SAINT BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Light in the Darkness: A Service of Hope at 6 pm

Saturday, December 21, 2024

325 PARK AVENUE AT 51ST STREET
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10022



We invite you to make this place yours.

Here is a place that is ancient and new, a faith that we hold going back to Jesus, back to his spiritual ancestors, back to those who walked the earth and found holy ground. And what we do is often based on really ancient patterns—worship and music; loving service to the poor, the hurting, the lonely; working for justice and peace; lively, fearless education and formation of minds and souls. And that faith is also completely contemporary, engaged in the culture and the needs of the moment.

What we are for

The dignity and worth of every person. An open minded, passionate commitment to truth. The importance of everyone's own spiritual journey. God's friends wherever we find them. Seeking Christ in every person who comes through the door. The sacredness of life's rites of passage. The value of community. The hard work necessary to make sure that all are welcomed. Telling the truth about life's challenges. A "user-friendly" church experience. Children, youth and families.

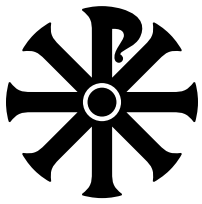
What we are against

Claiming to have all the answers. Elitism and exclusivism, especially in church. Bigotry for any reason. Authoritarianism. Indifference to injustice and suffering. Certitude in the face of ambiguity and superficial answers to hard questions. Boring sermons, bad music and general cluelessness. (So, God help us, because we don't always avoid these!)

What we value

Community, open hearts, open minds, open arms. Faith. Fortitude. Staying current, but equally staying rooted in tradition. Reason and honesty. Civic responsibility as New Yorkers, Americans and global citizens. Debate that allows for mutual respect. Music and beauty for their own sake. Joy in God's creation. Anyone who makes an effort to get to know and follow Jesus.

Welcome!



The people stand.

Night Prayer

Officiant Lord,
it is night.

The night is for stillness.
Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.
What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done;
let it be.

The night is dark.
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives
rest in you.
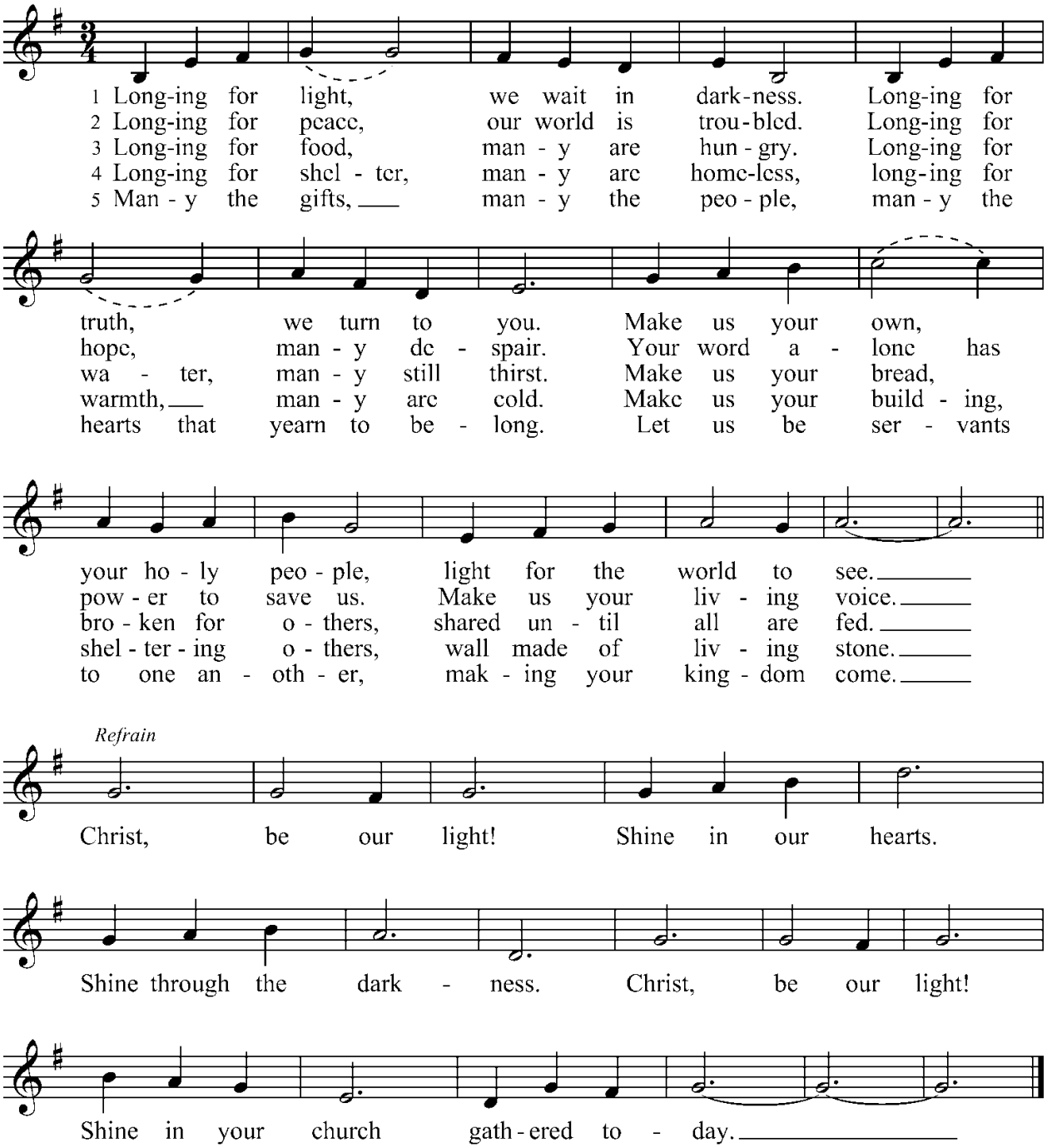
The night is quiet.
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
all dear to us,
and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.
Let us look expectantly to a new day,
new joys,
new possibilities.

