Westminster
Presbyterian Church

December 12, 2021
3rd Sunday of Advent
Commitment Sunday

Welcome and Announcements — **Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

Minute for Mission for the Christmas Joy Offering — **Linda Barbu**

Prelude — "To Bethlehem" — RON LOREE

Let us open our hearts and minds to the rhythm of the gathering music as it centers us in God's presence for worship.

***Gathering Words** — **Rich Drushal**

*The * in the liturgy indicates that you are invited to stand in body or in spirit.*

A voice calls out in the wilderness.
It sings of a home for all.
It speaks of justice and peace.

We could choose to ignore it.
We could drown out that song.
We could choose not to listen.

Instead, we come into this space.
We let the world grow quiet.
We listen.

A voice calls out in the wilderness.
Do you hear it?
We hear it. In listening, we worship.

Let us draw near to God.

***Lighting the Candle of Joy** — **Josie and Rich Drushal**

R: Joy is seeing people you love after months apart.
J: Joy is hearing, "Come on over, it has been too long!"
R: Joy is the stretches and giggles of a newborn child.
J: Joy is making it home when the journey is long.
R: Joy is your dog sliding to meet you at the door.
J: Joy is the energy of a new season.
R: Joy is feeling found when you thought you were lost.

J: So today we light the candle of joy,
because the welcome God has for us is nothing short of joyful.
R: Rest in that good news. Let it wash over you.
J: Family of faith, we are close to home. Amen.

***Opening Hymn No. 93** "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates" TRURO

Call to Confession **Josie Drushal**

It takes courage to tell the truth.
John the Baptist knew it.
His job as a prophet certainly could not have been easy.

And you and I know it.
Our job as people of faith—to create a home for all—has never been easy.

In our prayer of confession, may we channel some of John the Baptist's courage to tell the truth about ourselves and our world. We do not do this to shame ourselves or guilt ourselves for being imperfect. We speak the truth out loud because we know that we cannot grow and change without first being honest.

So let us be brave. Let us be bold. Let us be truth-tellers as we confess together now to a God who couldn't love us any more than God already does. Let us pray. . .

Prayer of Confession **Josie Drushal**

Expansive God,
We know that the church is your house,
and your house has room for everyone.

Yet, too often, instead of setting the table for our neighbors, we block the door.
Instead of welcoming all, we judge others by our own standards.
Instead of recognizing all the gifts that people bring to our shared life,
we privilege certain gifts over others.

Remind us that your home is a home for *all*,
that truth requires hard work,
that truth requires uncomfortable justice.

Help us to be bold enough to see it and brave enough to live it.
With hope we pray, amen.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Forgiveness **Josie Drushal**

Family of faith,
God sent prophets like John the Baptist to us because this work is not easy.
Helping create a world where all might have a home,
and all might be loved, and all might know peace, is an audacious goal.

Fortunately for us,
when we mess up—when we lose our way or forget our call—we are met with grace.
God could not love us any more or any less than God already does.

So rest in this good news:

We are at home with God—forgiven, claimed, and loved.
The door is always open for us.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Musical Response "When He Comes" GARRETT PARKER

Prayer of Illumination **Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

Scripture Reading Luke 3: 1-18 (*CEB translation)* **Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

3In the fifteenth year of the rule of the emperor Tiberius—when Pontius Pilate was governor over Judea and
Herod was ruler over Galilee, his brother Philip was ruler over Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was ruler
over Abilene, **2**during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—God's word came to John, son of Zechariah
in the wilderness. **3**John went throughout the region of the Jordan River, calling for people to be baptized to
show that they were changing their hearts and lives and wanted God to forgive their sins. **4**This is just as it was
written in the scroll of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

A voice crying out in the wilderness:
"*Prepare the way for the Lord;*
make his paths straight.
5*Every valley will be filled,*
and every mountain and hill will be leveled.
The crooked will be made straight
and the rough places made smooth.
6*All humanity will see God's salvation.*"

7Then John said to the crowds who came to be baptized by him, "You children of snakes! Who warned you to
escape from the angry judgment that is coming soon? **8**Produce fruit that shows you have changed your hearts
and lives. And don't even think about saying to yourselves, Abraham is our father. I tell you that God is able to
raise up Abraham's children from these stones. **9**The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree
that doesn't produce good fruit will be chopped down and tossed into the fire."

