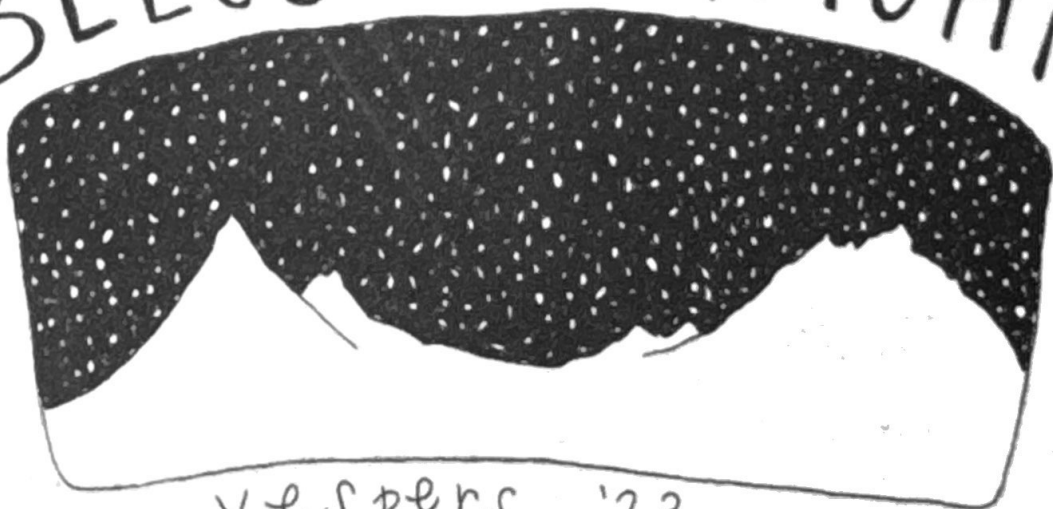


BLESS THIS NIGHT



vespers '23

PARTICIPANT BOOKLET

G. Mark Griffith
Rachel J. Joy
Heather L. Griffith
Steve Wolbrecht

BLESS THIS NIGHT

Vespers '23

Dedicated to the Holden Village winter community 2022-2023

Opening Litany

As a chant

One:



Jesus, you are the life and the truth.

All:



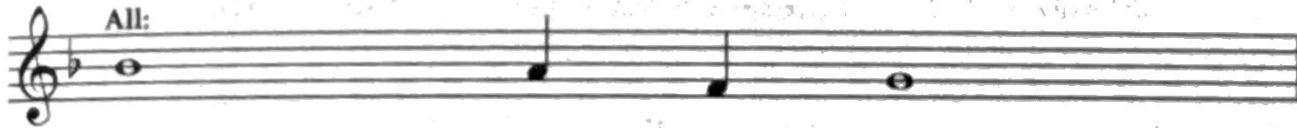
Be with us this eve - ning.

One:



You were there in the be - gin-ning;

All:



You are here with us now.

One:



As the day turns to dusk,

All:



