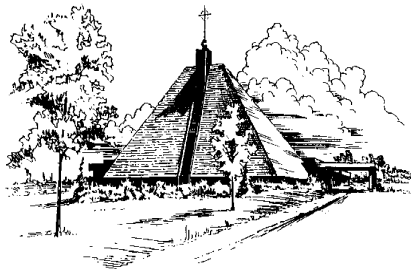


COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CINNAMINSON, NEW JERSEY



1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10:00 AM

DECEMBER 3, 2023

Covenant's Mission Statement

"To share God's love with all people, to nurture each other, to serve those in need, and to invite everyone into fellowship and worship as we strive to follow the example of Jesus Christ."

PRELUDE

"Light of the World"
Ruth Kiang - violin

Scott, Cash, Bergthold

GREETING AND PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Mary Lou Newborg

Holy Spirit living within us, guide our hearts and minds as we welcome today all those who worship with us at Covenant Presbyterian Church. Give us discerning hearts so that everyone who crosses our threshold feels welcomed in the spirit of your love. Help us to recognize each person as an individual sent by you who will enrich our lives. And most of all, O God, let this be a place of love and acceptance of all your children; in the name of your child, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHORAL INTROIT

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

Larson

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Now, in this holy season of Advent, we wait.

People: For the faithful God is coming to us.

Leader: Now, in this season of waiting, we listen.

People: For the faithful Word speaks of good news to us.

Leader: Now, in the waiting and listening, we watch.

People: For the faithful Spirit is moving among us.

Leader: With prayer and praise, in scripture and in song, let us Worship the Living God!



LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Jeffries Family

1st Candle (purple): Hope is assertive, even aggressive at times. Hope fueled the prophet to call upon God to tear open the heavens and shake the mountains so that we would all tremble, remembering that there is a God, because the world has forgotten. But we have not. We cling to this hope that interrupts and shakes our lives out of monotony, out of complacency, and out of despair. We light this candle, a spark of flame that ignites a rebellion of hope against empire, against hate, against fear. This is the fire that kindles inside of us and will not die.

Let us pray: God of Hope, our world has grown cold with despair, with hopelessness, with weariness and dread. Alight in us the fire of Your Spirit, a reminder that death never has the final word, so we might pursue justice and live into Your ways and become living hope in a world that desperately needs it. Amen.

OPENING HYMN

O God of Every Nation

(See page 13)

CALL TO CONFESSION

Advent is the season of preparing, of waiting, of hoping so let us confess to the One who comes, our impatient, toe-tapping, instant-gratification-filled lives, as we pray, saying:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

God who is drawing near to us: we live in a world of violence, which we do not condemn enough: Come to us, with your peace.

We are filled with the best of intentions, but are unable to follow through with action: Come to us, with your will.

We are sinners, who are afraid to gaze into your mirror of grace: Come to us, with your mercy.

SILENT MEDITATION

LORD HAVE MERCY (3x)

576

Lord, Have Mercy





WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Hear the good news and be at peace with yourself:

In this season of waiting, the Good News is this: mercy, new life, hope, and joy are the gifts we receive from our God.

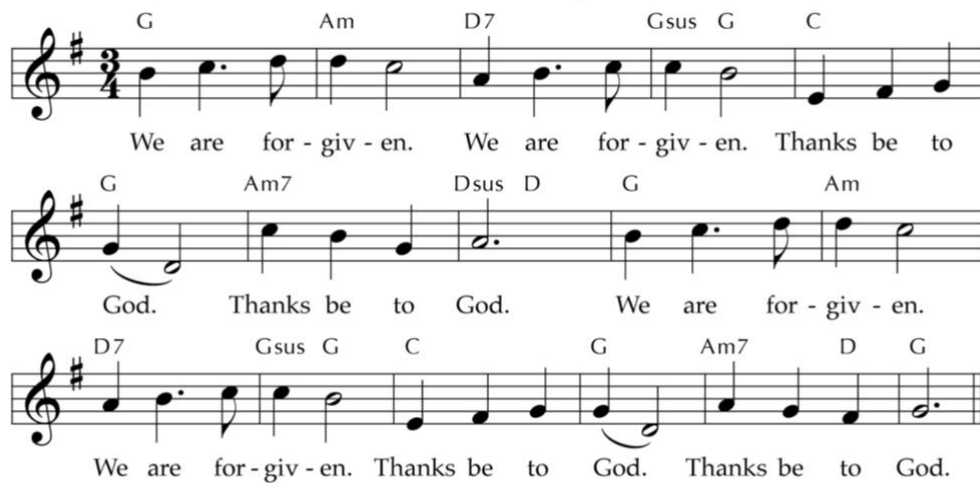
Thanks be to the God of Advent, who came in the Child, who is with us in the Spirit, who will come again in glory! Amen.