10The crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" **11**He answered, "Whoever has two shirts must share with
the one who has none, and whoever has food must do the same." **12**Even tax collectors came to be baptized.

They said to him, “Teacher, what should we do?” [13]He replied, “Collect no more than you are authorized to collect.” [14]Soldiers asked, “What about us? What should we do?” He answered, “Don’t cheat or harass anyone, and be satisfied with your pay.”

[15]The people were filled with expectation, and everyone wondered whether John might be the Christ. [16]John replied to them all, “I baptize you with water, but the one who is more powerful than me is coming. I’m not worthy to loosen the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. [17]The shovel he uses to sift the wheat from the husks is in his hands. He will clean out his threshing area and bring the wheat into his barn. But he will burn the husks with a fire that can’t be put out.”

[18]With many other words John appealed to them, proclaiming good news to the people.

Sermon **Home for All** **Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

***Hymn (printed music at end)** “A Home for All” REV. ANNA STRICKLAND
(Tune of “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”)

Litany of Commitment **Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

You may bring forward your covenant form and place it in the basket. If you have not already done so, you are welcome to mail it to the office.

Generous God,
you have made a world for us and given us incomparable gifts:
air and water, family and friends,
your steadfast love and forgiveness, and your son Jesus the Christ.

For all the gifts and wonders you have bestowed on us,
we thank you and worship you with renewed gratitude.

Giver of life,
You created us to love one another as Christ has loved us.
We are eager to participate in the work of the Church
And to further the ministry and service of this congregation.

We are called to be your stewards
so we commit to thoughtfully shoulder our personal share of responsibility,
and we commit to witness to the good news of Christ
with our hearts and hands and voices.

Gracious one,
We are confident in your love and care for us
And we trust that you have faithful plans for us.
Grant us generous hearts and courageous spirits
To do the things you call us to do.

We join with our church family in committing faithfully
and sowing bountifully in the year ahead.
Be our guide. Hold us up when we start to stumble.
May your Holy Spirit lead us in joyful song and fill us with eager anticipation.
You are our vision, O God.
Lead us on our journey to make a home for all. Amen.

Sharing Joys and Concerns **Josie & Rich Drushal**

Prayer of the People **Josie & Rich Drushal**

We ask through the power of your Spirit and in the name of Jesus the Christ,
who taught us to pray, saying:

Our God in heaven, holy is your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done, on earth as is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours.
Now and forever. Amen.

***Closing Hymn No. 106** "Prepare the Way, O Zion" BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

***Benediction** **Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

Postlude "Fantasia on ***Aberystwyth***" JOSEPH PARRY/ARR. MANSFIELD

The service continues with refreshments and fellowship.

To assure the safety of all, currently we are not passing the offering plates. They are in the back of the sanctuary. We invite you to place your gifts there. Thank you for your generosity.

Note: Prayers were adapted from Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org. Litany of Commitment was adapted from Idlewild Presbyterian Church, Memphis, TN.