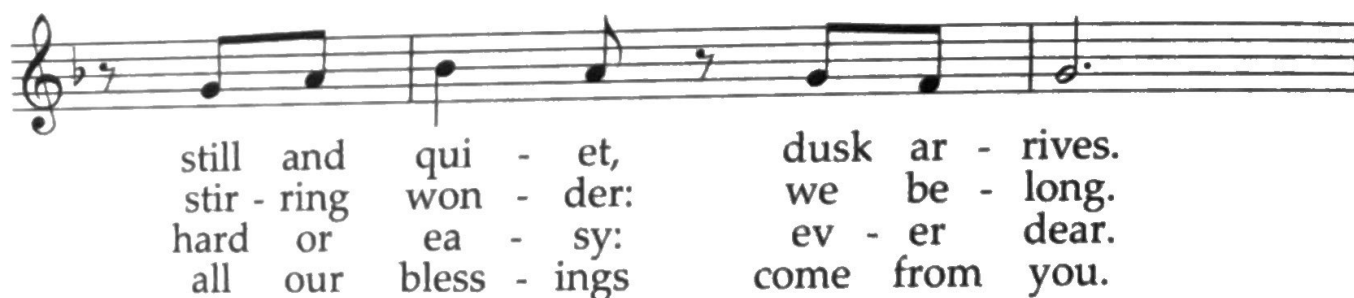
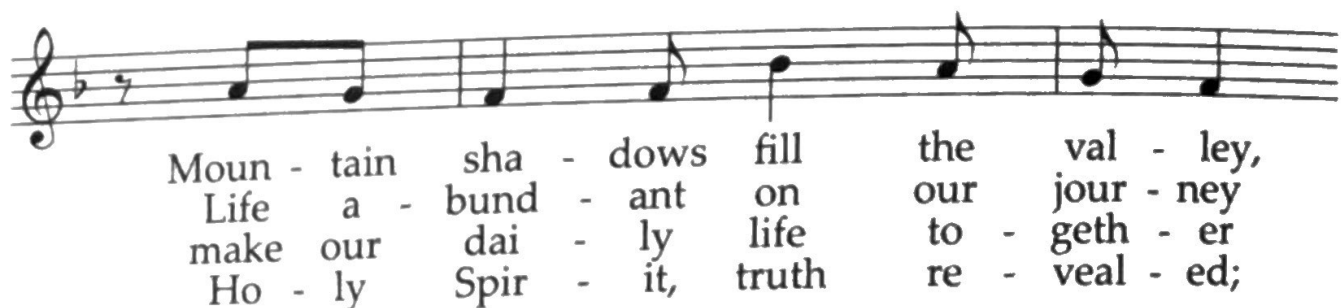
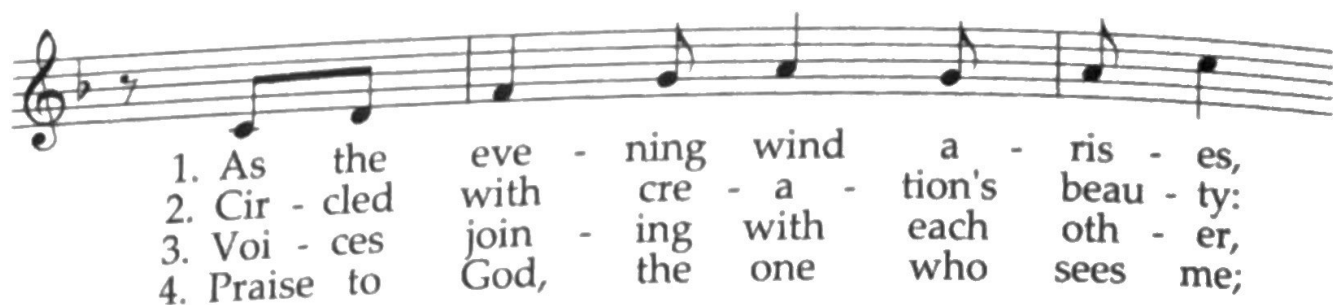
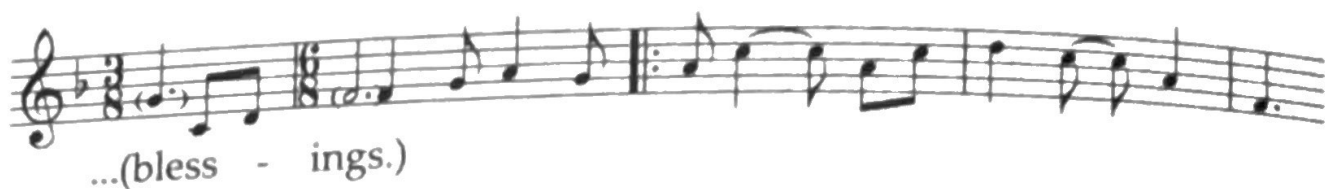
prepare us to re - ceive night's bless - ings.