In your name we pray.

All **Amen.**

Hymn



Words: Bernadette Farrell (b. 1957).
Music: *Christ, be our light*, Bernadette Farrell (b. 1957).

Opening Words

Officiant If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me,
and the light around me turn to night,"
Darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day;
darkness and light to you are both alike.

Litany for the Darkness of Waiting

Officiant We gather in darkness,
darkness that scares,
darkness that threatens,
darkness that makes us feel alone.

And yet—
within the darkness,
we find peace, calm, and light,
and reason to praise you, O God.

For the darkness of waiting,
of not knowing what is to come,
of staying ready and quiet and attentive,
we praise you, O God:

People **for darkness and light to you are both alike.**

Officiant For the darkness of staying silent,
for the terror of having nothing to say,
and for the outrage you give us
when we are told to say nothing,
we praise you, O God:

People **for darkness and light to you are both alike.**

Officiant For the darkness of loving
in which it is safe to surrender
to let go of our self-protection
and to stop holding back our desire,
we praise you, O God:

People **for darkness and light to you are both alike.**

Officiant For the darkness of choosing
when you give us the moment
to speak, and act, and change,
and we cannot know what we have set in motion,
but we still have to take the risk,
we praise you, O God:

People **for darkness and light to you are both alike.**

Officiant For the darkness of hoping
in a world which longs for you,
for the wrestling and the laboring of all creation
for wholeness and justice and freedom,
we praise you, O God:

People **for darkness and light to you are both alike.**

The people sit.

Scripture John 1:1–5

Reader In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

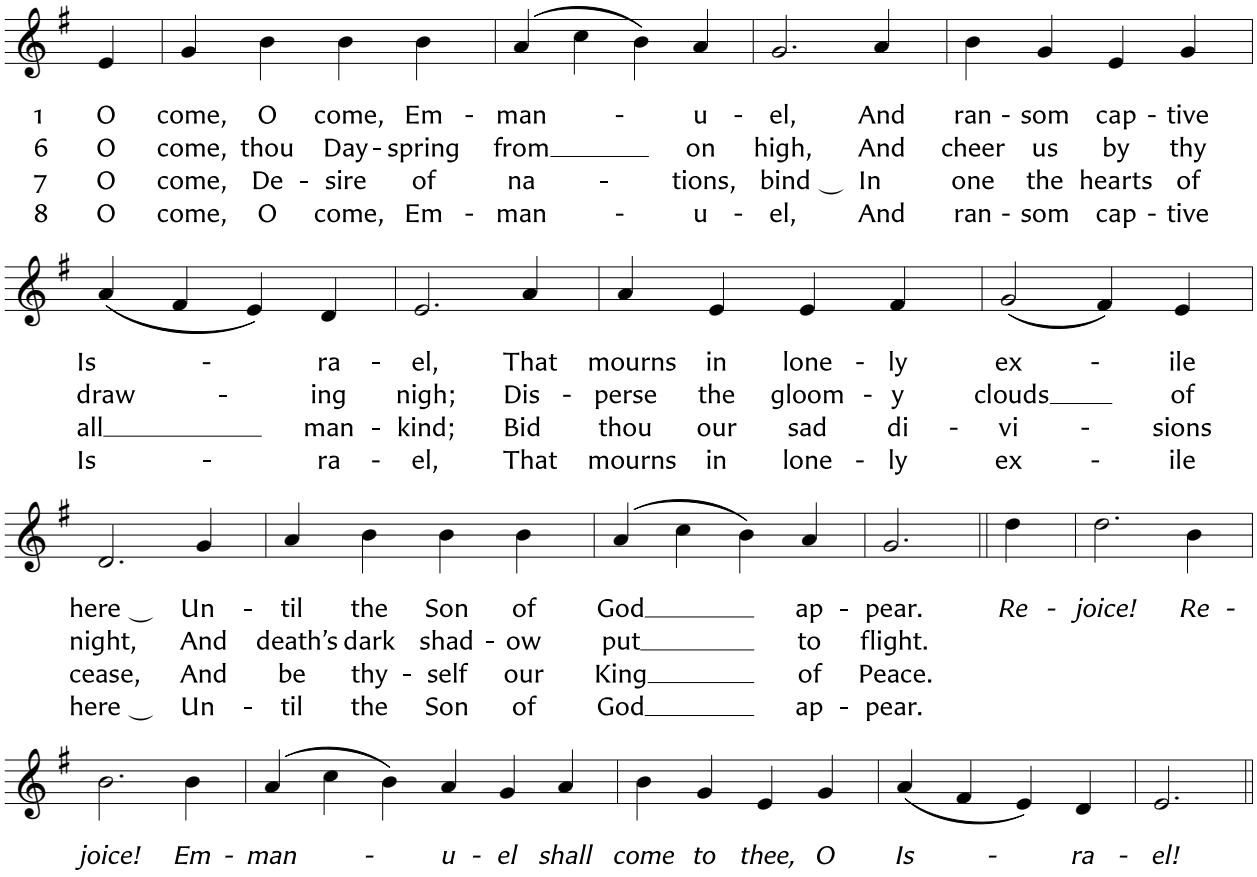
Poem "God's Grandeur" by Gerald Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