Music:	Piano	Mary-Marie Deauclaire
	Piano	Bob Iams
	Organ	Ken Shafer
Tech. Assistant/Event Steward		Tony Mendiola
Refreshments		Dorothy Iams
Flowers		
Sunday Assistant		Linda Barbu
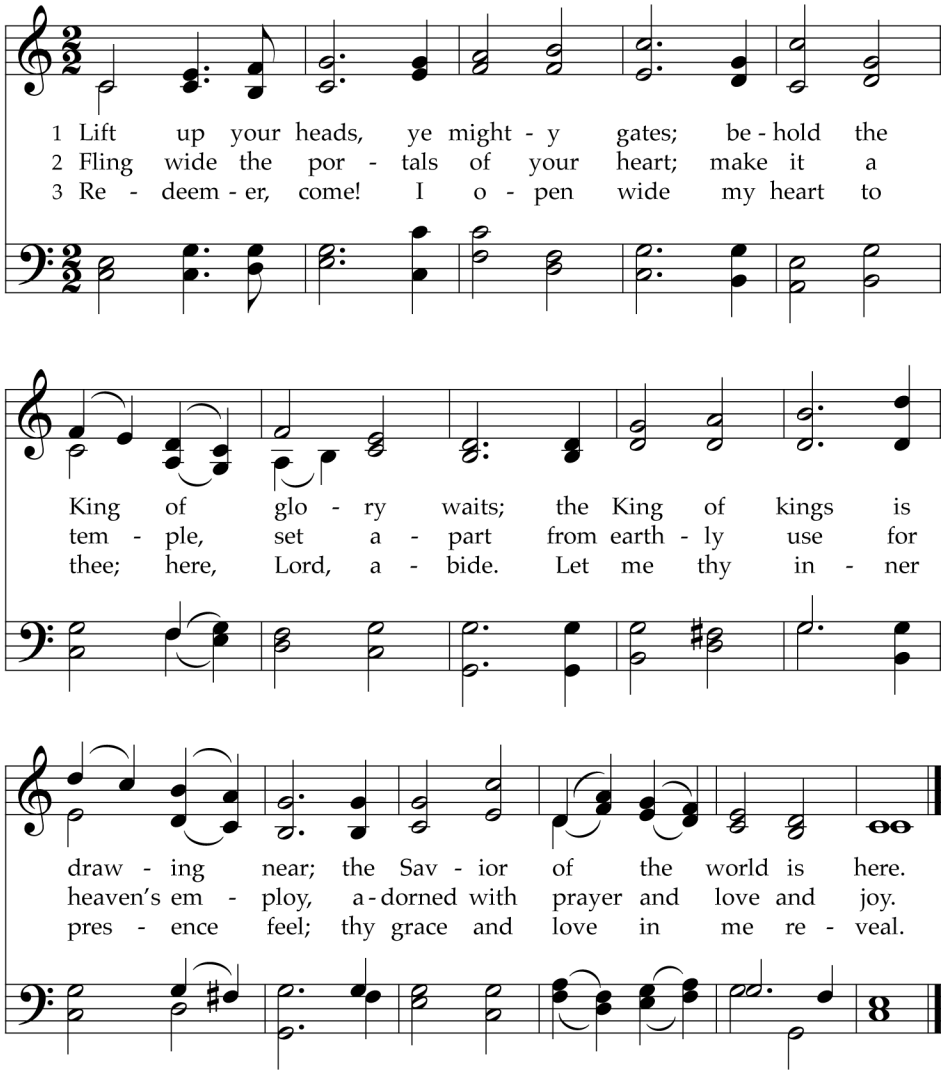
Westminster Presbyterian Church

Pastor Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy
Office Administrator Judy Mowrer
Minister of Music and Worship Arts Dr. Divine Gbagbo
Worship Accompanists Mary-Marie Deauclaire, Ken Shafer
AV Assistant/Event Steward Tony Mendiola
Custodian Kara Akers

353 East Pine Street, Wooster, OH 44691 Phone: 330-263-2398
Office Hours: 9am–noon, Tuesday through Friday
Website: www.wpcwooster.org or www.facebook.com/wpcwooster

Westminster Presbyterian Church strives to be a safe place for all people to worship regardless of ethnicity, creed, age, cultural background, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