WE ARE FORGIVEN (1x)

FORGIVENESS

447

We Are Forgiven



G Am D7 Gsus G C
We are for - giv - en. We are for - giv - en. Thanks be to
G Am7 Dsus D G Am
God. Thanks be to God. We are for - giv - en.
D7 Gsus G C G Am7 D G
We are for - giv - en. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

SHARING OF PEACE

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another. The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Together, let us pray.

Guide us, O God, by your Word and Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.





ISAIAH 64: 1-9

Let us Word of the Lord according to Isaiah, reading from chapter 64, verses 1-9. Listen for God's Word to us all:

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence— as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name or attempts to take hold of you, for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Glory to You, Lord Christ!

ANTHEM

"Bring Us Hope"

Schram

PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19



REFRAIN

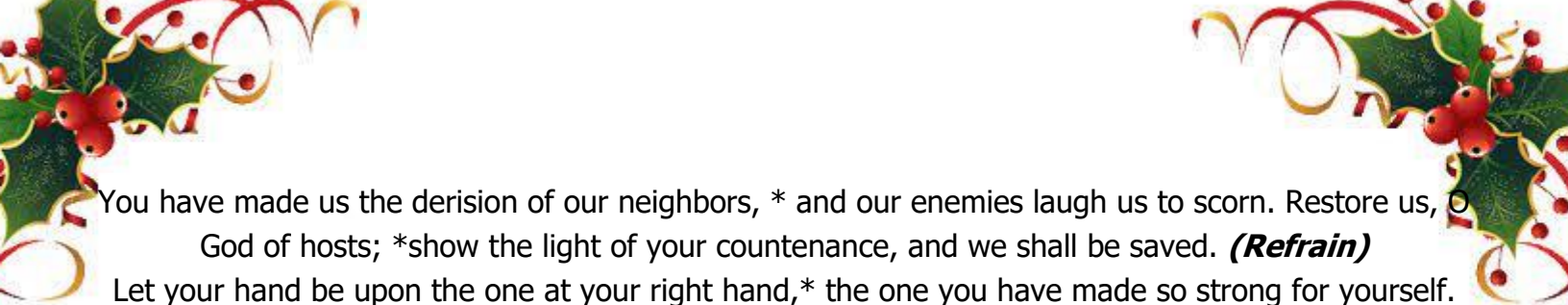
Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; * shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, * stir up your strength and come to help us. Restore us, O God of hosts; * show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. **(Refrain)**

O LORD God of hosts, * how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?

You have fed them with the bread of tears; * you have given them bowls of tears to drink.





You have made us the derision of our neighbors, * and our enemies laugh us to scorn. Restore us, O God of hosts; *show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. **(Refrain)**

Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,* the one you have made so strong for yourself.

And so will we never turn away from you;* give us life, that we may call upon your name.

Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;* show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

(Refrain)

Let us pray: Lord God, you so tend the vine you planted that now it extends its branches throughout the world. Keep us in Christ as branches on the vine, that grafted firmly in your love, we may show the whole world your great power and bear the fruit of righteousness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

MARK 13:24-37

Jesus said, "But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

"Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds 'with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"Keeping Alert"

Rev. Dr. Robert Higgs

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

We pause to reflect on the message

If you wish, you may want to use the following breath prayer (or any of your choice). The words may be said aloud or in silence

Breathe in: "I want to know you ...

