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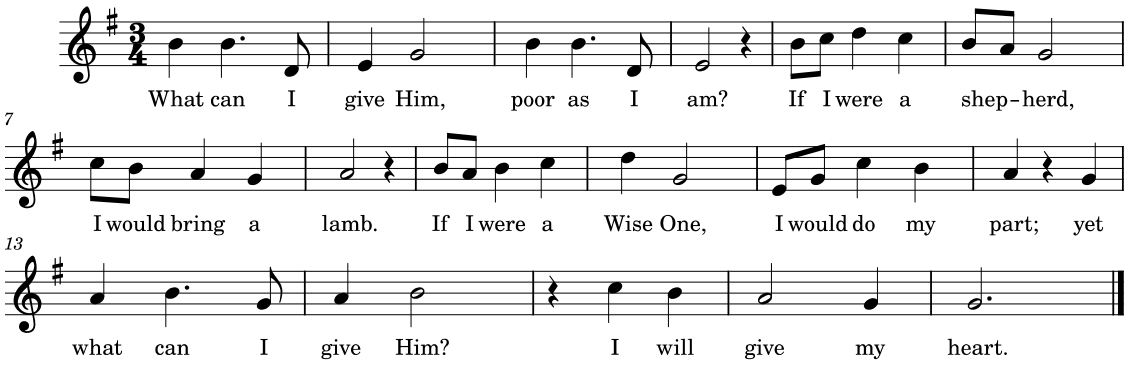
Second Sunday in Advent
December 3, 2023

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

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

Minute for Mission for Christmas Joy Offering — **Lemoine Peart**

Advent Prelude — **"What Can I Give Him"** — ***Jubilate Music Group***



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Becoming Present — **An Advent Ritual** — **Sherry Hatter-Miller and Eric Miller**

Leader: In our Advent series, we are celebrating the gift of being truly present — to each other and to the call of God to make this world a better place. We can be the gift of presence with those who are experiencing life as less-than-peaceful. But this might also be true of how we are personally feeling in this moment. Our lives can feel a bit chaotic or in need of a makeover.

The Good News is that God is continually making a way for do-overs. In this we can find peace, even when life doesn't feel so peaceful. This week we focus on what it means to be a gift of non-anxious presence for those who need it most.

(The congregation joins into song.)

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise [One], I would do my part;
Yet what can I give Him: I will give my heart.

Reader: We unwrap a present on this second Sunday of Advent
with great anticipation for the gift that God will reveal.
People: We open our hearts as we open the gift!

The gift is unwrapped…

Reader: The promise of Peace is the Divine Gift we receive.
People: And what will we do with it?

The box is opened and the candle from it is placed on the Advent wreath and lit.

Reader: The gift of Christ's peace reminds us that we can have serenity
even in the midst of non-peaceful situations.
Peace is not simply the absence of conflict.
Peace is an ever-present gift that we can open at any time
when we stop, breathe, and trust that we are never alone.
And the gift of peace we can give is to be present for those who feel alone.
People: **We light this Candle of Peace as a sign that we will be**
Present with Peace in the world.

The congregation joins into song.

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise [One], I would do my part;
Yet what can I give Him: I will give my heart.

Prayer of Presence

Let us pray:

Holy Living Light of God,
you are our Peaceful Presence.
Let this peace grow in our lives each day,
so we can be a Present of Peace to others.

Unwrap and open our hearts.
May it be so.
Amen.

*Opening Hymn No. 109 "Blest Be the God of Israel" *Merle's Tune*

Prayer of Illumination Rev. Dr. Enikö Ferenczy

Scripture Readings

Isaiah 40: 1-11 (Inclusive Bible Translation)

"Console my people, give them comfort," says your God.
"Speak tenderly to Jerusalem's heart,
and tell it that its time of service is ended…"
A voice cries out,
"Clear a path through the wilderness for YHWH!
Make a straight road through the desert for our God!"
Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low;
let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges become a valley!
Go up on a high mountain, you who bring good news to Zion!
Shout with a loud voice, you who bring good news to Jerusalem!
Shout without fear and say to the towns of Judah "Here is your God!"
Like a shepherd you feed your flock,
gathering the lambs and holding them close,
and leading mother ewes with gentleness.

2 Peter 3:8-15a (Inclusive Bible Translation)

This point must not be overlooked, dear friends: in the eyes of the Most High, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. God does not delay in keeping the promise, as some mean 'delay.' Rather, God shows you generous patience, desiring that no one perish but that all come to repentance… But what we await are new heavens and a new earth where, according to the promise, God's justice will reside. So beloved, while waiting for this, make every

effort to be found at peace and without stain or defilement in God's sight. Consider our God's patience as your opportunity for salvation.