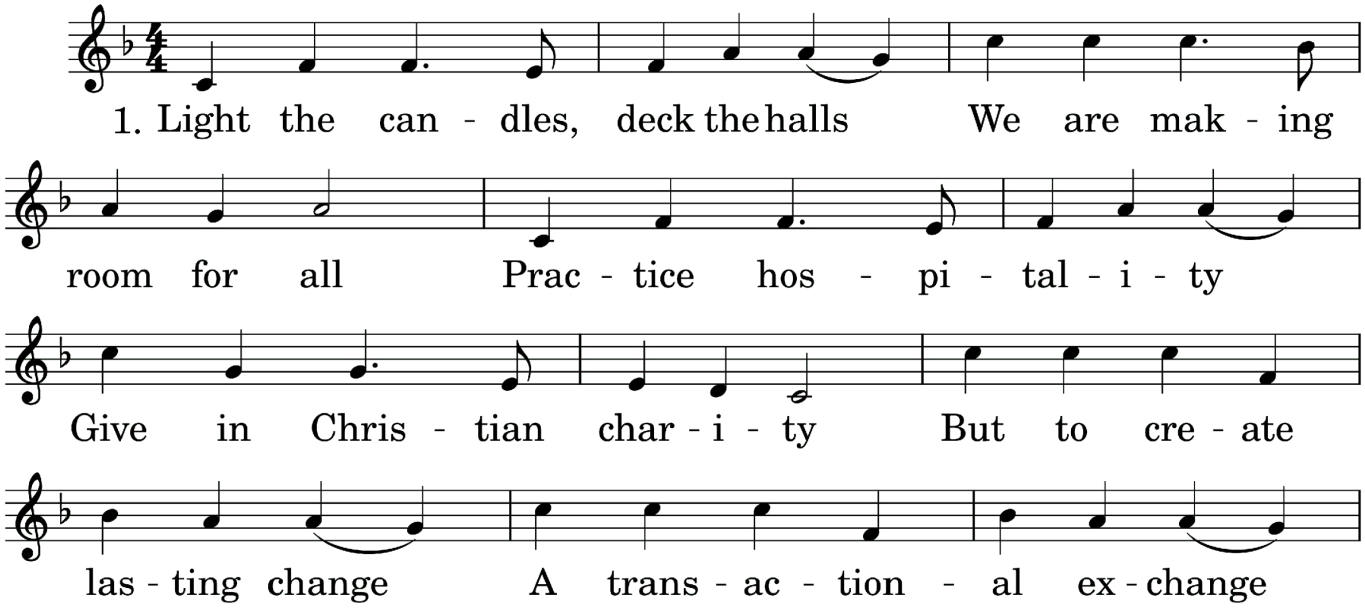
Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates 93



Beginning as a paraphrase of Psalm 24:7–10, this text then applies the door imagery to the singer's heart, and concludes with the individual's welcome of the approaching Savior. It is set to a very effective anonymous 18th-century English tune that has served many texts.