Reader The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

The people stand.

Hymn 56



Words: Latin, ca. 9th cent.; ver. *Hymnal 1940*, alt.
Music: *Veni, veni Emmanuel*, plainsong, Mode 1, *Processionale*, 15th cent.;
adapt. Thomas Helmore (1811-1890).

Litany of Light

Officiant Jesus our Lord, Light of the earth and Light of our lives: out of the darkness, we cry to you for ourselves and the world you came to save.

Into our pain and weakness,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

Officiant Into our uncertainty and fear,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

Officiant Into our sadness and loss,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

Officiant Into our sickness and discomfort,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

Officiant Upon all conflict and destruction,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

Officiant Upon all injustice and abuse,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

Officiant Upon all prejudice and oppression,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

Officiant Upon all cynicism and deceit,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

Officiant When leaders fail us,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

Officiant When nature suffers,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

Officiant When the poor are in need,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

Officiant When any feel alone or abandoned,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

Officiant Whenever darkness persists, and whatever form it takes,
People **Shine your light, O Lord.**

The people sit.

Scripture Isaiah 9:2–7

Reader The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Poem "Let the Stable Still Astonish" by Lesley Leyland Fields

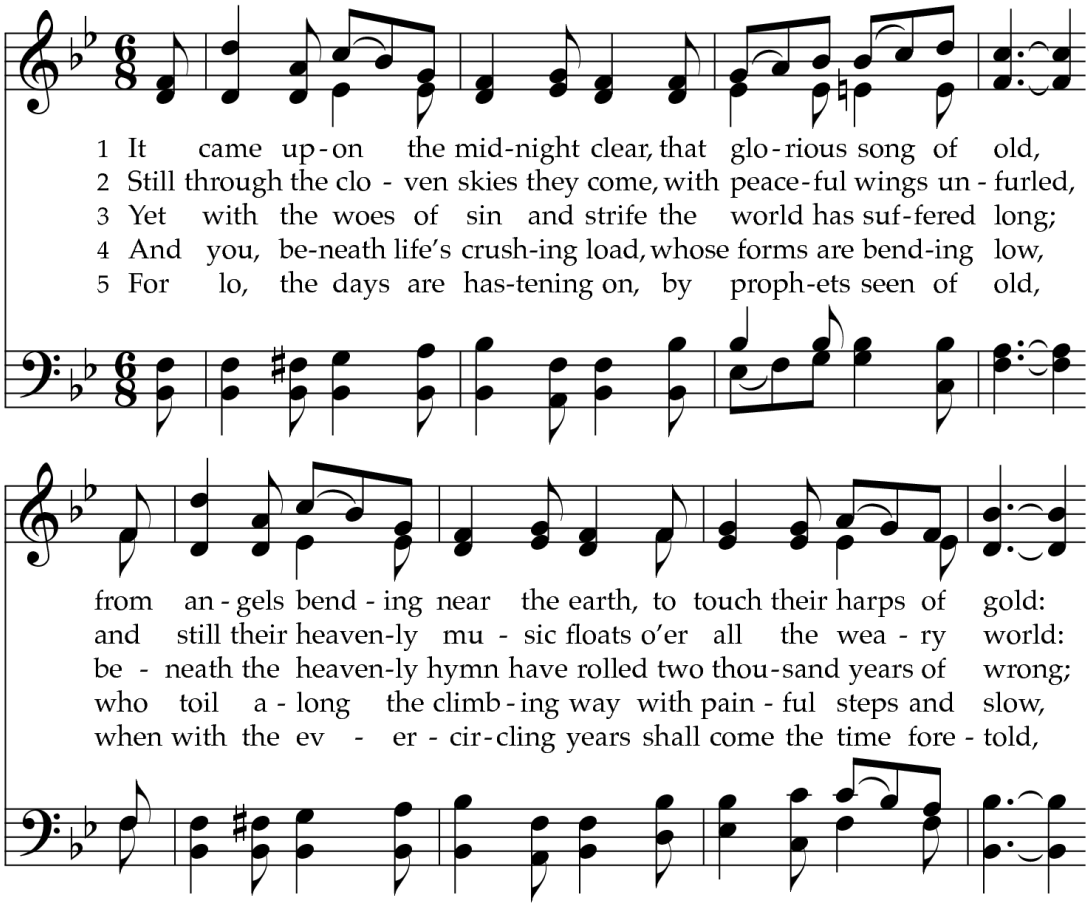
Reader Let the stable still astonish:
Straw-dirt floor, dull eyes,
Dusty flanks of donkeys, oxen;
Crumbling, crooked walls;
No bed to carry that pain,
And then, the child,
Rag-wrapped, laid to cry
In a trough.