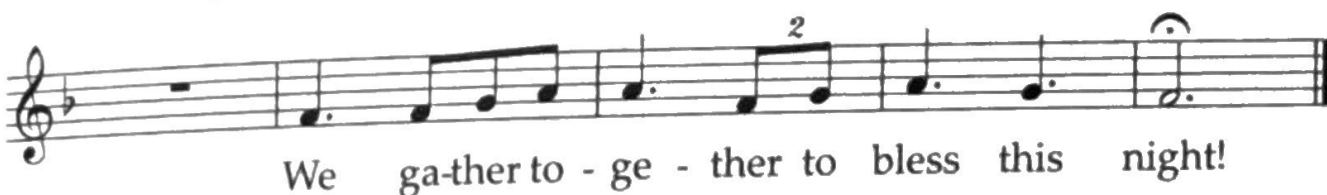
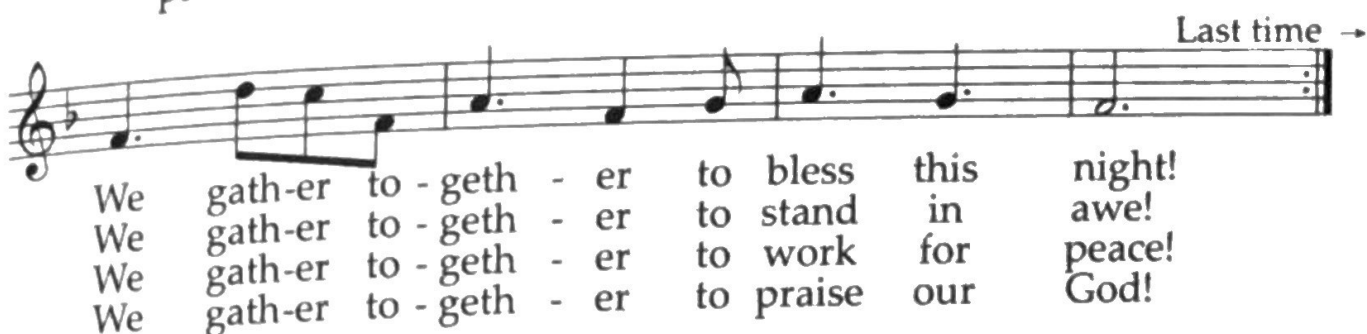
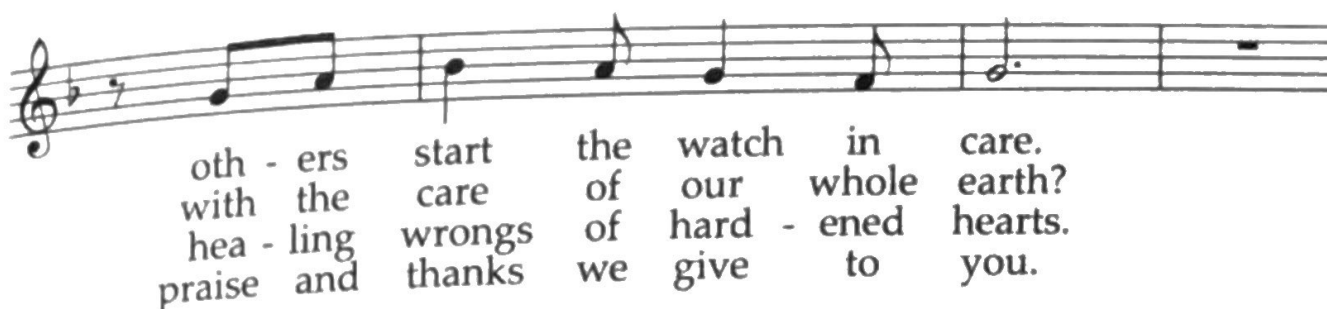
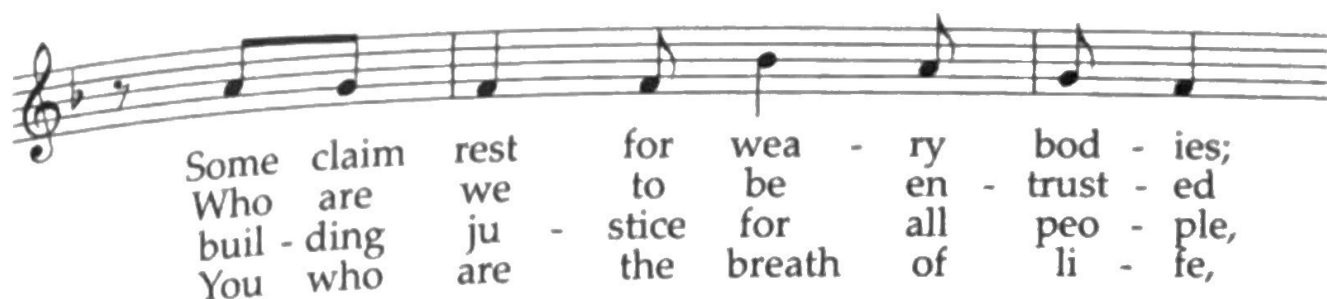
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Music © 2023 Steve Wolbrecht