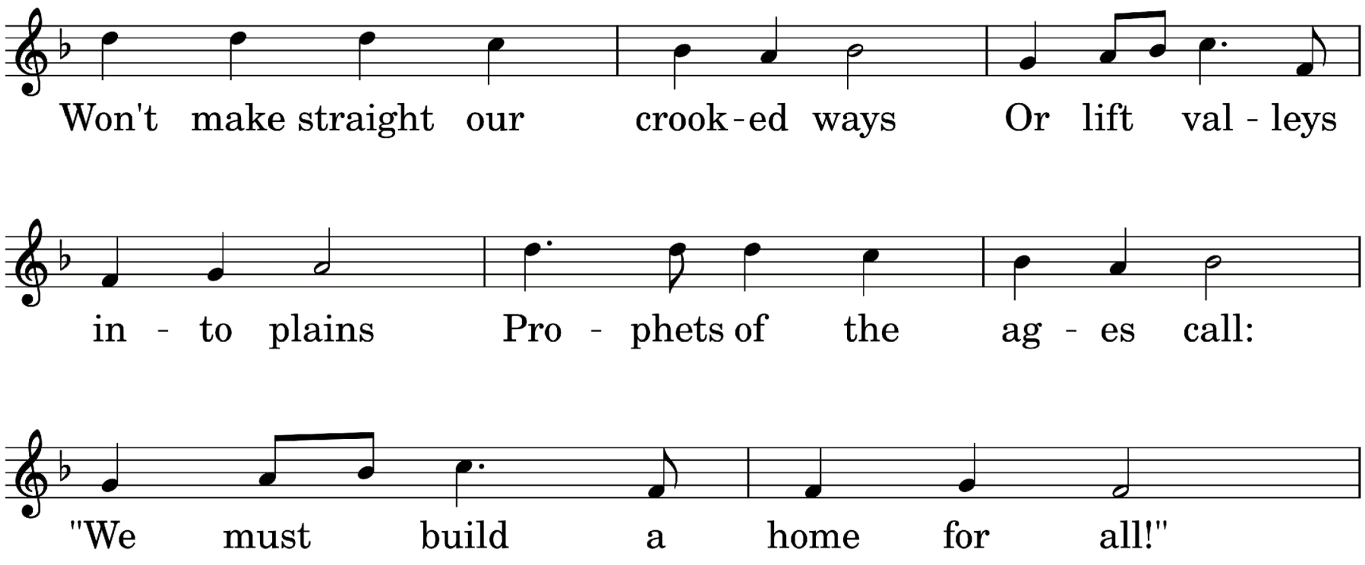
TEXT: Georg Weissel, 1642; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1855, 1863 — TRURO
MUSIC: *Musica Sacra*, c. 1778 — LM

A Home for All



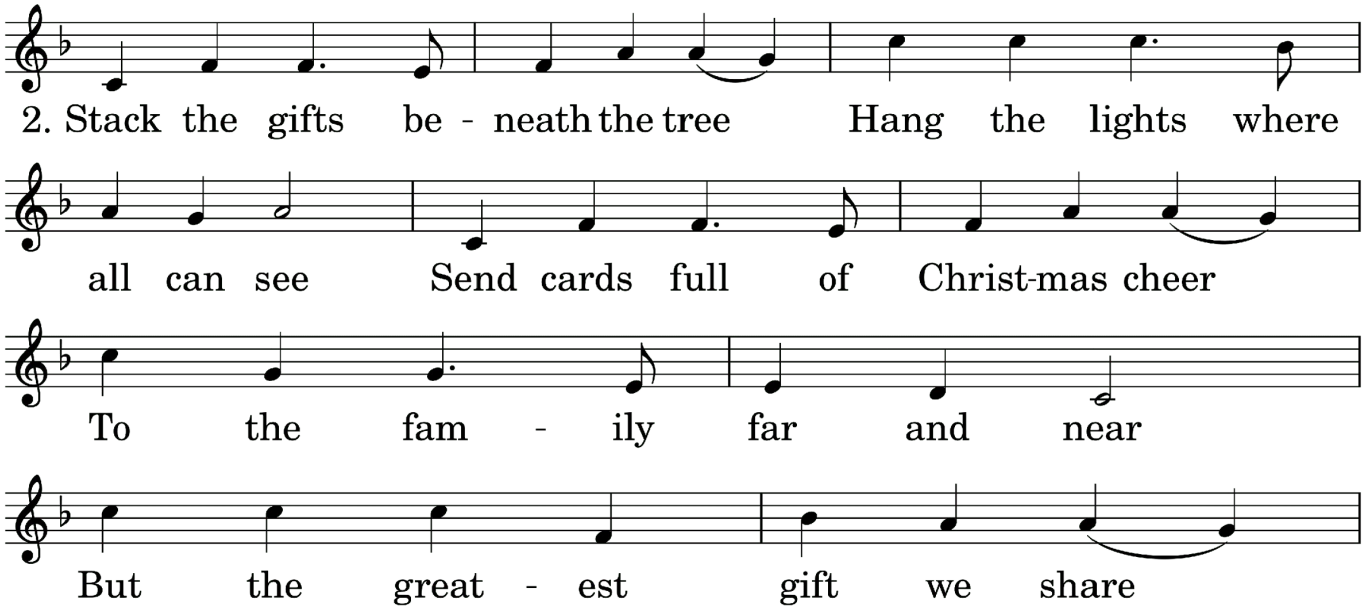
Text: Anna Strickland (2021)
Music (*MENDELSSOHN 7.7.7.7 D with refrain*): Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1840)
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A Home for All