Breathe out: "... and the power of your resurrection"





HYMN

"People Look East"

(See page 14)

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us, and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead: whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. and we believe one holy catholic and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

For the peace from above, for the loving kindness of God, and for our salvation, let us pray to the
Lord

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the world, for the unity of the church of God, and for the well-being of all peoples, let us pray to the Lord

Lord, have mercy.

For this gathering of the faithful, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

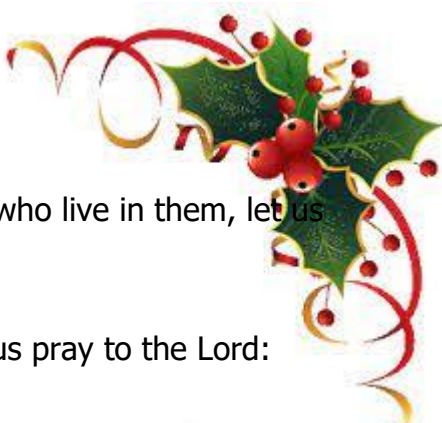

For all the baptized, for all who serve in the church, for elders and pastors, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the rulers of the nations as we pray for Joe our President, Cory and Robert our Senators, Philip our Governor, Andy our Representative, and the Justices of the Supreme Court. Let us pray to the
Lord.

Lord, have mercy.





For this town of Cinnaminson, for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For seasonable weather, and for abundant harvests for all to share, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the good earth which God has given us, and for the wisdom and will to conserve it, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For those who travel by land, water, or air, or through outer space, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the aged and infirm, for the widowed and orphaned, and for the sick and the suffering, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the poor and the oppressed, for those unemployed and the destitute, for prisoners and captives, and for all who remember and care for them, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For deliverance in times of affliction, strife, and need, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For blessings and mercies we have received and need:

Lord, have mercy.

For all your children to know the peace and joy of your supporting care, let us pray to the Lord

Lord, have mercy.

For all who have died in the hope of the resurrection and are at rest, let us give thanks to the Lord.

Eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, accept the prayers of your people, and strengthen us to do your will; through Jesus Christ. Amen.

CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

May we not hide our gifts, Loving God, but offer them to you with trust and hope, so all may join us on the journey to your kingdom of grace and hope, peace and healing. The offerings for the work of the church will now be received.

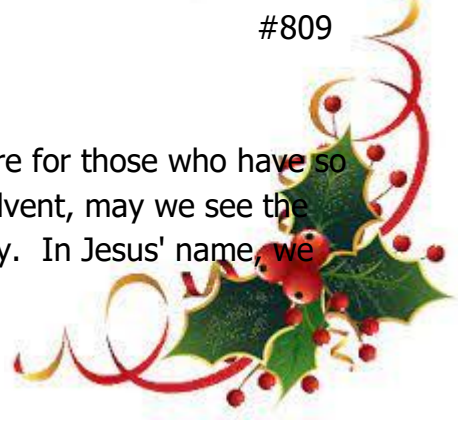
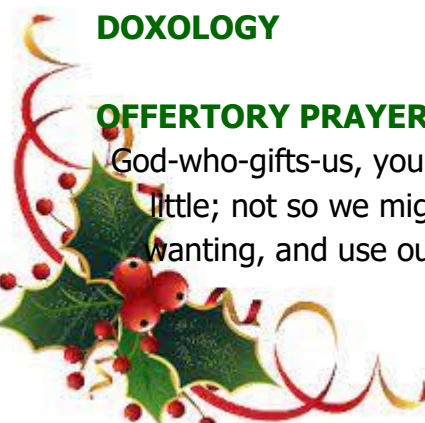
OFFERTORY

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from Whom All Blessings

#809

OFFERTORY PRAYER



God-who-gifts-us, you do so, not so we might have more, but we might care for those who have so little; not so we might splurge, but we might share. In the waiting of Advent, may we see the wanting, and use our resources to fill their lives with hope, grace, and joy. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Jesus said: Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

SURSUM CORDA

Now, in this holy season of Advent, God comes to be with you.

God comes to be with you as well. As we begin our journey to Bethlehem, let us open our hearts to God. For God will fill them with strength and courage for the journey. Let us join our voices in singing praise to God. We will lift glad songs of joy to the One who is coming to us.

