

The flesh and blood of the God-man Jesus brings our salvation. God has become one of us. The mystery of the incarnation causes all of us to ponder anew the sacrificial love of God. To be fully one of us, to share with us in all things, to know no sin, and yet to become sin for us, that is the stuff that causes all creation to fall at His feet and worship. There is no greater love of God than the work of Jesus Christ in rescuing fallen creation. Here is the pure Gospel.

This Advent resource is provided

Savior of the nations, come,
 Virgin's Son, make here Your home!
 Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,
 That the Lord chose such a birth.
 (LSB 332:1)

so that pastor and people can discover again the rich glories of the Word becoming flesh among us. All of the resources—Bible studies, daily devotions, sermons, worship resources—are designed unpack the rich biblical and theological imagery provided in the hymn “Savior of the Nations, Come.”

RESOURCES FOR ADVENT—CHRISTMAS PREACHING AND WORSHIP

Sermons

- Midweek 1:** The Invitation
- Midweek 2:** The Announcement
- Midweek 3:** His Throne
- Christmas (option 1):** Are You Ready?
- Christmas (option 2):** The Life

Bible Studies

- Midweek 1:** Trusting the Lord to Preserve the Throne of David (Isaiah 7:1–14)
- Midweek 2:** The Lord Will Install His King, Forever (Isaiah 9:1–7)
- Midweek 3:** The Suffering and Glory of God's Servant (Isaiah 52:13–53:12)
- Christmas Eve/Day:** The Word Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us (John 1:1–14)

Children's Messages

- Midweek 1:** The Invitation
- Midweek 2:** The Announcement
- Midweek 3:** His Throne
- Christmas Eve/Day:** The Hero

Worship Resources

- Midweek 1:** Evening Prayer Service
- Midweek 2:** Evening Prayer Service
- Midweek 3:** Evening Prayer Service
- Christmas** Christmas Divine Service

Additional Resources

- Antiphon Accompaniment
- The Word Became Flesh
- Savior of the Nations, Come (optional setting)
- Savior of the Nations, Come (stanza 3)
- Choral and Instrumental Music Resources

SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS COORDINATING PRODUCT

Savior of the Nations Daily Devotions
 12-4310YSA \$2.29 each
 Purchase 25 or more for only \$.99 each

Savior of the Nations Bulletins
 84-0935YSA \$8.25 (pack of 100)

Savior of the Nations Born on Christmas Morn
 56-2463YSA \$2.29 each
 Purchase 10 or more for only \$.99 each

Savior of the Nations Children's Christmas Service CD
 35-1345 \$39.99

SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS
Resources for Advent—Christmas
Preaching and Worship

J. Bart Day

Janet Muth

GETTING INTO SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS

The ancient Advent hymn “Savior of the Nations, Come” (*LSB* 332) is rich in biblical imagery. Ambrose of Milan, the original author, certainly reflects in the text a life of deep meditation upon the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord. The hymn unfolds the gift of the incarnation and the meaning of that event for time and eternity.

Advent is about comings. The season grants opportunity for the Church to reflect upon the first coming of Christ, His promised glorious return, and the reality of His continued presence among us through Word and Sacraments to the end of the age.

The hymn beautifully focuses on the two natures of Christ and the full revelation of God in the person of Jesus.

Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh—
Woman’s offspring, pure and fresh. (*LSB* 332:2)

The flesh and blood of the God-man brings our salvation. God has become one of us. He has been eternally joined to the stuff of Mary’s womb so that He might be present for us. And this not of man, but a gift of God, a work of the Spirit. The mystery of the incarnation causes all of us to ponder anew the sacrificial love of God. To be fully one of us, to share with us in all things, to know no sin, and yet to become sin for us, that is the stuff that causes all creation to fall at His feet and worship. There is no greater love of God than the work of Jesus Christ in rescuing falling creation. Here is the pure Gospel.

This Advent resource is provided so that pastor and people can discover again the rich glories of the Word becoming flesh among us. All of the resources—Bible studies, daily devotions, sermons, worship resources—unpack the rich biblical and theological imagery provided in the hymn “Savior of the Nations, Come.” This resource is designed with the hymn as a unifying and central focus throughout the Advent season. While stanzas are appointed for each midweek service, we would encourage congregations to sing “Savior of the Nations, Come” during Divine Service each week. The hymn works wonderfully as a communion distribution hymn as it echoes the communion dismissal.