Gospel Reading — *Mark 1:1-8 (Inclusive Bible Translation)*

Here begins the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God: as it was written in Isaiah the prophet: "I send my messenger before you to prepare your way, a herald's voice in the desert, crying, 'Make ready the way of our God. Clear a straight path. '" 'And so John the Baptizer appeared in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to John and were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. John was clothed in camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and he ate nothing but grasshoppers and wild honey. In the course of his preaching, John said, "One more powerful than I is to come after me. I am not fit to stoop and untie his sandal straps. I have baptized you in water, but the One to come will baptize you in the Holy Spirit."

Sermon Being Present with Peace Rev. Dr. Enikö Ferenczy

*Hymn No. 516 "For the Bread Which You Have Broken" *Kingdom*

Celebrating the Lord's Supper Rev. Dr. Enikö Ferenczy

Invitation to the Table

We are all invited to this table of Jesus. This is one of the ways that we acknowledge the continual gift of his presence with us. We remember the rituals of his Last Supper with his disciples in which he offered a poignant invitation for all of his followers to be together at meals, break bread and lift cups, and know that we are never alone.

This is the invitation now. The gift of presence — with each other and with Christ. This is the mystical union that binds us to Christ, present in this moment, and to all who have ever gathered at this table... no matter where, or when.

As we prepare for the feast, we will give ourselves a respite from the multitasking or obsessing over about something that isn't quite right or settled or the particular way we like it. We slow down in this prayer time, taking on a more peaceful rhythm.

We will begin our prayers with three questions, each followed by a short silence. Focusing intentionally on thoughts and memories can be a kind of prayer, bringing our lives into a conversation with the Holy. I invite you to take a deep breath and close your eyes if you are comfortable doing that.

The first question is this: Who was a gift of presence to you this week? Did you experience their attention in a way that felt like a special connection? Take a moment to recall this in your mind's eye, seeing it emerge like opening a gift. If you cannot recall such a moment, it is OK… this week you will notice these moments more deeply.

[pause for a bit]

The second question is this: How did you offer yourself as a gift of presence? What did it feel like to extend your attentiveness and availability beyond yourself? Did you notice how it made a difference to someone else for you to be truly present to them?

[pause for a bit]

The third question is this: Is it possible that God's presence is felt more acutely in these moments when we truly tend to one another? What could you do this coming week that would allow God's gift of Peace to flow through you to someone else? It may be as simple as finding opportunities to speak an encouraging word. Or as complex as actually lifting up someone's circumstances through volunteering or donating.

[pause for a bit]

(The congregation joins into song)

Right here and right now we open our senses
to see and perceive the gifts we've been given,
to know and believe that what we must do
is open our hearts to let all gifts flow through.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving **Rev. Dr. Enikö Ferenczy**

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to God.
Let us give thanks.

It's so right to do.
We open our hearts
to let all gifts flow through.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Holy God, Gift-Giver of all that exists.
You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.
When we turned away, and our love failed,
your love remained steadfast.
You delivered us from captivity,
made covenant to be our God,
and spoke to us through your prophets.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.
He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners.
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant
by water and the Spirit.

Jesus promised the gift of his presence with us always,
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

So pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
so that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his love.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world,
until we feast at your heavenly banquet.

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 kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power and the glory are yours.
Now and forever. Amen.

Words of Institution
Communion of the People
Prayer after Communion

Closing Hymn No. 87** **"Comfort, Comfort Now People"** ***Genevan 42

Benediction **Rev. Dr. Enikö Ferenczy**

Postlude

The service continues with fellowship.

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*Liturgy is from the Worship Design Studio for Advent 2023.
Prayers were adapted from Marcia McFee.
*Hymns are from the Glory to God Hymnal.
*Music: Tom Shaw, organ; Susan Shaw, flute
*Sunday Service Assistant/treats: Sherry Hatter-Miller

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To continue to assure the safety of all, the offering plate is located on a table in the back of the sanctuary. If you are moved to support our ministry, we invite you to place your gifts in the plate.

GIVE NOW

You may also give online through our website by clicking on the "GIVE NOW" button at the bottom of the home page. Your generosity helps us to fulfill our calling to engage in God's transformative mission in our community.