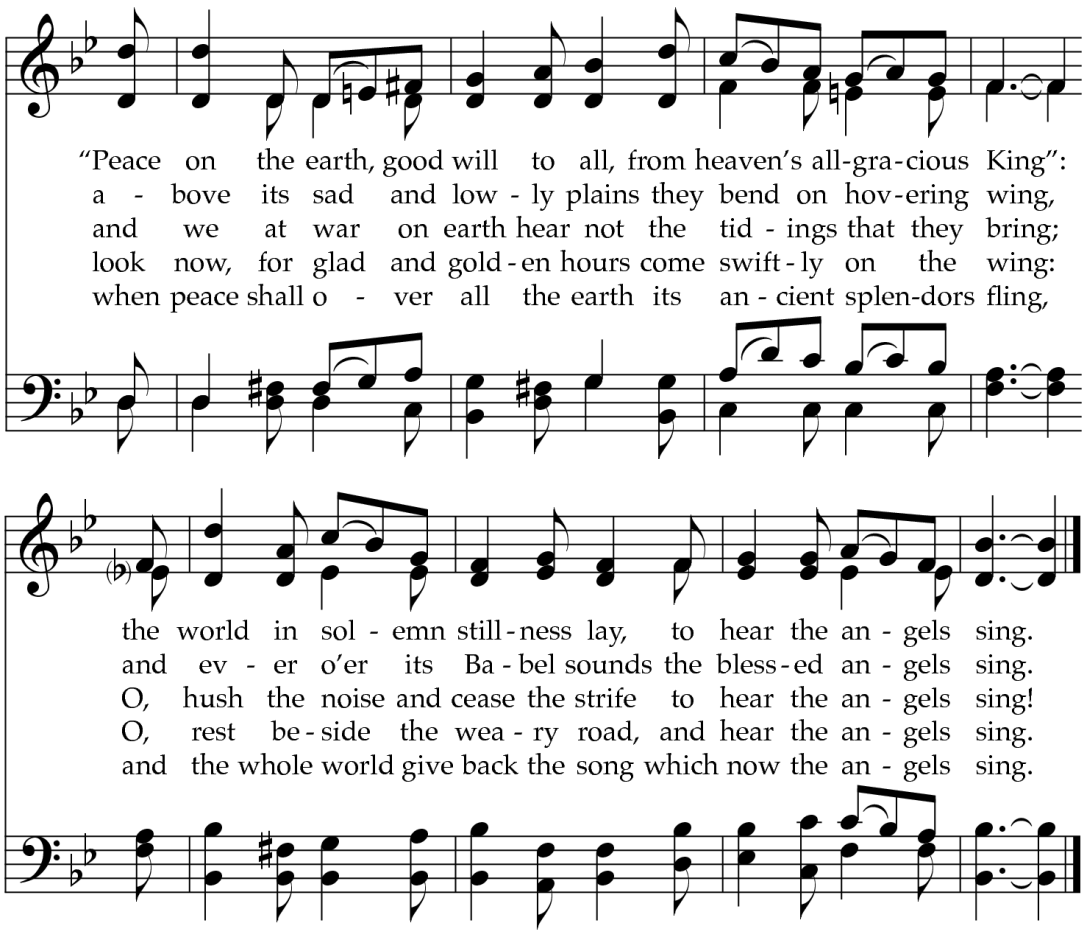
Who would have chosen this?
Who would have said: "Yes,
Let the God of all the heavens and earth
be born here, in this place." ?