For You are the Father’s Son
Who in flesh the vict’ry won.
By Your mighty pow’r make whole
All our ills of flesh and soul. (*LSB* 332:6)

We pray that this resource will be a blessing to your congregation as you prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

FEATURES

This CD from Concordia Publishing House includes fully customizable resources for the pastor and musician, designed to lead the Christian congregation through the season of Advent in preparation for the Christmas celebration. Based upon the hymn “Savior of the Nations, Come,” this CD contains:

SERMONS

- Midweek 1:** The Invitation
- Midweek 2:** The Announcement
- Midweek 3:** His Throne
- Christmas (option 1):** Are You Ready?
- Christmas (option 2):** The Life

BIBLE STUDIES

- Midweek 1:** Trusting the Lord to Preserve the Throne of David (Isaiah 7:1–14)
- Midweek 2:** The Lord Will Install His King, Forever (Isaiah 9:1–7)
- Midweek 3:** The Suffering and Glory of God’s Servant (Isaiah 52:13–53:12)
- Christmas Eve/Day:** The Word Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us (John 1:1–14)

CHILDREN’S MESSAGES

- Midweek 1:** The Invitation
- Midweek 2:** The Announcement
- Midweek 3:** His Throne
- Christmas Eve/Day:** The Hero

WORSHIP RESOURCES

- Midweek 1 Evening Prayer Service
- Midweek 2 Evening Prayer Service
- Midweek 3 Evening Prayer Service
- Christmas Divine Service

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Antiphon Accompaniment
- The Word Became Flesh
- Savior of the Nations, Come (optional setting)
- Savior of the Nations, Come (stanza 3)
- Choral and Instrumental Music Resources

NOTES

- The children's messages call for the children to gather with the pastor at the baptismal font each week. It will also be helpful if a small manger (perhaps the one from the congregation's crèche) is placed at the font. The focus of the weekly messages will be to unfold the two natures of Christ (human and divine) as sung in "Savior of the Nations, Come." The preacher will want to carefully consider how the hymn stanzas appointed for each week highlight the unique themes and language therein.
- The midweek services follow Evening Service in *Lutheran Service Book*.
- The Christmas Divine Service follows Divine Service, Setting One in *Lutheran Service Book*.
- Depending on local custom and circumstances, an opening hymn and/or closing hymn may be included. See the Choral and Instrument Music Resources PDF for a list of selections.
- Full accompaniment for the Advent Antiphon may be found in the PDF resources.
- The Office Hymn should remain "Savior of the Nations, Come" throughout the Advent series, stanzas as noted per week.
- For the Canticle, you may choose to substitute *LSB* 933, 934, 935
- For the Offering, see the Choral and Instrument Music Resources PDF.

MIDWEEK 1

THE INVITATION

Not all invitations are glorious! Not all invitations are what they appear to be.

Left to our own sinful ways, we would refuse to do what we consider is below us. The tempting lies of the devil have us believing that we are what we are really not! As children of Adam and Eve, we desire to be like God. We seek after fame and fortune. We desire the praise of others. We covet pomp, power, prestige, and possessions. We believe ourselves to be above all others.

And so we have gladly accepted the devil's invitation to join him in his make-believe kingdom: a kingdom built on shallow promises and selfish lies, a kingdom of the flesh catering to all our baser desires.

Repent. Confess the sins that you hid even from yourself, the delusions of your heart. Confess who you truly are: full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice; a gossip, slanderer, God-hater, insolent, arrogant, and boastful; senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Repent. The lies of the devil are never delivered as promised.

Through the voice of the Gospel hear and heed the invitation—the invitation to join Christ in His kingdom. Of course, not all invitations are glorious! Not all invitations are what they appear to be.

Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin's Son, make here Your home!
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth. (*LSB* 332:1)

When there was nothing, there was God the Holy Trinity. “The only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made” (Nicene Creed).

Out of pure darkness, when there was yet nothing, the invitation came from the Father to His Son, an invitation to join Him in the creating of all things “visible and invisible.” An invitation to be the Word, the Word in which all things were made and without which nothing was made. Of course, not all invitations are glorious! Not all invitations are what they appear to be.

