FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM

Combined Service
The Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

The Service for the Lord's Day

WE GATHER

PRELUDE Your Name — Paul Baloche/Glenn Packiam

Contemporary Ensemble

WELCOME

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING — JoAnne Turcotte

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING RESPONSE — #9

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Verse 1) — VENI EMMANUEL

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*GATHERING HYMN — #3

Comfort, Comfort You My People — PSALM 42

1 Comfort, comfort you my people,
Tell of peace, thus saith our God;
Comfort those who sit in darkness
Bowed beneath oppression's load.
Speak ye to Jerusalem
Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell them that their sins I cover,
And their warfare now is over.

2 For the herald's voice is crying
In the desert far and near,
Bidding us to make repentance
Since the kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way;
Let the valleys rise in meeting
And the hills bow down in greeting.

*Please stand if you are able.

3 Make ye straight what long was crooked,
Make the rougher places plain:
Let your hearts be true and humble,
As befits God's holy reign,
For the glory of the Lord
Now o'er earth is shed abroad;
And all flesh shall see the token
That God's word is never broken.

WE CONFESS

CALL TO CONFESSON

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, more days than not, the hope of peace feels like the rain. We try to hold onto it with cupped hands, but eventually, it slips right on through. Forgive us for holding hope so loosely.Forgive us for allowing the realities of today to define tomorrow. We know that this world needs people of peace and love, so today we pray: turn us into those people. Teach us how to proclaim Zechariah's prophetic song of peace for the world so that love-incarnate might be born anew.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

WE LISTEN

CHILDREN'S SERMON

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE Luke 1:67-80 JoAnne Turcotte
Leader: The word of the Lord;
People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON The Rev. Lindsey Altvater Clifton

"Peace in a Weary World"

WE RESPOND

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

*SERMON HYMN #2
Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus HYFRYDOL

1 Come, Thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Palestine's Strength and Consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear Desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

2 Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*Confession of Belhar*)

We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ. We believe that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells. We believe that God's life-giving Word and Spirit has conquered the powers of sin and death, and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity, that God's life-giving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

CALL FOR OFFERING

Call to Give

Offertory "A Slumber Song" Samuel Barber

Madison Zahorsky, Soprano

Sleep, little baby, I love thee; Sleep, little king, I am bending above thee!
How should I know what to sing, Here in my arms as I sing thee to sleep?
Hushaby low, rockaby so. Kings may have wonderful jewels to bring,
Mother has only a kiss for her king! Why should my singing so make me to weep?
Only to know that I love thee, I love thee, Love thee, my little one, sleep.