Who but the same God
Who stands in the darker, fouler rooms of our hearts
and says, "Yes, let the God
of Heaven and Earth
be born here—
in this place."

The people stand.

Hymn





Words: Edmund Sears (1810-1876), alt.
Music: *Carol*, Richard Storrs Willis (1819-1900).

Litany of Birth

Officiant God of awe and wonder,
from nothing you made creation,
from darkness you made light,
and from death you made new life:
As you came among us long ago in your Child Jesus,
so come among us today,
and be born in our hearts.

You embraced fragility and vulnerability by taking on the flesh of a Child. Inspire us to protect the fragile and vulnerable in our communities.

People **Be born in our hearts, O God.**

Officiant You surprised Mary with the good news that she would bear you into the world. As you amazed and delighted her, so amaze and delight us with the goodness of your promise.

People **Be born in our hearts, O God.**

Officiant When all was dark, the angels announced your birth with the message of peace on earth. Bring peace to us, and send us to proclaim your peace to others.

People **Be born in our hearts, O God.**

Officiant Your birth was first witnessed by the lowliest of lowly, and you laid down to sleep next to common animals. Bless those who experience rejection and shame, and hallow every life with the brightness of your presence.

People **Be born in our hearts, O God.**

Officiant Rulers from distant lands traveled over a long distance to pay tribute to you. Build bridges among people of diverse backgrounds, and unite us in service of a common purpose.

People **Be born in our hearts, O God.**

Officiant Your birth is not over. The world, full of strife, still waits for your appearance. Come, Lord God, and save your people.

People **Be born in our hearts, O God.**

The people sit.

Scripture John 12:27-36

Reader Jesus said, "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. The crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains for ever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light."

Poem "Blessing when the World is Ending" by Jan Richardson (b. 1967)

Reader

Look, the world
is always ending
somewhere.

Somewhere
the sun has come
crashing down.

Somewhere
it has gone
completely dark.

Somewhere
it has ended
with the gun,
the knife,
the fist.

Somewhere
it has ended
with the slammed door,
the shattered hope.

Somewhere
it has ended
with the utter quiet
that follows the news
from the phone,
the television,
the hospital room.

Somewhere
it has ended
with a tenderness
that will break
your heart.

But, listen,
this blessing means
to be anything
but morose.
It has not come
to cause despair.

It is simply here
because there is nothing
a blessing
is better suited for
than an ending,
nothing that cries out more
for a blessing
than when a world
is falling apart.

This blessing
will not fix you,
will not mend you,
will not give you
false comfort;
it will not talk to you
about one door opening
when another one closes.