For in that loving and gracious speaking, in such creating, God the Holy Trinity was wholly vulnerable. The creation could turn against its creator. The self-giving love of the Holy Trinity could never coerce its creation, would never manipulate for self-satisfaction.

For when perfect creation fell into the abyss of darkness and night, the all-creating Word could do nothing but become incarnate among that which He had once made and spoken good. The perfect Word of creation, Jesus the Christ, became the Word made flesh. The Father's invitation to come down among His sinful children was fully and completely embraced by the Son so that He might speak words of light and life into all the world.

In humility and truest love, the Son left His throne in heaven and joined Himself to Mary's womb. Taking up flesh through the speaking of a word, the only-begotten Son of

MIDWEEK 1: LEADER

TRUSTING THE LORD TO PRESERVE

THE THRONE OF DAVID

Isaiah 7:1–14

INTRODUCTION

The wonderful promise of Isaiah 7:14, that a virgin would give birth to a son and she would call Him Immanuel, came about in a particular set of circumstances. In c 734 BC, Israel, the Northern Kingdom (also called Ephraim), and Syria (also called Aram) formed a military alliance to defend themselves against the growing power of Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria. The two kings, Rezin and Pekah, put tremendous pressure on Ahaz, king of Judah, to join their alliance. God promises to preserve a remnant, and through Him the Lord will preserve the throne of David.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(Note: Questions only are found in the student section.)

1. **Q:** Our culture is infatuated with babies and children. Think of the many ways that we try to protect and shelter children from some of the harsher aspects of our society. Discuss what this may mean for us as a culture and where we place our hope. Read Isaiah 7:1–14, taking special note of vv. 3 and 14.

A: Accept a number of reflections from the participants, including computer software to protect children from dangerous Web sites, special laws that treat crimes against children as more serious, the establishment of organizations and institutions for children's protection, welfare and health care, as well as programs in some states that provide health insurance for poor children. In many ways, as a culture, we believe that children are our future. At this point, the leader might want to note that there is a great deal of similarity to what is in our reading here. Judah faces sure and certain destruction. God, however, promises that there will be a future. The royal line of King David will continue until the birth of the Messiah, the Son of David and Son of God, named Immanuel, who will be conceived and born of a virgin. (See question and answer #4.)

2. **Q:** In v. 1, Isaiah recounts a shortened genealogy for Ahaz, king of Judah. In a similar way, Matthew recounts a full genealogy of Jesus in the first chapter of his Gospel. Why might Isaiah (and Matthew) have made sure to include this information?

A: Sometimes when we read the Bible, we are overwhelmed with the strange names and what we perceive as the lack of apparent connection to the story. But biblical authors include these genealogies to show that God has unveiled His plan of salvation in real times and real places through real people. Far from being mere spiritual stories, Scripture is a record of God active in history.

3. **Q:** Read 2 Kings 16:7–9. How was King Ahaz planning to confront the threat from kings Rezin and Pekah? What became of this decision?

A: Knowing the threat from Rezin and Pekah, Ahaz allied with Tiglath-pileser III, apparently thinking that the enemy of his enemy was his friend. However, after the king of Assyria was done with his neighbors in Syria and Israel, it was not long before Judah was attacked and destroyed also, thus beginning Israel's exile in Babylon. Ahaz's biggest problem was that he failed to see the threat Assyria would become.

4. **Q:** Isaiah is told by the Lord to take his son with him and go to Ahaz. Isaiah's son's name is Shear-jashub, which means "the remnant shall return." Why do you think the Lord commanded Isaiah to do this? Did the Lord make good on His promise?

A: Over and against the scheming of powerful governments and men stand the children of the Lord, Shear-jashub and Immanuel. The Lord uses the weak and powerless to shame the strong and the powerful. Many scholars believe that the Lord was giving Ahaz one last chance to remain faithful to Him instead of casting his lot in with the Assyrians. Regardless of the plans of men, even kings, the Lord was true to His promise. Although the Assyrians later rose up and conquered Judah and deported the Israelites to Babylon in 586 BC, the Lord kept His promise, and a remnant returned from Babylon under Cyrus in 538 BC. From this remnant eventually was born Jesus of Nazareth.

