down the mighty | from their thrones
and lifting | up the lowly.**

⁵³ You have filled the hungry | with good things
and sent the rich | away empty.

⁵⁴ **You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,
to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,**

⁵⁵ the promise made | to our forebears,
to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever. **R**

Second Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;

⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

⁷ Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”

⁸ When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings

and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law),⁹ then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second.¹⁰ And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

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 1:39-45, 46-55

The holy gospel according to Luke, the 1st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.” [

⁴⁶ And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

The Gospel of our Lord
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Rev. Mark Kreemer

HYMN OF THE DAY

Savior of the Nations, Come

ELW 263

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:

Advent Trilogy
Chancel Choir

Benjamin Harlan (b. 1954)

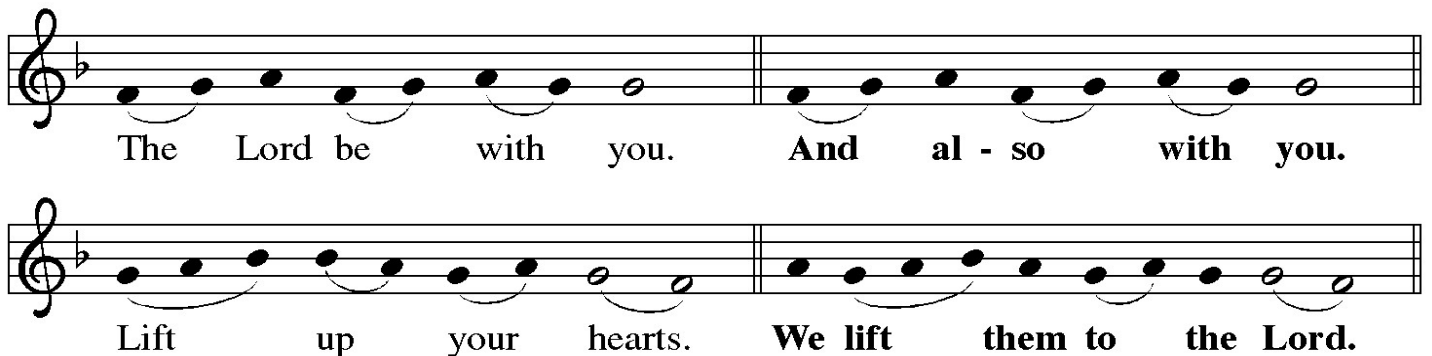
OFFERING PRAYER

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 also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

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 two phrases: 'The Lord be with you.' and 'And also with you.' The second staff contains the melody for the next two phrases: 'Lift up your hearts.' and 'We lift them to the Lord.' The lyrics are printed below the notes, with the final phrase of each line in bold.

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.

EUCCHARISTIC 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.

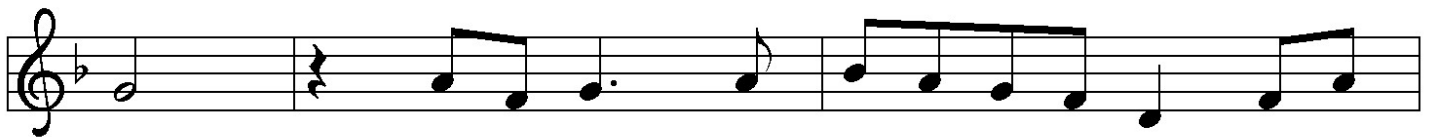
INVITATION TO COMMUNION

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

In the Bleak Midwinter
 Anderson Rambler, bass-baritone

arr. Mack Wilberg (b. 1955)

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

Joy to the World

ELW 267

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:

Joy to the World
Mr. Butler, trumpet

arr. Jay Althouse (b. 1951)



In our prayers today we will remember

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

Christmas Eve Worship

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



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.



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	\$311,696
<hr/>	
Remaining funds to be raised	\$ 65,304



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*”



Comments from the Cloud of Witnesses

Our Lord God showed me our Lady, Saint Mary. The greatness and nobility she saw in God filled her full of reverent dread, and with it she saw herself so little, so low, so simple, so poor in comparison to her Lord God that her reverent dread filled her full of meekness. And thus she was filled full of grace and of all manner of virtues. And thus it is between our Lord Jesus and us the greatest joy possible that he who is highest and mightiest, noblest and worthiest, becomes lowest and meekest, friendliest and most courteous. And our Lord wills that we believe, choose and trust him, enjoy and delight in him, comforting and solacing ourselves as best we can with his grace and his help until the time we see it in reality. The marvelous courtesy and unassuming friendliness no one may experience in this present life unless doing so through the great fullness of grace given inwardly by the Holy Spirit.