It will simply
sit itself beside you
among the shards
and gently turn your face
toward the direction
from which the light
will come,
gathering itself
about you
as the world begins
again.
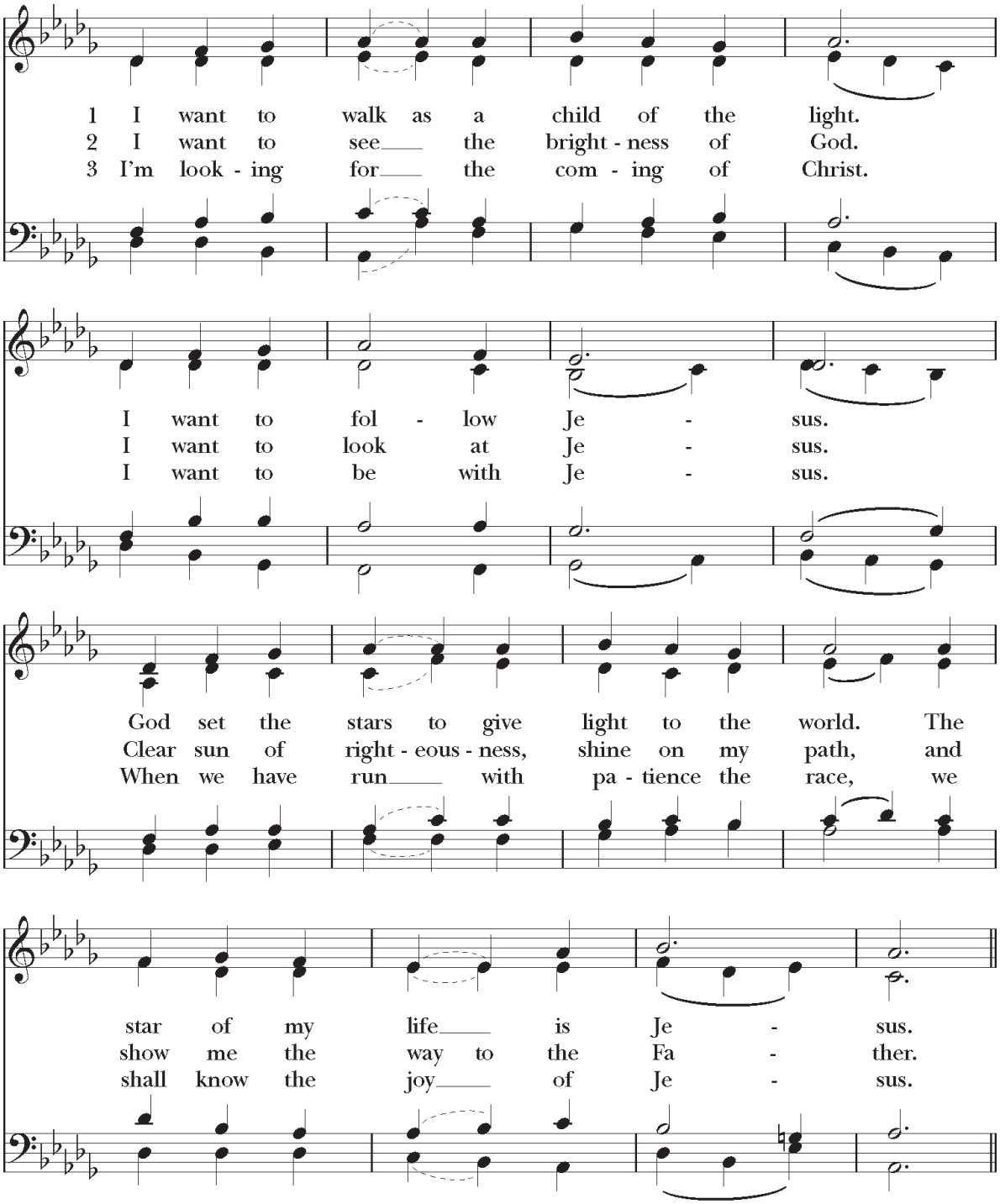
Invitation to Prayer
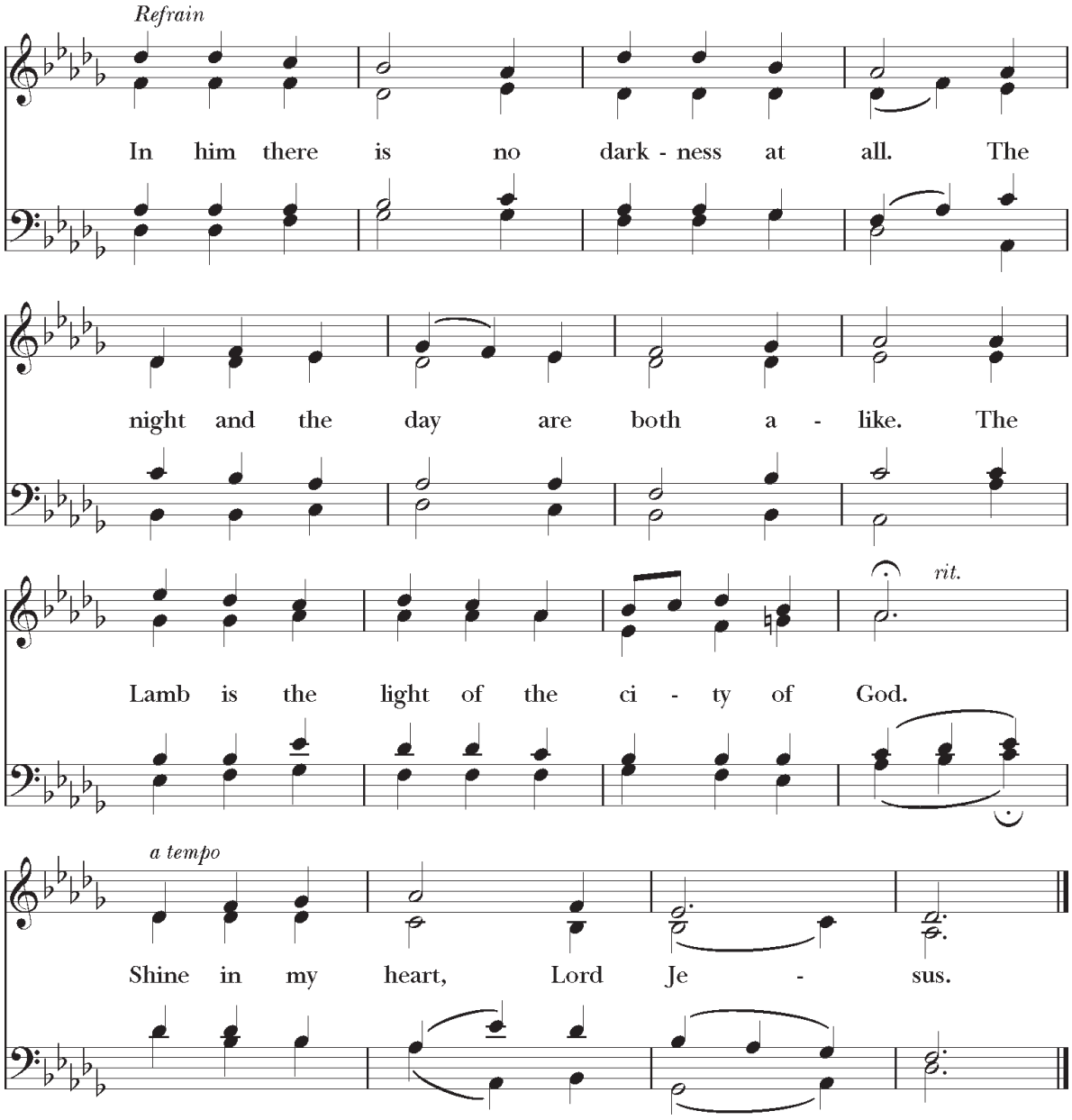
Officiant Dear friends, there is much to be troubled about in our lives and in the world. Disease runs rampant; need persists; divisions rage. But Christ is with us in our sadness, in our grief, and in our fear. I invite you now to enter into a time of quiet contemplation: to call to mind in the silence of your hearts all those in need of God's healing care, and, if you desire, to have our clergy pray with you or on your behalf. As our time of prayer concludes, you are encouraged to come forward to the chancel steps and receive a candle as a symbol of the light of Christ, a light that no darkness will overcome.