PRAYER OF THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

When you were tired of waiting, God-of-the-first-moment, you tore open chaos, so creation might flow unimpeded: puppies quivering in falling snow, ice for skating forming on ponds, giraffes stretching their necks for snacks. All these fresh and glorious wonders were crafted for those in your image, so we might live in your joy forever, but we chose to be doorkeepers for sin, waiting for death to appear. Prophets came, so we might hear you and see you at work in our midst, yet, we turned a deaf ear to them, refusing to notice you. So you came down to us in Jesus, your Child of life, simply to save us. With those who try never to turn away, and those who call on your name, we sing your praises this day:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

(see page 17)

In your holiness, you could have stood apart from us, God of compassion and hope, but in your love, you came to us to be one of us in Jesus. When we struggle in despair's poverty, he enriches us with your grace. When we are weakened by fear, he strengthens us with your hope. When we think our lives are empty, he fills us with everything we need. When death thought it had lulled him to sleep, he kept alert, waiting for your resurrection love to gather him up and bring him to new life.

With those who are always alert, and with those who are drowsy from waiting, we proclaim that mystery which is our faith:

CHRIST HAS DIED (2x)

563 Christ Has Died; Christ Is Risen



Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come a - gain.





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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

COMMUNION MUSIC

"The Lily of the Valley"

Austin

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Loving God, we thank you that you have fed us in this Sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet in your eternal kingdom. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

CLOSING HYMN

"Soon and Very Soon"

(See page 16)

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Go out into the world ... be with us all. Amen.

O Lord, may you this week open up doors for us to share your love!

CHORAL RESPONSE

"May the Lord Bless You and Keep You"

Larson

POSTLUDE

"He Hideth My Soul"
Ruth Kiang - violin

Kirkpatrick

MINISTERS: Linda Ballenger and Karen Schwartz (Ushers), Sandi Pascone (Refreshments), Pat Rothenhofer (Chancel)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Join us for our Christmas Eve Service at 4PM! We will have our bell choir, chancel choir and guest flutist Elisa Muzzillo and guest violinist, Nina Zubaidi providing music. The "ABC's of Christmas" will conclude with the traditional candle lighting ceremony.

2. ANGEL TREE

The Deacon's Angel Tree is ready for the 2023 season. We're sponsoring two local families in need who could use our help making this Christmas a little brighter. The items on the Angels are specific to these families, not generic items as in past years. All the gifts are things the families have requested. Beginning Sunday, December 3rd. You will be able to take an Angel from the Angel Tree and help make a very special Christmas for these needy families. All items should be returned unwrapped, with the Angel tag attached, by Sunday December 17th. You can direct any questions to Jeanne Martin. Thank you.

3. POINSETTIA FORM

If you are interested in dedicating a poinsettia to a loved one, please fill out the form and return it to the church office no later than December 10. Forms will be available in the Narthex by next week.

4. SUNDAY SCHOOL

Attention all children starting at age 4. Covenant will be hosting Sunday School during the 10am Church Service on the following dates: December 17th.

5. YOUR PARTICIPATION IS NEEDED! Members are invited to participate in our services. Please contact Bonnie Cain or Greg DiBona if you are interested in reading scripture or leading our worship services. We are also in need of more volunteers to operate the camera and soundboard. Please contact the church office if you are interested.

6. BIBLE STUDY The Bible Study will be located in the lounge on Mondays at 11AM. All are welcome!

7. STEWARDSHIP: Total Income for 11/26: Total Income: \$1580.00, Envelope Giving: \$1405.00, Deacons:\$125.00.



Christmas Eve Service

December 24th, 2023
4:00 PM

Covenant Presbyterian Church
2618 New Albany Road
Cinnaminson, NJ 08077

The poster features a dark red background with white snowflakes, green holly leaves, and red berries at the top. A string of four colorful Christmas stockings hangs across the top. At the bottom, two decorated Christmas trees are visible against a starry night sky.