5. **Q:** In the Small Catechism, the explanation of the First Commandment is: "We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things." Read 2 Kings 16:10-16. Far from simply committing a major foreign policy blunder, where did Ahaz truly go wrong?

A: Ahaz failed to see things from God's perspective. Assyria was the real threat to the whole region, to Judah especially, and this should have been apparent to Ahaz when he started making offerings to the Assyrian gods and making altars for their gods in the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. Ahaz failed to trust in God and His promises and instead attempted to trust in his own ability to create earthly alliances.

6. **Q:** In Isaiah 7:4–6 the Lord uses a metaphor to refer to kings Aram and Pekah (the son of Remaliah) as two smoking ends of sticks. What is the Lord saying about them? What was Ahaz’s chief concern? Read Deuteronomy 31:6–7 and Joshua 1:6–9. Just as the Lord has dealt previously with Israel, in whom should Ahaz have trusted?

A: The kings of Israel and Syria are nothing more than smoldering bits of charcoal. Their fire is gone out and the smoldering is all that remains of them. It will not be long before Assyria conquers them. The Lord was trying to tell Ahaz that he need not fear them. From Ahaz’s perspective, though, he was risking everything at this point. But just as Moses and Joshua were told to take courage in the one whose strength is unlimited, Ahaz should have understood and trusted the Lord his God, the one who knew him and loved him and anointed him as king.

7. **Q:** In Isaiah 7:7–9, what does the Lord say will happen to Aram and Pekah and their kingdoms? What does the Lord encourage Ahaz to do?

A: This is one of those subtle ironies in Scripture. Kings Pekah and Rezin have announced their plan, and now the sovereign King of kings announces His plan. The Lord’s statement to Ahaz, “If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all,” fairly adequately translates the Hebrew wordplay in the verbs here. Both “to be firm in faith” and “to be firm” are from the Hebrew verb *aman* (from which also comes the word “amen”). “To be firm in faith” can also be translated as “to trust, believe.” Security, real security is found not in alliances but in faith in God.

8. **Q:** In Isaiah 7:10–12, the Lord gives Ahaz permission to ask for a sign. How often have faithful believers through history wished that the Lord would grant them a sign from heaven to confirm a decision! Unbelievably, what does Ahaz do? Why?

A: The Lord is being unbelievably generous to Ahaz. He not only has confirmed His promise to Israel in the presence of Shear-jashub, “a remnant will return,” but He sent His holy prophet Isaiah to speak directly to the man and confirm His promises to him as anointed king: the enemies will have no ability to overthrow Ahaz or to conquer Judah. To seal the deal, the Lord invites Ahaz to ask for a sign so spectacular (as “deep as Sheol or high as heaven”) that there would be no doubt in God’s plan as Ahaz confronts this hard choice. In another irony, as the Lord is willing to put Himself to the test for Ahaz’s sake, He is putting Ahaz to the test. Ahaz shows that he really does not want a sign from the Lord to confirm God’s plan. In false piety, he brushes away the Lord’s offer, not wanting to put the Lord to the test. At this point, any evidence would only confirm the Lord’s faithfulness and further confirm Ahaz’s unfaithfulness. Perhaps Ahaz has already thrown in his lot with Assyria.

MIDWEEK 1: STUDENT

TRUSTING THE LORD TO PRESERVE

THE THRONE OF DAVID

Isaiah 7:1–14

INTRODUCTION

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QUESTIONS

1. Our culture is infatuated with babies and children. Think of the many ways that we try to protect and shelter children from some of the harsher aspects of our society. Discuss what this may mean for us as a culture and where we place our hope. Read Isaiah 7:1–14, taking special note of vv. 3 and 14.
2. In v. 1, Isaiah recounts a shortened genealogy for Ahaz, king of Judah. In a similar way, Matthew recounts a full genealogy of Jesus in the first chapter of his Gospel. Why might Isaiah (and Matthew) have made sure to include this information?
3. Read 2 Kings 16:7–9. How was King Ahaz planning to confront the threat from kings Rezin and Pekah? What became of this decision?
4. Isaiah is told by the Lord to take his son with him and go to Ahaz. Isaiah's son's name is Shear-jashub, which means "the remnant shall return." Why do you think the Lord commanded Isaiah to do this? Did the Lord make good on His promise?