We offer our gifts of money, talents, time, and energy—the gifts of our lives in gratitude for God's relentless love and grace for all. These gifts represent our commitment to heed God's call and join God in God's mission of healing and transforming our world.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, Dec. 3

- Worship Service – 10 am – Mackey Hall
- Wooster Friends Meeting – 10.30 am – The Meeting Place
- 150th Anniversary Planning Meeting – following worship – The Meeting Place
- Alternative Gift Market at First Presbyterian in Bruch Hall – 11.30 am-2 pm

Monday, Dec. 4

- Troop 61 – 6 pm – Mackey Hall

Wednesday, Dec. 6

- Second Advent Study with dinner – 6.30 pm – Miller's home

Thursday, Dec. 7

- Dance and Exercise – 8.30 am – The Meeting Place

Sunday, Dec. 10

- Worship Service with Open Arms Hispanic Ministries followed by soup & bread lunch – 10 am – Mackey Hall
- Wooster Friends Meeting – 10.30 am – The Meeting Place

Westminster Presbyterian Church

Pastor Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy
Minister of Music Rev. Dr. Thomas Shaw
Office Administrator Rev. Dr. James Henery
Tech/Media Administrator Jack Veney
AV Assistant/Event Steward Tony Mendiola
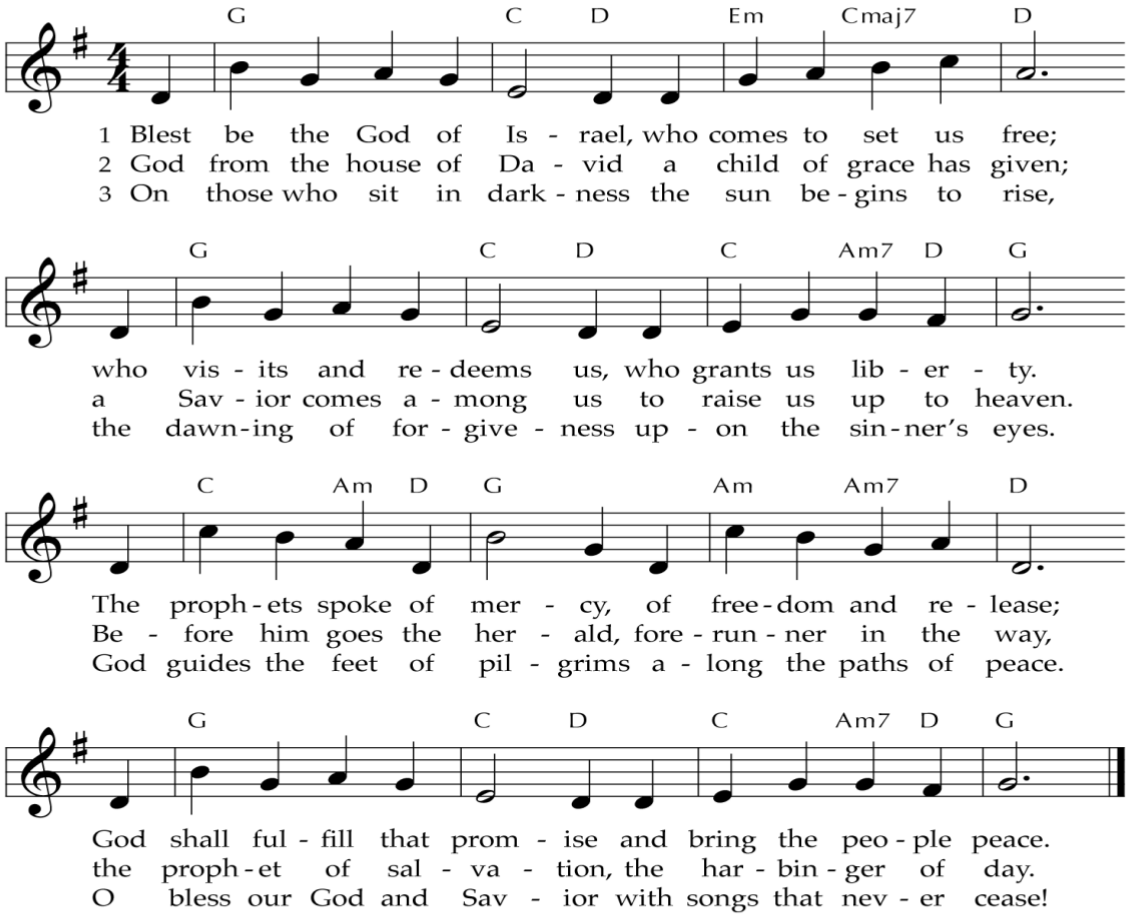
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Westminster Presbyterian Church strives to be a safe place for all people to worship regardless of ethnicity, creed, age, cultural background, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