—*Julian of Norwich*

Thank you to those serving today:

Presiding	Rev. Mark Kreemer
Director of Music	Dr. Abigail Haake
Lector	Sydney Johnson
Assisting Minister	Patty Long
Communion Assistants	Dwight Butler & Cindy Lash
Greeter	Gary Collard
Sacristy	Sandy Bennett
Ushers	Dan Farrar, Gary Collard, Jeff Akey, Dave Dourm
Soundboard	Jim Johnson
Video/Live-Stream	John Stanko

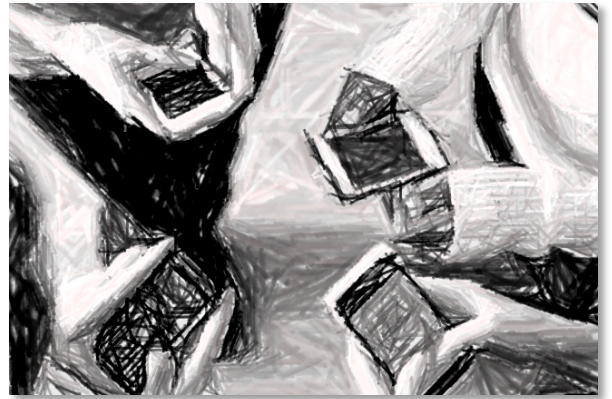
Download the St. Paul's Phone APP

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 Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus ELW 254
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HYMN OF THE DAY Savior, Of the Nation's Come ELW 263
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SENDING HYMN Joy to the World ELW 267
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Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

CMI Hymns, Singles

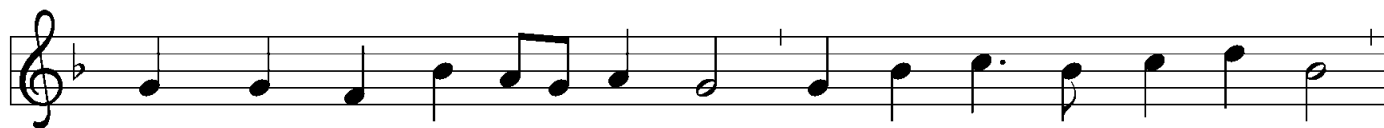
1. Come, thou long ex - spect - ed Je - sus, Born to set Thy
 2. Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, Born a child, and
 peo - ple free! From our fears and sins re - lease us,
 yet a King: Born to reign in us for - ev - er,
 Let us find our rest in Thee. Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion,
 Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring. By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it
 Hope of all the earth Thou art; Dear de - sire of
 Rule in all our hearts a - lone; By Thine all - suf -
 ev - 'ry na - tion, Joy of ev' - ry long - ing heart.
 fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, (1707-1788).

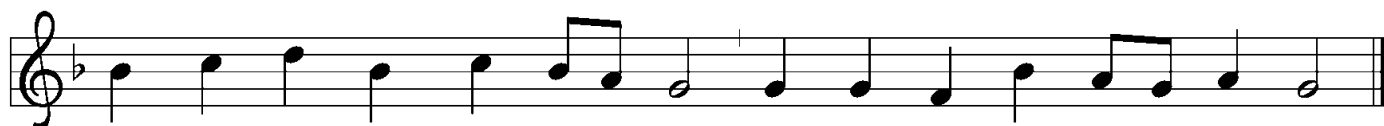
Tune: HYFRYDOL, Music by Rowland H. Prichard, (1811-1887); Arranged by Dave and Lauren Moore.

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Savior of the Nations, Come



- 1 Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; vir - gin's son, make here your home.
- 2 Not by hu - man flesh and blood, but the mys - tic Breath of God,
- 3 Won - drous birth—oh, won - drous child—from his throne, a vir - gin mild!
- 4 From God's heart the Sav - ior speeds, back to God his path-way leads;



Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth: God has cho - sen such a birth.
was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of wom - an, blos - som fresh.
Ver - y God, and Mar - y's son, ea - ger now his race to run!
out to van - quish death's com - mand, back to reign at God's right hand.

5 Now your manger, shining bright,
hallows night with newborn light.
Night cannot this light subdue;
let our faith shine ever new.

6 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord,
virgin's son, incarnate Word!
To the holy Trinity
praise we sing eternally!

Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340–397; Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. hymnal version
Music: NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND, J. Walter, *Geistliche Gesangbüchlein*, 1524
Text © 2006 Augsburg Fortress

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Joy to the World



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872