Clergy will be available underneath the north balcony for those who would like personal prayer.

The people stand as the hymn begins and come forward to receive candles from the clergy stationed at the base of the chancel steps.

Hymn 490





Words: Kathleen Thomerson (b. 1934).
Music: *Houston*, Kathleen Thomerson (b. 1934).

The people sit.

Scripture Matthew 5:14–16

Reader Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."
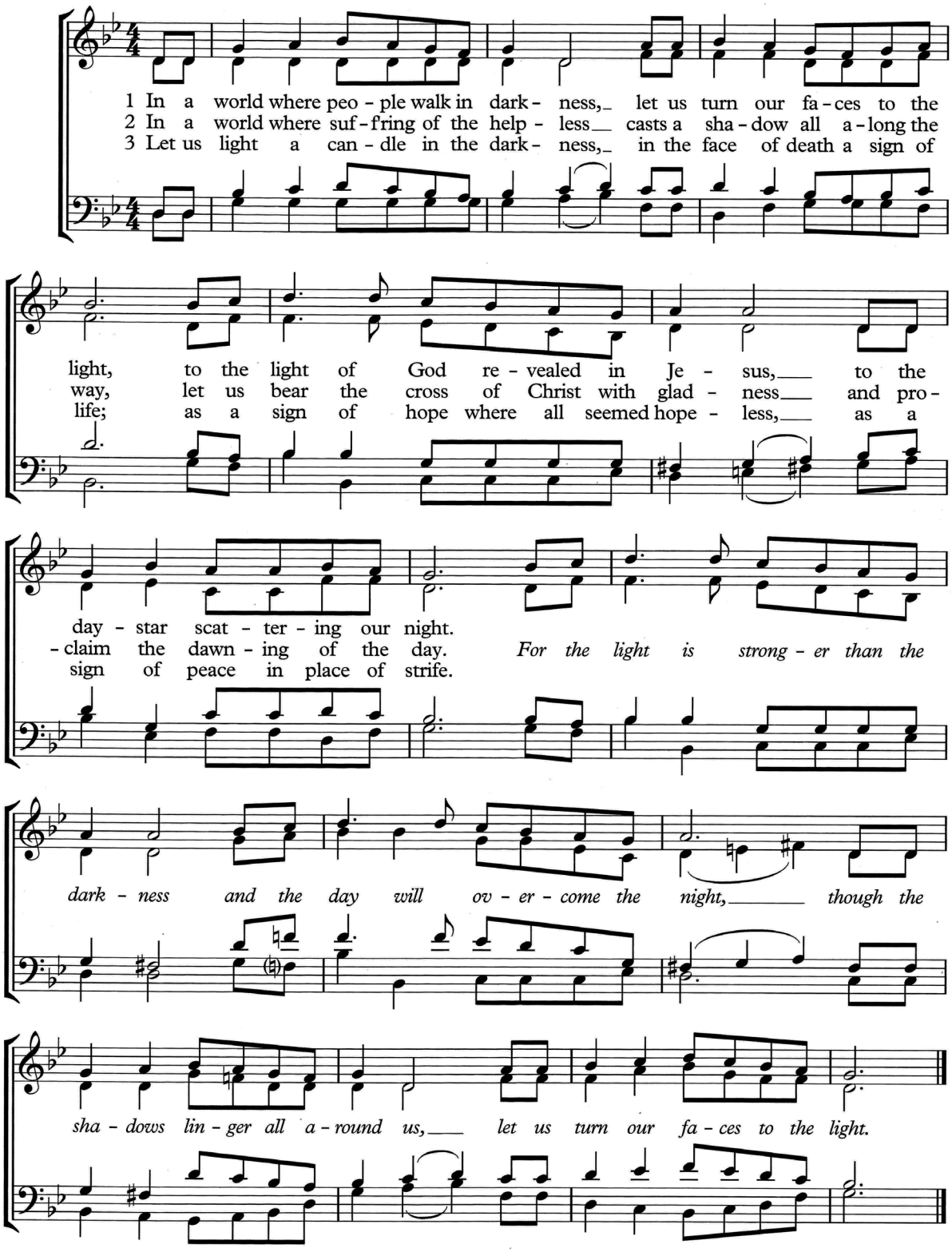
Poem "The Work of Christmas" by Howard Thurman (1899-1981)