Hymns and Heralds
A Community Choir

A Christmas Celebration
The Sounds of the Season

Sunday, December 10, 2023
3:00 PM

Calvary Presbyterian Church
300 Fourth Street
Riverton, NJ 08077

Tickets not required. Reception following the concert.
Free will offering benefiting the
Bread of Life Food Pantry and the Lift Project.

While you're here,
take advantage of our
Christmas Cookie Sale
Don't have time to make your own?

The poster has a light grey background with faint musical notes. It is decorated with holly leaves and berries at the top corners. A central graphic shows a cross on a musical staff with notes, and below it, silhouettes of people with their arms raised in praise. At the bottom right, there is a small image of a plate of Christmas cookies.

Prayer List

Thank you to Pastor Bob for his on point and thoughtful sermon. Grateful prayers for Chuck Rosica who led the congregation in the worship service as he read scripture and kept us up to date on important announcements. The bell choir performed lovely music to set the mood for worship. Thank you! Thank you to Pat Rothenhofer for very tasty refreshments.

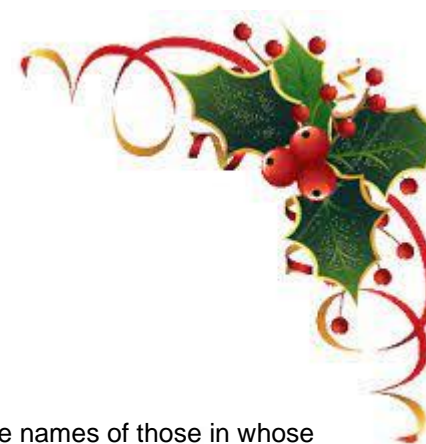
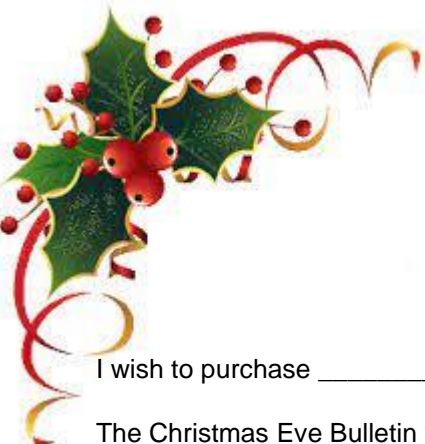


Keep praying for peace in the world and an end to violence in our communities.

Please keep our Covenant families and friends in your prayers:

Treva - prayers for total healing and return of strength - she is receiving rehabilitation
Betty Graham - feeling better and healing of her leg
B. Ann and Dave DuBois - good care and rest as they both deal with health issues
Kathy Hood - peace of mind and comfort
Terri Bell - able to rest in comfort and gather strength and love from her husband, Ken, as he takes good care of her
Barbara Van Tassel's friend, Betty McCord - accurate diagnosis and very good care
Mary Lou's friend, 2-year-old Logan - that he will become free of cancer as he receives radiation
Karen Schwartz's grandson, Lucas - thankful that he has returned to school as his leg heals
Rita DiBona - healing for Greg's grandmother following a fall and return of strength
Betty's friend, Bill - good results and getting better following intense treatment
Bruce, Dawn and Erin - able to secure an apartment and strength for Bruce as he deals with health issues





Poinsettia Order Form

I wish to purchase _____ POINSETTIA PLANT (s) at \$11.00 each.

The Christmas Eve Bulletin will include a listing of names of donors (if desired) and mention the names of those in whose memory or in whose behalf the poinsettia plants are presented.

Mr./Mrs./Family _____

In memory/gratitude _____

Enclosed please find my check for the sum of \$ _____

Signed _____ Phone _____

Please return form to the church office no later than Sunday, December 10, 2023.

POINSETTIAS MAY BE PICKED UP AFTER THE DECEMBER 24TH CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

PLEASE CHECK ONE!