*Doxology #592

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

*SENDING HYMN

My Soul Cries Out With a Joyful Shout CANTICLE OF THE TURNING

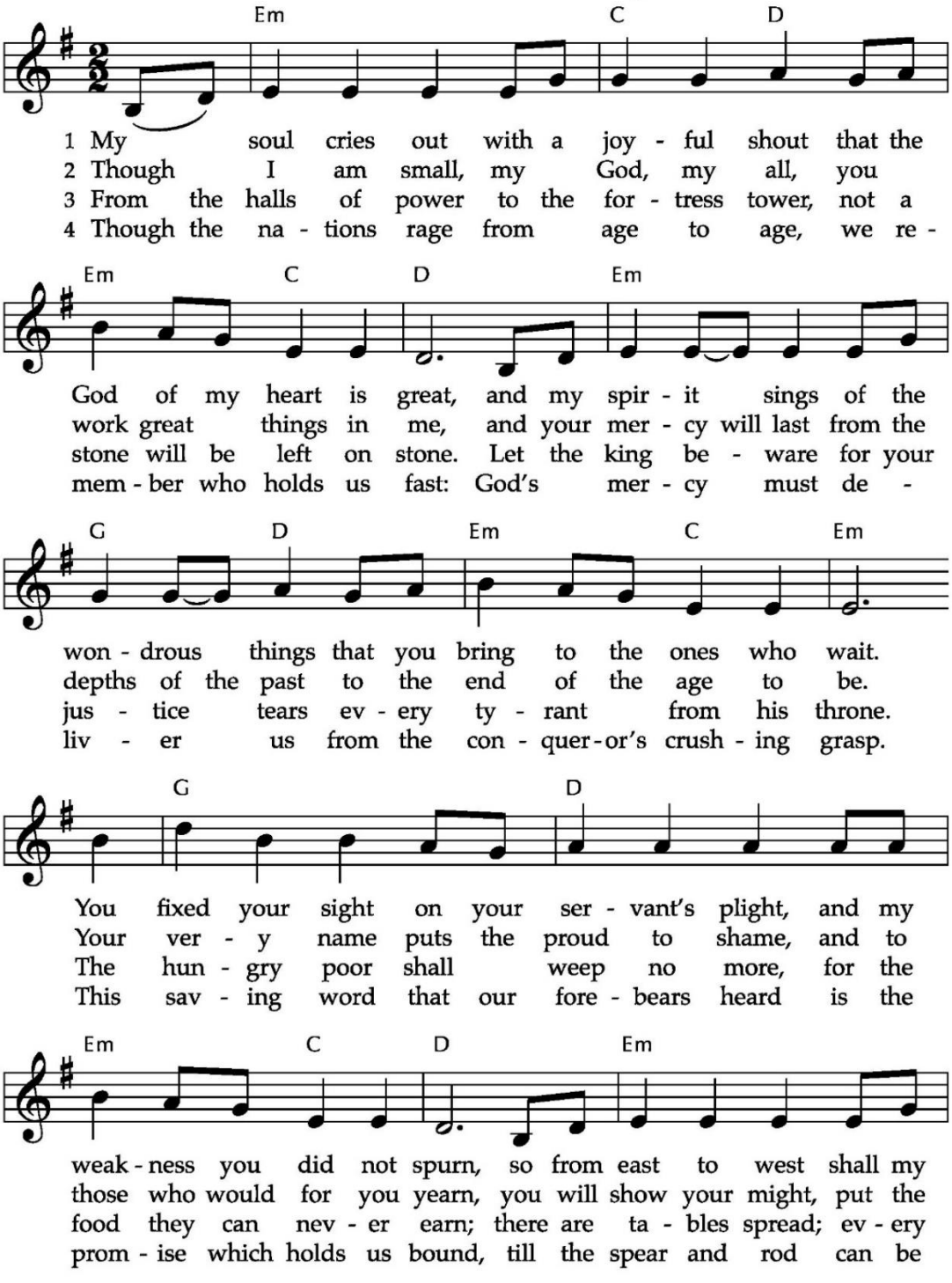
From *Glory to God* - see insert

*BENEDICTION

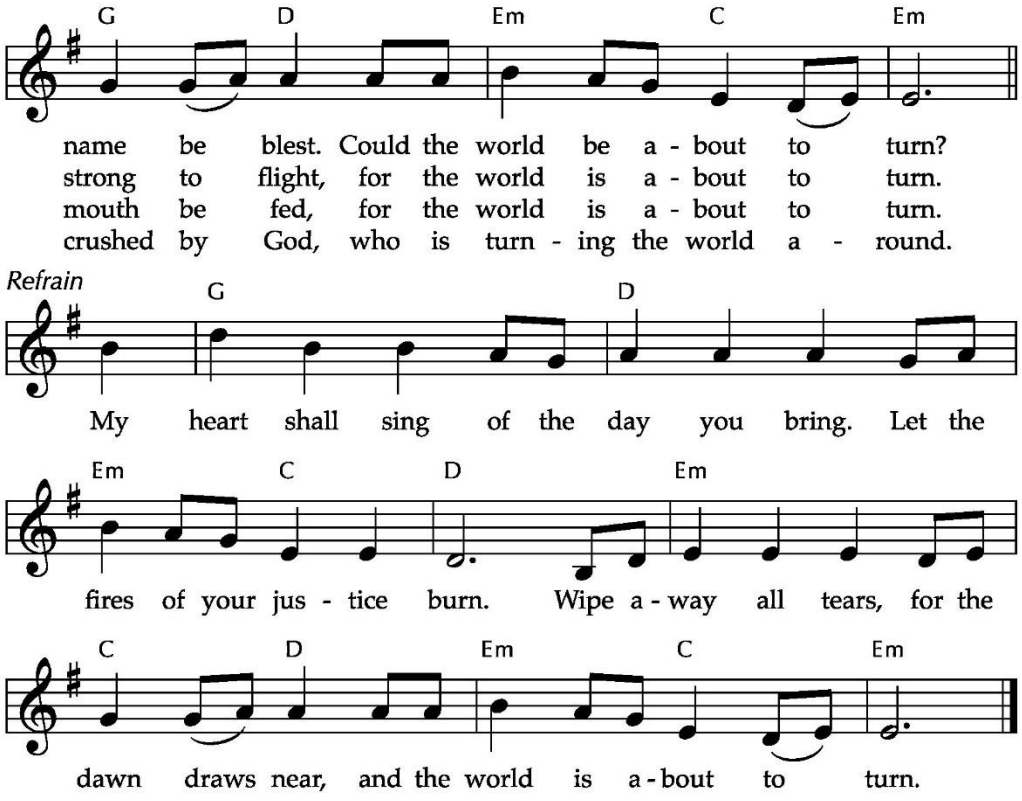
POSTLUDE Noel Theodore Dubois

100 My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

Canticle of the Turning



By employing an energetic Irish folk song for its melody, this ballad-like paraphrase of the *Magnificat*, Mary's song at her meeting with her relative Elizabeth (Luke 1:46–55), recaptures both the wonder and the faith of the young woman who first recognized what God was doing.


G D Em C Em
name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.
Refrain
G D
My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the
Em C D Em
fires of your jus - tice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the
C D Em C Em
dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.