109 Blest Be the God of Israel

Song of Zechariah
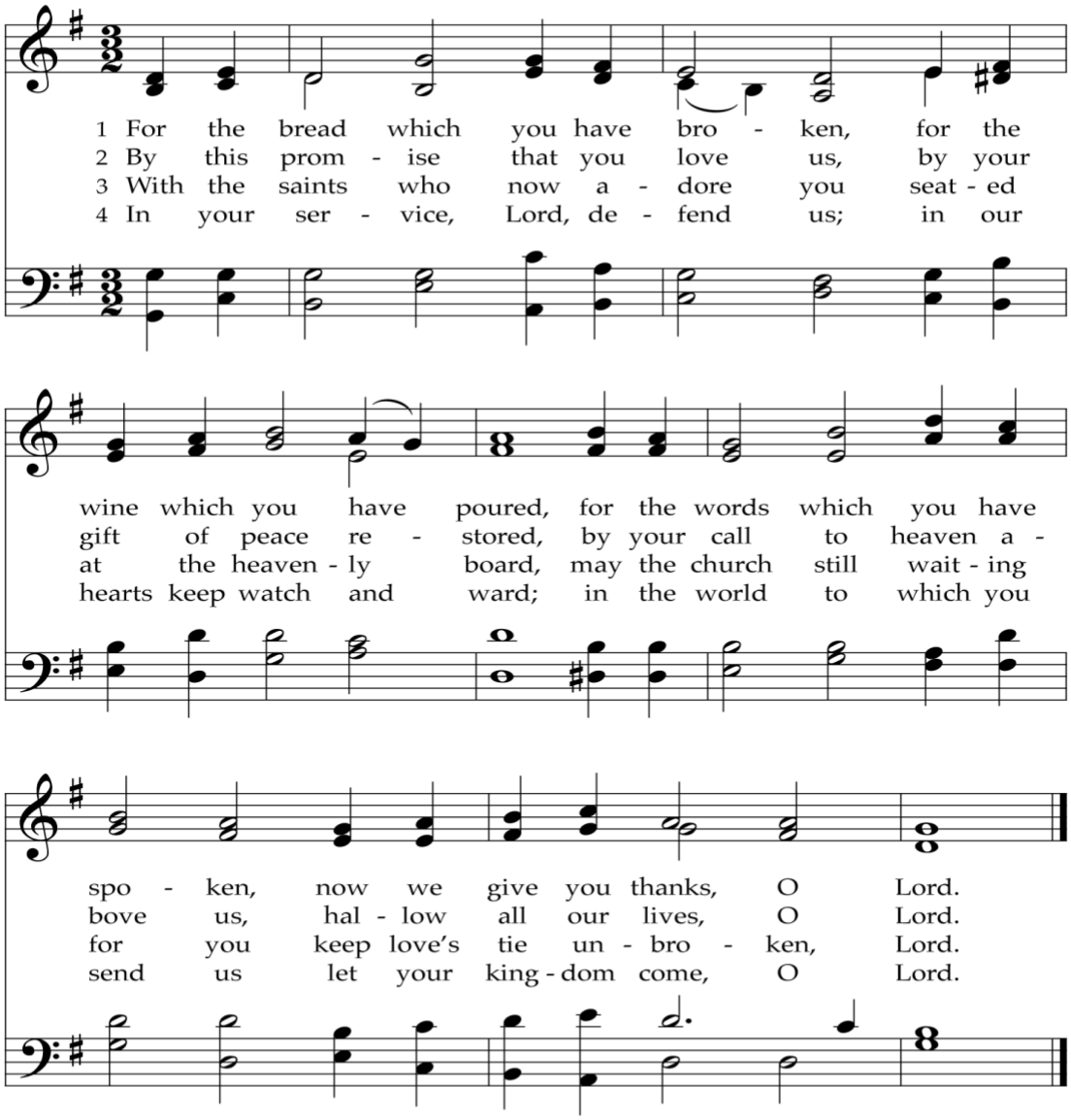


This 20th-century British paraphrase of the Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68–79) broadens the implications of what John the Baptist's father says in order to affirm that God's work is ongoing. The tune is named for the composer's oldest sister, who was his first piano teacher.