_____ I will pick up my poinsettia

_____ I would like the Deacons to deliver my poinsettia to someone special



O God of Every Nation 756

1 O God of ev - ery na - tion, of ev - ery race and land,
 2 From search for wealth and pow - er and scorn of truth and right,
 3 Lord, strength-en those who la - bor that all may find re - lease
 4 Keep bright in us the vi - sion of days when war shall cease,

re - deem the whole cre - a - tion with your al - might - y hand.
 from trust in bombs that show - er de - struc - tion through the night,
 from fear of rat - tling sa - ber, from dread of war's in - crease;
 when ha - tred and di - vi - sion give way to love and peace,

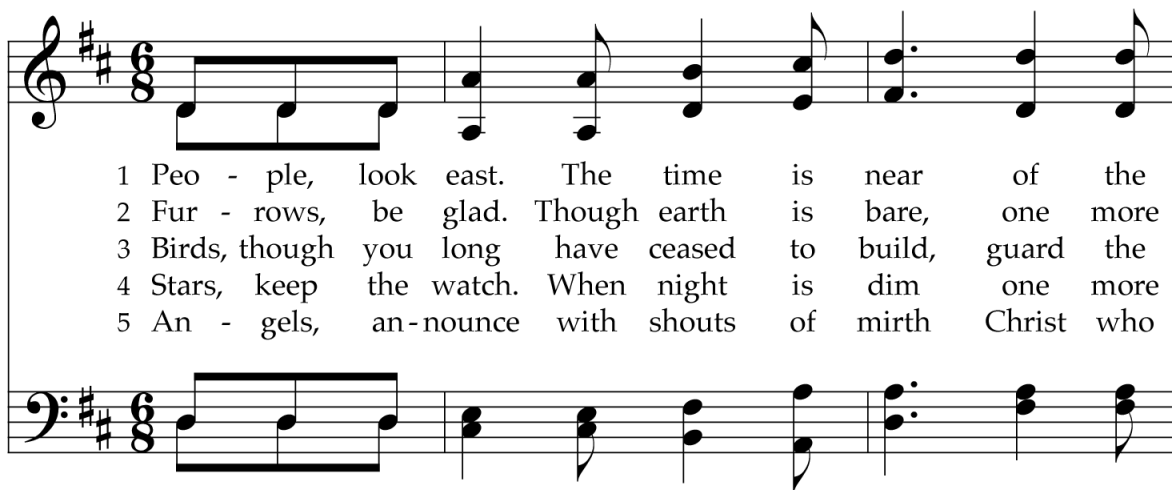
Where hate and fear di - vide us and bit - ter threats are hurled,
 from pride of race and sta - tion and blind - ness to your way,
 when hope and cour - age fal - ter, your still small voice be heard;
 till dawns the morn - ing glo - rious when truth and jus - tice reign

in love and mer - cy guide us and heal our strife - torn world.
 de - liv - er ev - ery na - tion, e - ter - nal God, we pray.
 with faith that none can al - ter, your ser - vants un - der - gird.
 and Christ shall rule vic - to - rious o'er all the world's do - main.

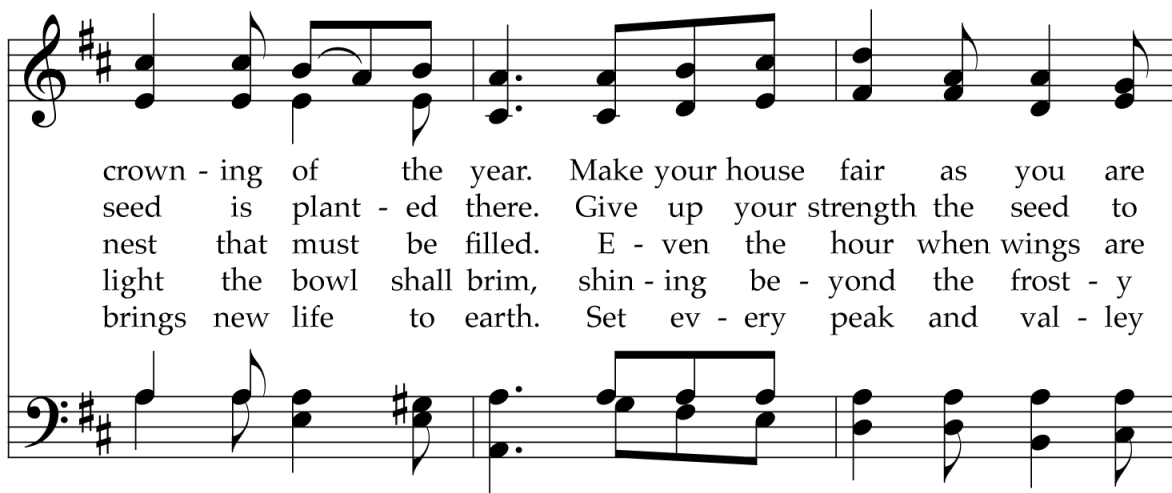
If we truly believe that God cares for all people, we cannot limit our prayers and songs for peace to the welfare of our own nation, no matter how much we may love it. This challenging text is set to a stirring Welsh tune, named for a hamlet with a prominent Baptist chapel.