5. In the Small Catechism, the explanation of the First Commandment is: “We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.” Read 2 Kings 16:10-16. Far from simply committing a major foreign policy blunder, where did Ahaz truly go wrong?
6. In Isaiah 7:4–6 the Lord uses a metaphor to refer to kings Aram and Pekah (the son of Remaliah) as two smoking ends of sticks. What is the Lord saying about them? What was Ahaz’s chief concern? Read Deuteronomy 31:6–7 and Joshua 1:6–9. Just as the Lord has dealt previously with Israel, in whom should Ahaz have trusted?
7. In Isaiah 7:7–9, what does the Lord say will happen to Aram and Pekah and their kingdoms? What does the Lord encourage Ahaz to do?
8. In Isaiah 7:10–12, the Lord gives Ahaz permission to ask for a sign. How often have faithful believers through history wished that the Lord would grant them a sign from heaven to confirm a decision! Unbelievably, what does Ahaz do? Why?
9. What sign does the Lord provide despite Ahaz’s false piety? What is the Lord promising to do through this sign?
10. There are several Hebrew words that can refer to a young woman. The one here, *alma*, never refers to a woman who is clearly married or not a virgin. It always seems to refer to a young woman who is a virgin. It is used six other times: see Genesis 24:43; Exodus 2:8; Psalm 68:25; Proverbs 30:19; Song of Solomon 1:3; 6:8. Why is it important that Mary is a virgin? Read Matthew 1:18–25.
11. Indeed, for Christians, Isaiah 7:14 is something of a touchstone in the Old Testament. But read Isaiah 7:15–25. It appears that Immanuel, this boy, would be born in Isaiah’s day, and before he is of the age of reason, the Lord would bring Assyria to lay waste to Judah. What are we to make of this?
12. We learned earlier about the specific historical context of this prophecy. In what way does the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 repair the damage wrought by Ahaz in his unbelief?

MIDWEEK 1

THE INVITATION

HYMN FOCUS

“Savior of the Nations, Come” (*LSB* 332:1, 7)

VISUAL

A large sealed invitation. Inside should be written: “Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34).

SUMMARY

Jesus heard the invitation of the Father to come down from heaven and become one of us, for us.

MESSAGE

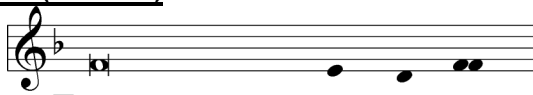
Hi, kids. Guess what I got in the mail this week: an invitation! What do you get invitations for? Birthday parties? Christmas parties? Weddings? Baptisms? I wonder what is in this invitation. Entertain a few answers, then open the invitation up, or have an older child open it and read it out loud. “Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Wow—that is quite an invitation! Do any of you know what an inheritance is? It is something that belonged to someone else, and now they give it to you or to me just because they want to. This invitation invites me to receive an inheritance that has been waiting for me for a very long time. Who is inviting me to receive this inheritance? The invitation says (read the invitation again): “Come, *you who are blessed by My Father.*” If the Father is God the Father, then it must be Jesus, God’s Son, who is inviting us.

What an invitation! Better than being invited to a birthday party or to a wedding! Jesus, the same little baby who was born in a stable and who laid in a manger, is also the Son of God. Because He was born, grew up, and died for our sins, we can now receive the inheritance that God the Father has wanted to give us since before the world was created. Can anyone guess what that inheritance is? Is it money? A big house? A new pet? Some super-awesome toy? Take a few answers. It is better than all those things. It is life forever and ever with God the Father and with Jesus. Jesus inherited eternal life by His death on the cross. And when He climbed out of the grave at Easter, He promised that we would always be with Him. What a fantastic invitation!

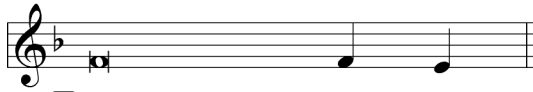
Stand

Versicles (Advent)

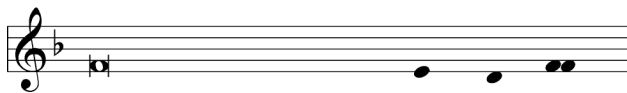
[Revelation 22:17, 20; 2 Timothy 4:8; Romans 8:22]



L The Spirit and the Church cry out:



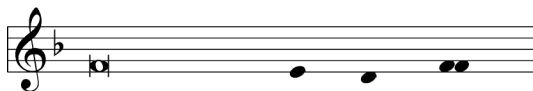
G Come, Lord Je - sus.