TEXT: Michael Perry, 1973, alt.
MUSIC: Hal H. Hopson, 1983
Text © 1973 The Jubilate Group (admin. Hope Publishing Company)
Music © 1983 Hope Publishing Company

MERLE'S TUNE
7.6.7.6.D

LORD'S SUPPER

516 For the Bread Which You Have Broken
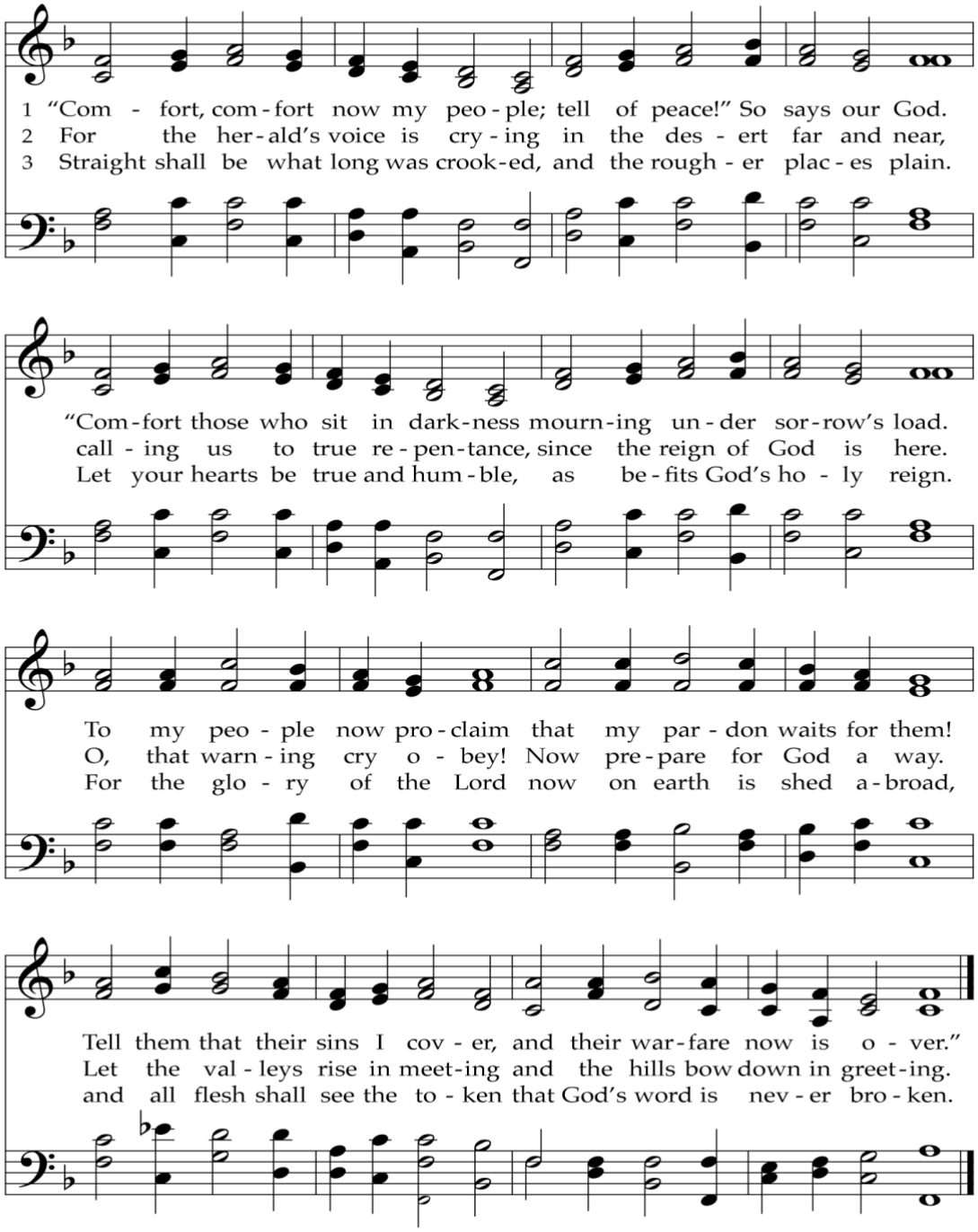


The author of this text, the editor of several Presbyterian hymnals, was the foremost American hymnologist of the early 20th century. Although some of his language in this text echoes early hymns of the church, he is writing here not as a scholar but as a person of deep faith.

TEXT: Louis FitzGerald Benson, 1924, alt.
MUSIC: V. Earle Copes, 1959

KINGDOM
8.7.8.7

Comfort, Comfort Now My People 87



This 17th-century German paraphrase of Isaiah 40:1–5 was one of the texts translated as part of the 19th-century British interest in German religious poetry. It is set here to one of the most popular Genevan Psalter tunes, probably derived from an earlier French folksong.

TEXT: Johannes Olearius, 1671; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt.
MUSIC: Genevan Psalter, 1551

GENEVAN 42
8.7.8.7.7.7.8.8