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Evening Hymn





Gathering Prayer

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Let us give thanks to our Creator.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

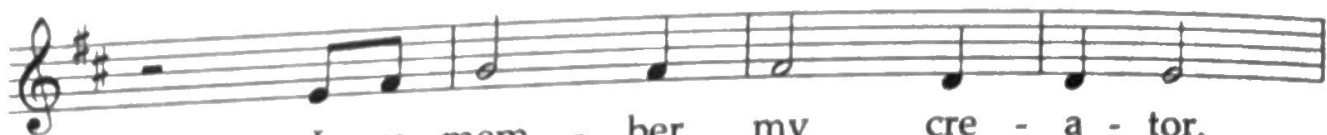
One: I invite you to join me in a spirit of prayer:

All: Gracious and creating God, you love all that you have made.

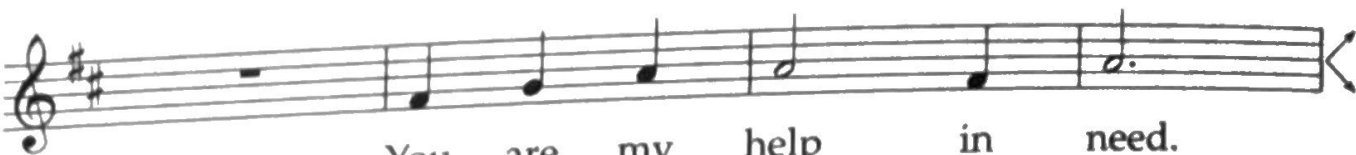
In the beginning you blessed the night and day, and everything in between. As we gather this evening, may we remember your love for us. May we share that love and be renewed to work for justice and peace. Amen.