105

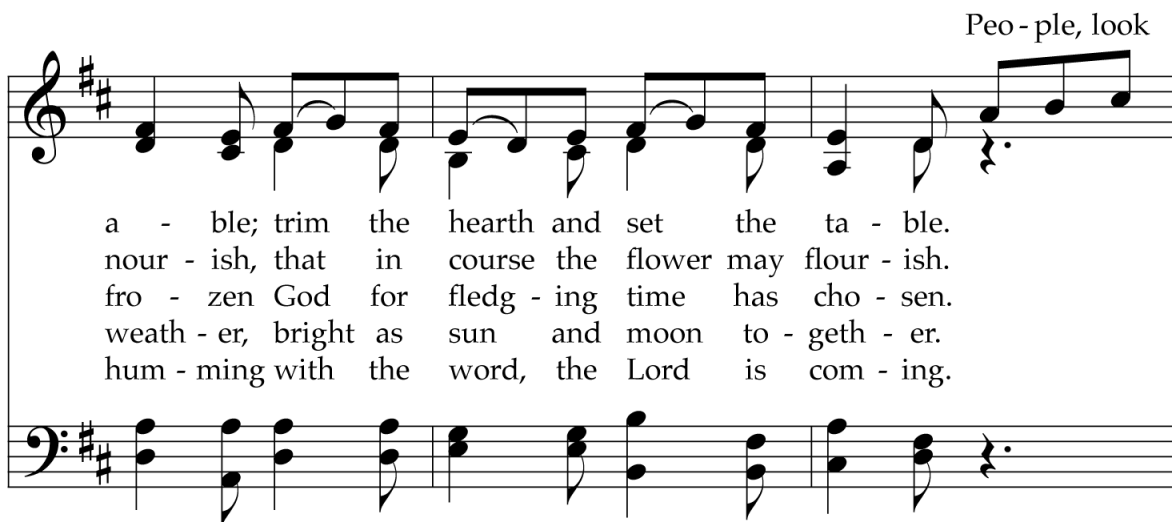
People, Look East



1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more
3 Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the
4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more
5 An - gels, an - nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who




crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are
seed is plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to
nest that must be filled. E - ven the hour when wings are
light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y
brings new life to earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley



Peo - ple, look
a - ble; trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.
nour - ish, that in course the flower may flour - ish.
fro - zen God for fledg - ing time has cho - sen.
weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.
hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.


JESUS CHRIST: ADVENT

east and sing to - day:



Peo-ple, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.
Love, the Rose, is on the way.
Love, the Bird, is on the way.
Love, the Star, is on the way.
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Peo-ple, look east: (Love is on the way.)



384 Soon and Very Soon

1 Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.
2 No more cry - ing there: we are going to see the King.
3 No more dy - ing there: we are going to see the King.
4 Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.

Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.
No more cry - ing there: we are going to see the King.
No more dy - ing there: we are going to see the King.
Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.

Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.
No more cry - ing there: we are going to see the King.
No more dy - ing there: we are going to see the King.
Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.

Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, we're going to see the King!

This spirited African American gospel hymn draws on John's vision of the new heaven and the new earth in Revelation 21:3-4, with its wonderful promise that God will wipe away the tears from all eyes, that death will be no longer, and that there will be no more mourning or pain.

562

Holy, Holy, Holy

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,

heav - en and earth are full, full of your glo - ry.

Ho - san - na in the high - est, 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.