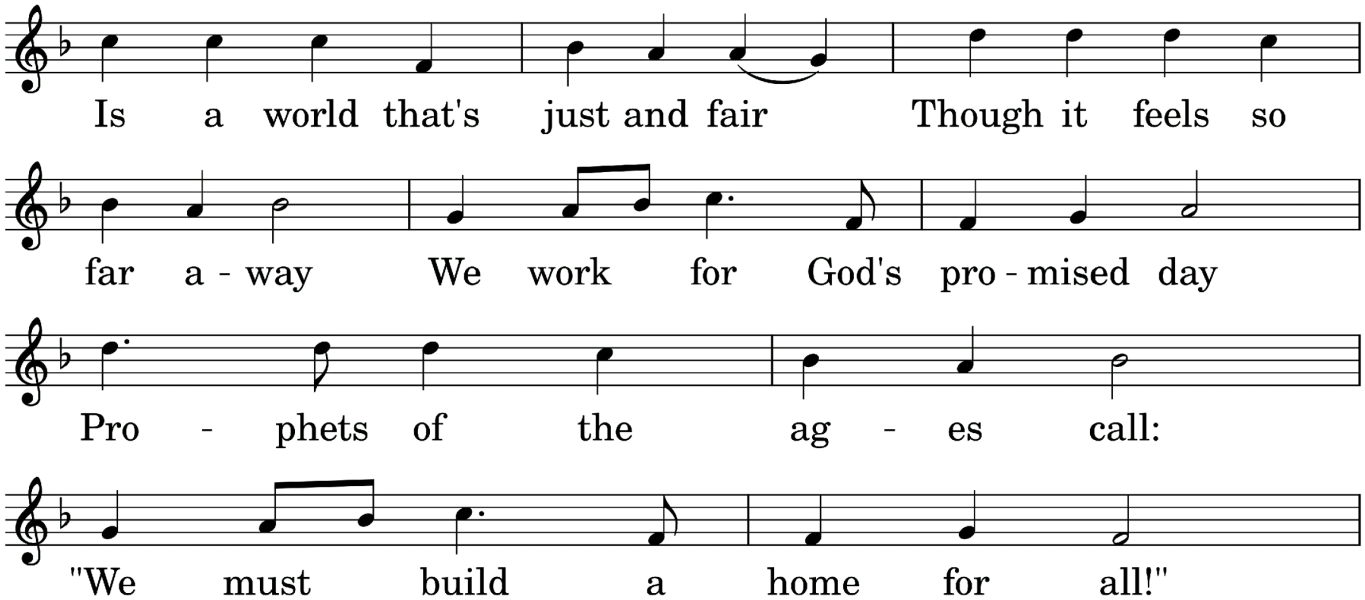
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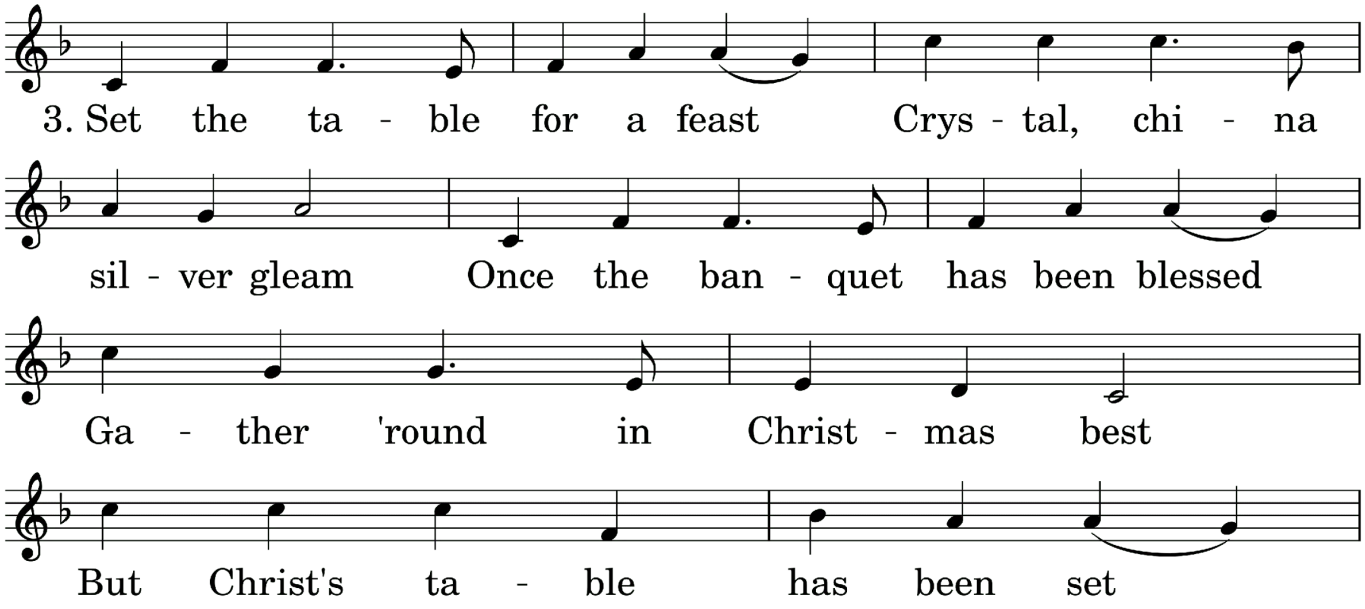
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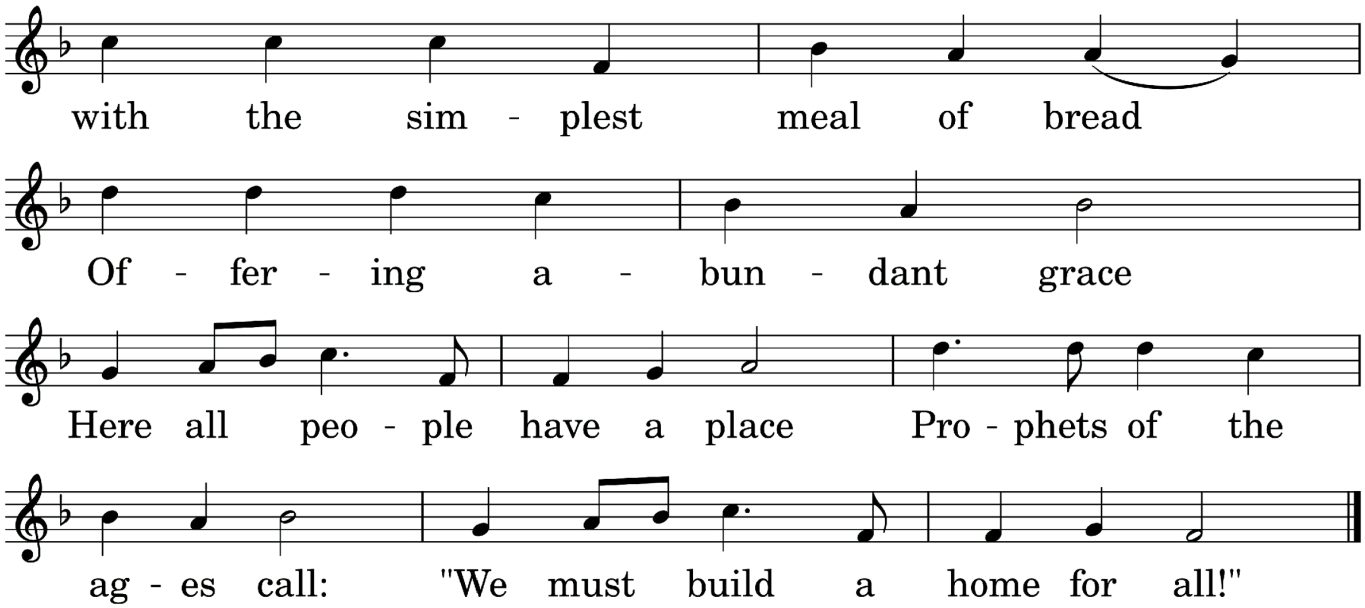
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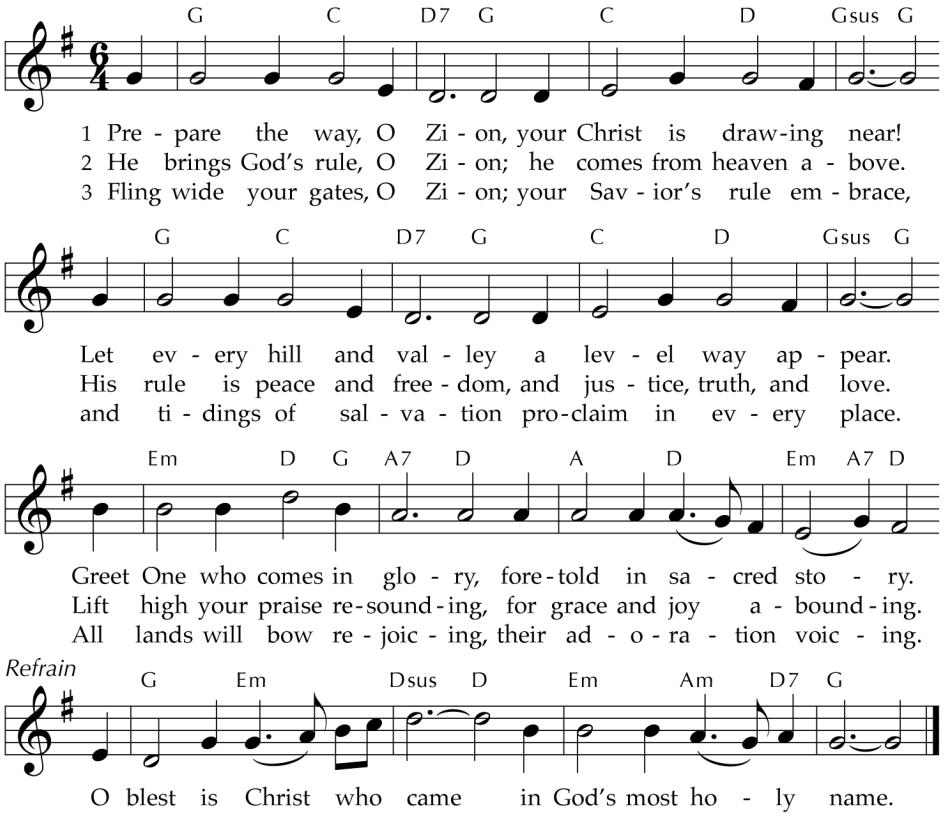
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Prepare the Way, O Zion 106



Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

This engaging Advent text based on Isaiah 40:3–5 and Psalm 24:7–10 has been in use in the Church of Sweden for almost two hundred years. It is set to a version of an even older Swedish tune, which in turn seems to be derived from a German folktune that spread to Scandinavia.

TEXT: Frans Mikael Franzen, 1812, rev. 1819; trans. Augustus Nelson, 1958; adapt. Charles P. Price, 1980, alt.
MUSIC: *Then Swenska Psalmboken,* 1697; arr. *American Lutheran Hymnal,* 1930
Text © 1982 Hope Publishing Company

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN
7.6.7.6.7.7 with refrain