1. When I see the mountains
2. When our feet are slip - ping

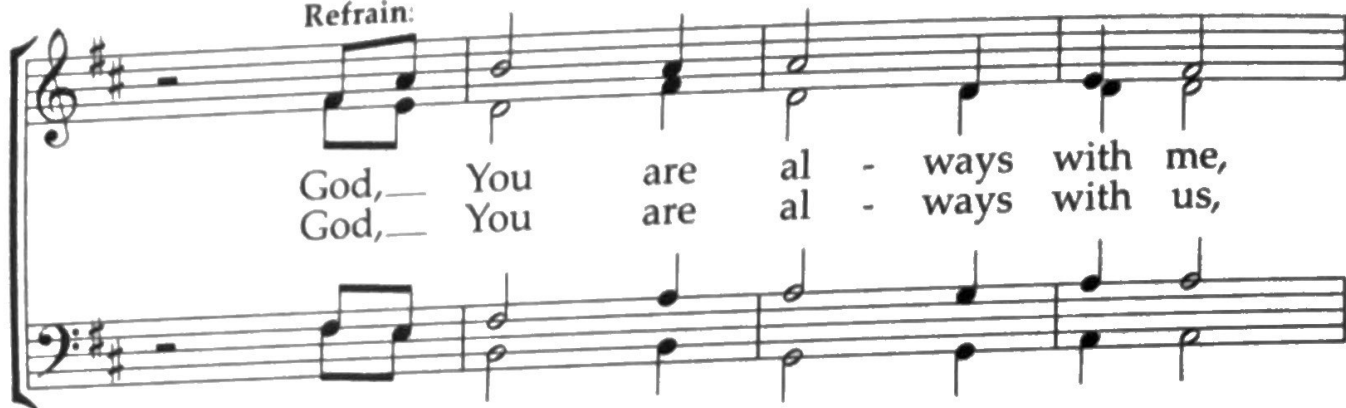


I re - mem - ber my cre - a - tor.
on our way through un - known per - il,

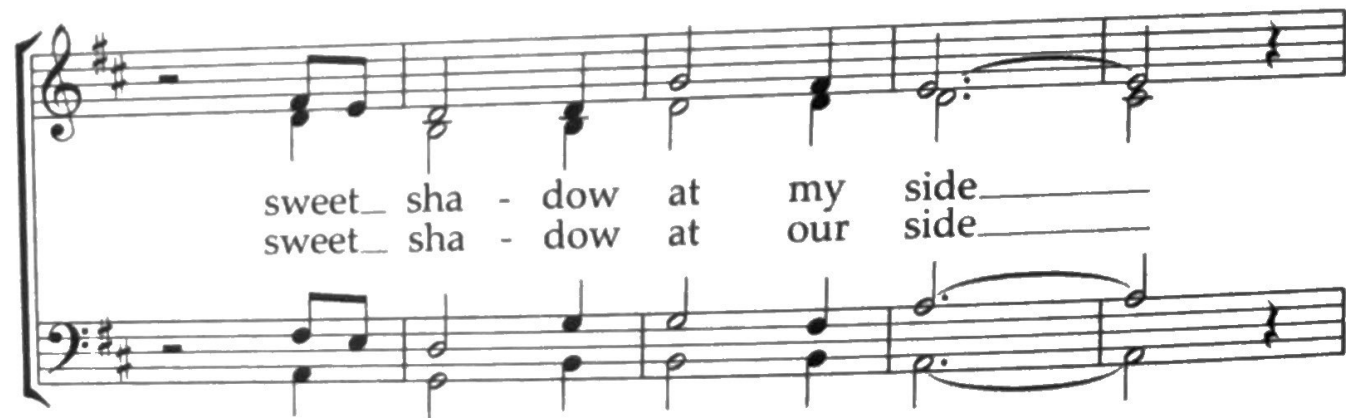


You are my help in need.
You watch and stand close by.

Refrain:



God, — You are al - ways with me,
God, — You are al - ways with us,



sweet sha - dow at my side
sweet sha - dow at our side

shel - ter - ing me from harm, my
shel - ter - ing us from harm, our

stead - y shade from sun and moon; the
stead - y shade from sun and moon; the

keep - er of my life.
keep - er of our lives.

2nd time To Coda

Coda
Slower

You keep our go - ing out,

You keep our com - ing in, from

this time on, and for - ev - er - more.

One: Our help comes from God, who keeps our going out and our coming in. Guide us as we listen to these words.

All: Amen

Readings/Reflections

Silence for Meditation

Period of silence

You may or may not be used to silence. During this time, you may hear rustling, coughing, or other human activity. You are invited to focus on your breath, and breathe together with the community that is here tonight.

One: We listen with open hearts. What does God ask of us?

**All: To do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly
with God and each other.**

The Angel's Appearance — Annunciation



Out of their dis-tress God's peo - ple cried out for



help, for love, for just - ice. They want-ed the pow-er of an



arm-y— think-ing it would ease their pain. God, wi-ser than



all, heard their cry and sent a child. An



an - gel told young Mar - y, "A child is to come for



hope, for love, for just-ice. A rev-o-lu-tion in your womb!



Will you bear the sav - ior, Je - sus?"