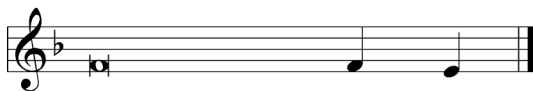
L All those who await His ap - pear - ance pray:



G Come, Lord Je - sus.



L The whole cre - a - tion pleads:



G Come, Lord Je - sus.

Phos Hilaron

Hymn of Light



L Joy - ous light of glo - ry:



G of the im - mor - tal Fa - ther; heav - en - ly, ho - ly,



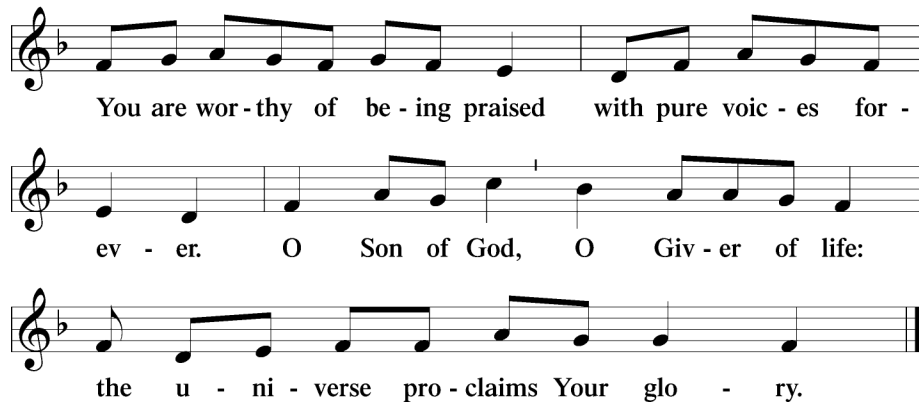
bless - ed Je - sus Christ. We have come to the



set - ting of the sun, and we look to the eve - ning light.