Reader When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.

The people stand.

Hymn



Words: Robert Willis (1947-2024).
Music: *Abbey Dore*, John Harper (b. 1947), based on traditional carol melodies.

Sending

Officiant Go,
be bearers of the light
Into the darkness of the world.

Where you find despair,
be the bearers of hope.

Where you find oppression,
be the bearers of justice.

Where you find conflict,
be the bearers of peace.

And, as you go,
know that Christ the true Light
walks with you every step of the way
to illumine your path,
protect you with care,
and warm you with love.

All **Amen.**

Service Participants

Officiants The Reverend Zack Nyein, The Reverend Peter D. Thompson, The Reverend Meredith E. Ward
Lectors Barry Phillips, Leslie McCullough Jeffries
Ushers Holly Bellows, Rena Crisp, Doug Jones
Soloist Wendy GIlles

Organist and Choirmaster Dr. Paolo Bordignon
Director of Communications Kara Flannery
Assistant Communications Director Ben Castellanos
Livestream Producers Leo da Silva, Chloe Pitkoff, Thatcher Pitkoff, Charles White
Livestream Host Ken Alexander

Director of Facilities Charles Bryant
Director of Maintenance Willie Gonzalez
Facilities Anthony Thomas

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Clergy and Staff

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Vicar The Reverend Peter D. Thompson (pthompson@stbarts.org)
Senior Associate Rector The Reverend Zack Nyein (znyein@stbarts.org)
Associate Rector for Pastoral Care The Reverend Meredith E. Ward (mward@stbarts.org)
Assistant Rector The Reverend Canon Andrew J.W. Mullins * (amullins@stbarts.org)
Assisting Priest The Reverend Molly O'Neil Frank + (moneilfrank@stbarts.org)
Assisting Priest The Reverend Canon Stephanie Spellers +
Deacon The Reverend Deacon John F. Wirenius *

* Non-stipendiary + Part-time

Organist and Choirmaster Dr. Paolo Bordignon (pbordignon@stbarts.org)
Associate Organist and Choirmaster Mr. Alexander Pattavina (apattavina@stbarts.org)
Administrative Associate for Music Ms. Olivia Greene (ogreene@stbarts.org)

Associate For Parish Life Ms. Veronica Shea (vshea@stbarts.org)
Associate Manager of Social Outreach Mr. Teagan Sage (tsage@stbarts.org)
Seminarian Mr. Nathan Peace (npeace@stbarts.org)

The Vestry of St. Bart's

Wardens Miriam K. Schneider, Ray Vandenberg

David Carson, Rachel Farrar, James Ferrara, Dall Forsythe,
Jennifer Fuller, David Hilder, Tim Hook, Natalie Johnson,
Mary Robin Jurkiewicz, James Marion, Robert McKinney, Kari Parks

Chancellor Patrick MacMurray
Assistant Chancellors Anne Rabbino, Peter Sullivan, Douglas Tanner

Honorary Wardens Fletcher Hodges III, Percy Preston, Jr.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH

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