Please rise as you are able

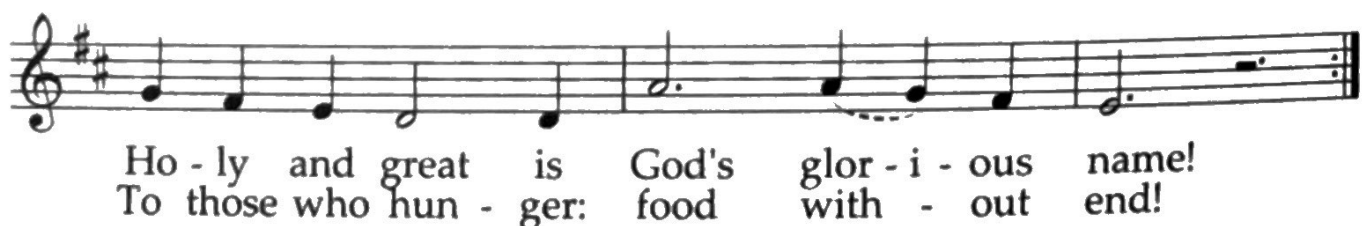
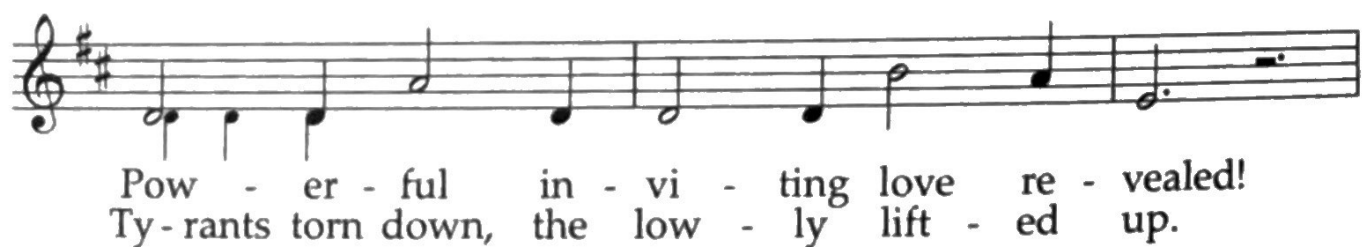
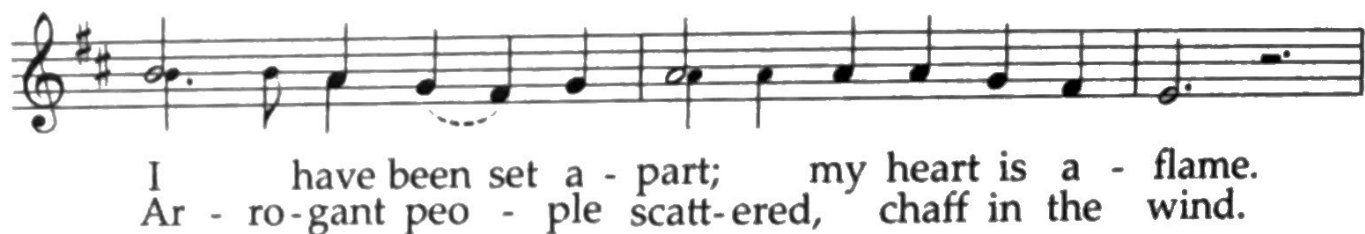
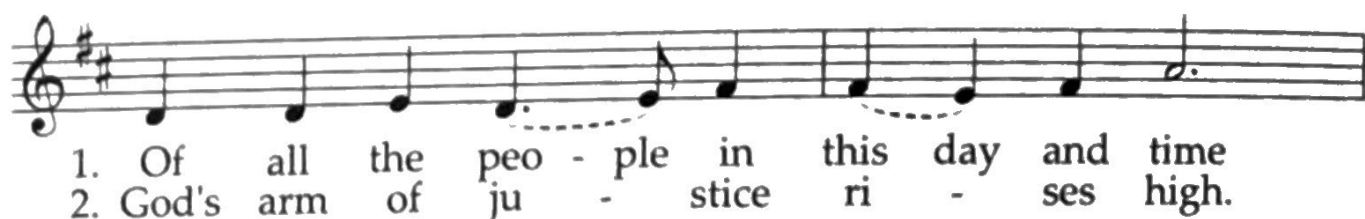