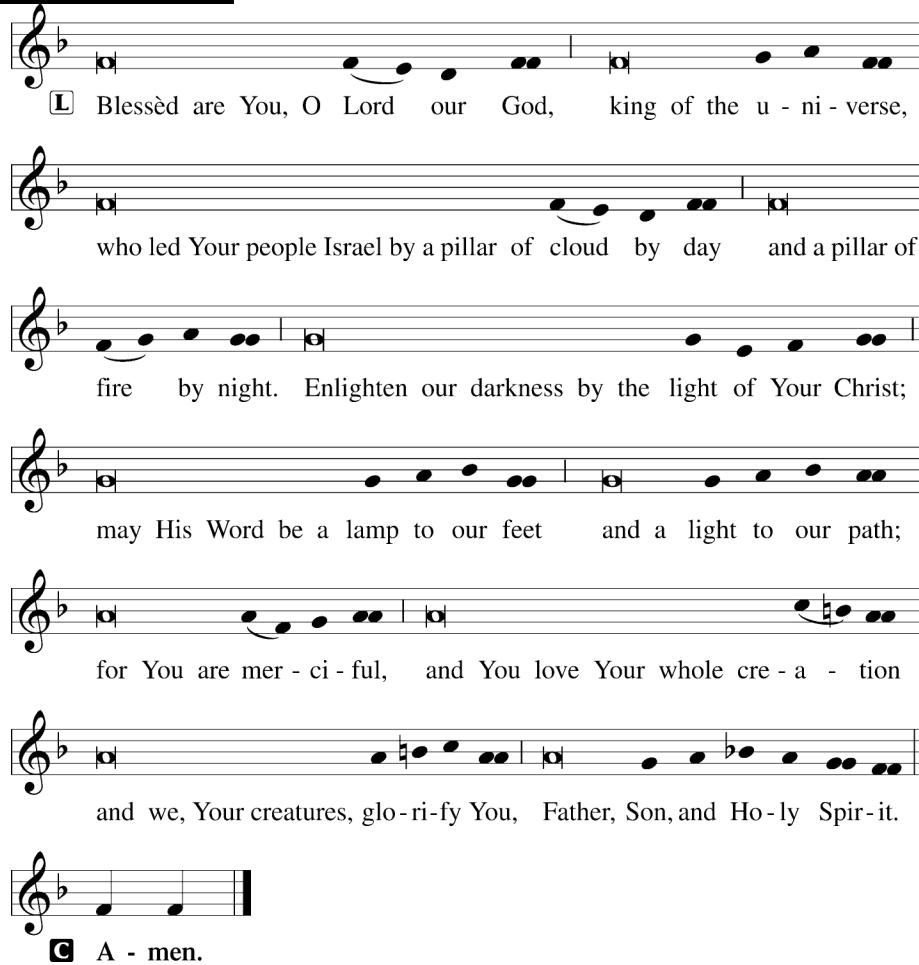


We sing to God, the Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it:



You are wor - thy of be - ing praised with pure voic - es for -
 ev - er. O Son of God, O Giv - er of life:
 the u - ni - verse pro - claims Your glo - ry.

Thanksgiving for Light



☐ Blessèd are You, O Lord our God, king of the u - ni - verse,
 who led Your people Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of
 fire by night. Enlighten our darkness by the light of Your Christ;
 may His Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;
 for You are mer - ci - ful, and You love Your whole cre - a - tion
 and we, Your creatures, glo - ri - fy You, Father, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it.
 ☑ A - men.

Sit

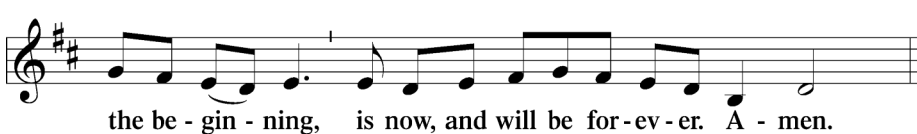
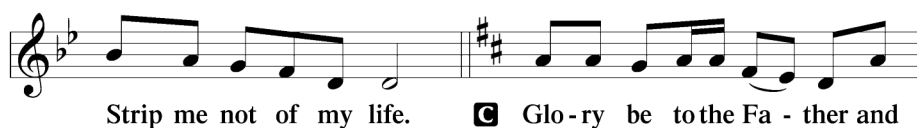
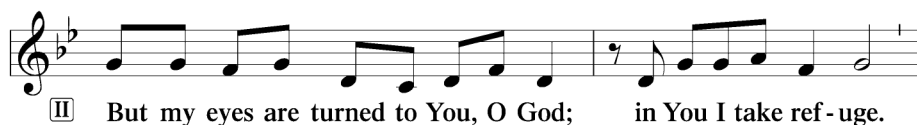
+ PSALMODY +

Psalm 141



☑ Let my prayer rise be - fore You as in - cense,

vv 1-4, 8



Let my prayer rise be - fore You as in - cense,
the lift-ing up of my hands as the eve-ning sac-ri-fice.

L Let us pray.

Silence for individual prayer may follow.

L Let the incense of our repentant prayer ascend before You, O Lord, and let Your loving-kindness descend on us that, with purified minds, we may sing Your praises with the Church on earth and the whole heavenly host and may glorify You forever.

C Amen.

Psalm 139:1-24

Antiphon

The Word be-came flesh and dwelt a - mong _____ us.

Psalm Tone

O LORD, you have searched me and | known me!*

You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts | from afar.

You search out my path and my | lying down*
and are acquainted with | all my ways.

Even before a word is | on my tongue,*
behold, O LORD, you know it alto- | gether.

You hem me in, behind | and before,*
and lay your hand up- | on me.

Such knowledge is too wonder- | ful for me;*
it is high; I cannot | attain it.



To coworker Pam Cunningham
Savior of the Nations, Come
LSB 332: 3—Unison Voices or C-Instrument, Organ

Attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340–397;
German version, Martin Luther, 1483–1546
St. 3 tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001

NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND
Geystliche gesangk Buchleyn, Wittenberg, 1524, ed. Johann Walter
Setting by Henry V. Gerike

Organ

Swell: Flute 8', (4')

Ped. (Optional)

4

3 Here a maid was found with child,

8

Yet re - mained a vir - gin mild.

LSB 332:3: © 2006 Concordia Publishing House

This setting may be used with a unison choir or soloist and organ.

It may also be used as a prelude for organ alone or for organ and C instrument playing the melody.

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