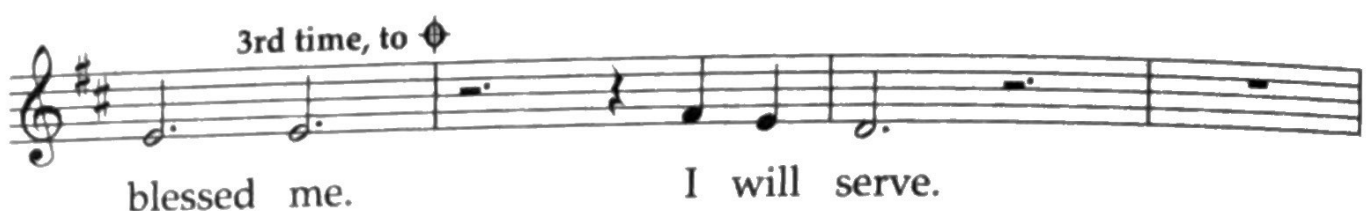
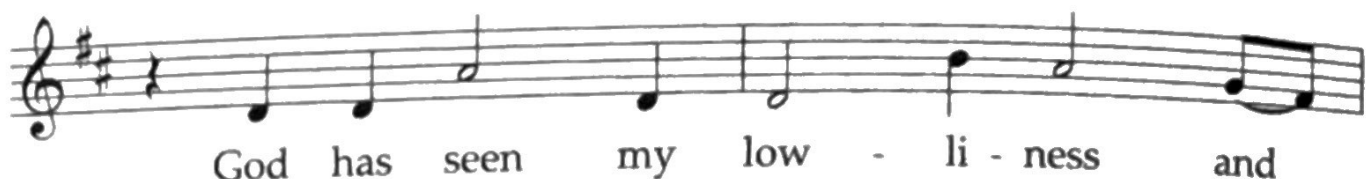
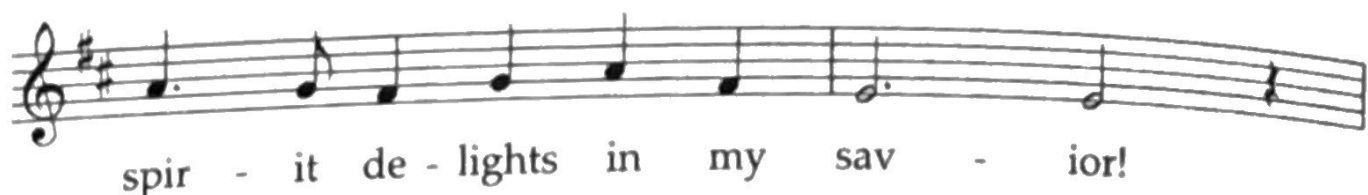
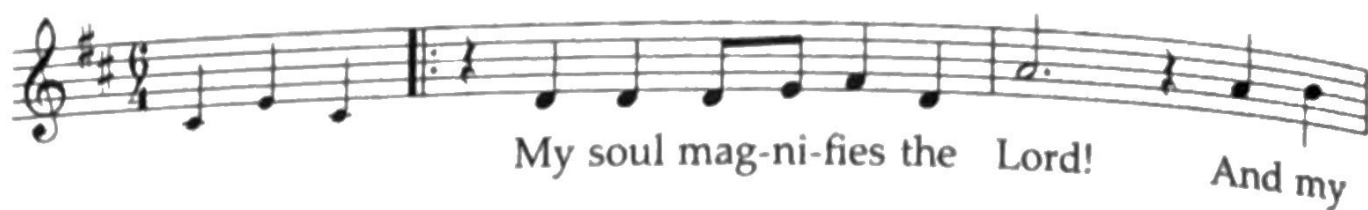
Ma-ry rose in awe, "How_ can this be?"



Segue to Magnificat

Then she ex-claimed with fear and joy:

Mary's Song — Magnificat



Coda



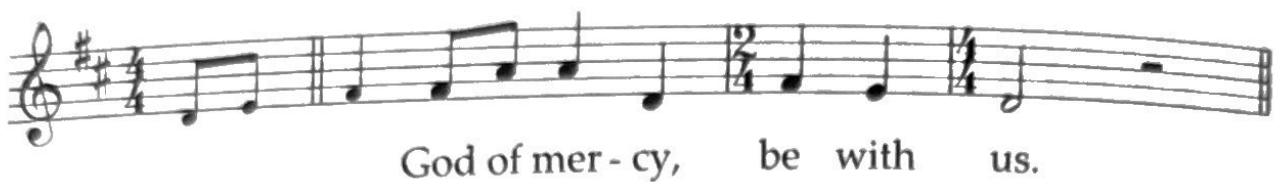
Please be seated

One: In prayer we open ourselves to the mystery of the universe.

All: We trust that God brings change, in us and through us,
in powerful ways.

One: We pray for ourselves, our communities, the world,
and all of creation.

All:



Our help comes from You. [*Pray for individuals...*]

We pray:

God of mercy, be with us.

We walk humbly with You and each other. [*Pray for community...*]

We pray:

God of mercy, be with us.

You keep our going out and our coming in. [*Pray for those in need...*]

We pray:

God of mercy, be with us.

We remember Your promises of justice and mercy for all.

[*Pray for the world...*] We pray:

God of mercy, be with us.

We are circled with creation's beauty. [*Pray for creation...*]

We pray:

God of mercy, be with us.

Segue immediately to the Prayer of Jesus

The Prayer of Jesus:

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray.
He said, when you pray, pray like this:



O Ho-ly One, who calls me be-lov-ed,—



You are in the air we breathe. Your



name, and all that You have made, is beau-ti - ful.— Bring



forth your ju - bi - lee! Give life to your dreams in



hea-ven and on earth. Nou-rish and sus-tain our bo - dies.



Re-lease our debts as we re-lease the debts of oth-ers.—



Do not let us turn from you. In hard-ship and in per-il,—



stay with us. A - men.

Blessing

One: The world is ever turning.

All: Turning toward hope, toward love, toward justice.

One: May it be so.

Blessed by the God of life, we
go out in - to this night to stretch and
grow, wan - der and won - der!
Now to rest, to work, or to play; we
thank you O God for the bless-ing of this night.
A - - - men.

Sending

One: Go in peace. Know that you are enough,
you are whole, and you are holy.

All: Thanks be to God.

About This Service

Holden Village has a legacy of creating liturgical music that reflects the Village's commitment to inclusive and contemporary language. We seek to add to that musical repertoire and hope that this service is used only as long as it is relevant to the community.

This service generally follows a traditional vespers service format with one important and intentional difference. A traditional vespers service focuses on themes of light overcoming darkness. We sought to create an evening service that celebrates darkness and does not create a binary opposition between light and dark. While we acknowledge that these metaphors are found throughout the Bible, we also recognize that these associations have been implicitly and explicitly used to cause harm, especially for people and communities of color. We also believe that moving beyond oppositional binaries helps us recognize and celebrate the diversity of God's creation.

Thus, this service seeks to honor twilight, dusk, night, and darkness as times of blessing and renewal in our lives. The service also has themes of creation and justice, and recognizes all bodies as holy.

All scriptural texts were translated into English from the original languages. We drew inspiration for the Opening Litany from John 1. The text for the Evening Hymn was partially inspired by Genesis 1 and Psalm 8. We also acknowledged Hagar, an enslaved woman—the first person to dare give God a name—who called God *El Roi*, or God Who Sees Me (Genesis 16:13). Despite her pain and struggle, Hagar receives God's blessing. In Psalm 121, we focused on verses 5 and 6 rather than the more familiar verses 1 and 2, emphasizing the theme of God as protector of the individual and the community. The Angel's Announcement and Mary's Song are from Luke 1 and the Prayer of Jesus follows Luke 11:1-2 and Matthew 6:9-13.

Thanks to the 2022-23 winter community at Holden Village for support, encouragement, and feedback. Special thanks to Laura Elmquist who arranged the C instrument score and provided valuable assistance through the writing process.

G. Mark Griffith
Rachel J. Joy
Heather L. Griffith
Steve Wolbrecht
Holden Village, June 2023