



# WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## Third Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2023



**Westminster Presbyterian Church extends an enthusiastic welcome**, in Christ's name, to all who worship here or join us in fellowship. Our church family seeks to embody God's boundless love by embracing, liberating and empowering people – whoever they are and wherever they may be on their faith journeys – to realize the transforming power of Christ in our congregation, community, and the world beyond.



**A Covenant Network Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**  
**An Earth Care Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**  
**A Matthew 25 Church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)**  
**A Stephen Ministry Congregation**

# TODAY AT WESTMINSTER

**8:45 – 12:15 p.m.**      **Nursery Care** for infants and toddlers in Preschool Suite D

**9:00 – 9:55 a.m.**      **Worship** in the Sanctuary

**Time with Our Children (approximately 9:15 a.m.)**

*The young and young-at-heart are invited to join the worship leader at the front of the sanctuary. Following the TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN, young ones through grade 5 may be escorted to Children's Programming or they are very welcome to remain in worship.*

**Children's Programming (9:20 – 10:00 a.m.)**

- Preschool Sunday School: Ages 3 and 4 in the Preschool Suite Room C
- Joyful Noise Choir: Kindergarten–Grade 5 in the Youth Music Room

**10:00 – 10:45 a.m.**      **Holy Toast Café** in Walton Community Hall

*Enjoy free coffee, tea, and fellowship. Breakfast items are available for one dollar.*

**10:10 – 11:00 a.m.**      **Childrens Programming**

- Snack Time for Kid's Zone K-5<sup>th</sup> grade in Classroom 2  
**(10:00 – 10:10 a.m.)**
- Christmas Pageant Rehearsal for ages 3 to 5<sup>th</sup> grade in Preschool Suite/Sanctuary
- Nursery Care for birth through age 2 in Preschool Suite D

**Adult Education**

- Attending to Our Emotions During the Holidays  
(see announcement on page 6)

**11:00 – 12:00 p.m.**      **Movie Time** for children ages 3 through 5<sup>th</sup> grade in Preschool Suite C

**11:15 – 12:00 p.m.**      **Living Mosaics worship** in Rodney Chapel

**12:00 – 12:30 p.m.**      **Christmas Caroling pizza lunch and rehearsal** in Walton Community Hall  
(see announcement on page 8)

**12:30 p.m.**      **Leave for caroling for retirement communities**

For descriptions of our programs for children and youth, visit [wpc.org/children-youth](http://wpc.org/children-youth).

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FAITH!



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**The Music:** The Westminster Handbell Choir will be ringing five octaves of handbells in worship today: 12 players will ring 60 brass bells for the prelude, offertory, and postlude! Handbell choir rehearsals will resume in February. For information or to participate, contact [TonyThurman@wpc.org](mailto:TonyThurman@wpc.org).

**The sanctuary flowers** are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Sandy White, Chris Waisanen, Signy Carson, and Barbara Hoover by the Book Talk group. Consider giving the flowers for Sunday worship to remember or honor loved ones or to celebrate an event. Please contact Linda Watson at (302) 571-6719 or [lwatson@ycst.com](mailto:lwatson@ycst.com).

**Westminster's Prayer Team** prays for the needs of our community. Please submit your prayer request to [wpcprayerlist@gmail.com](mailto:wpcprayerlist@gmail.com) or online at [wpc.org/care-support](http://wpc.org/care-support).

**You can make a contribution** to Westminster Presbyterian Church by visiting our website at [wpc.org](http://wpc.org) and clicking the "Donate" button or scan this QR code on your smart phone. →  
We accept donations by bank withdrawal, credit card, and debit card.



Visit [wpc.org/staff-leadership](http://wpc.org/staff-leadership) for a full listing of Westminster's staff and leadership.

# ORDER OF WORSHIP

~ Passages in **bold** print may be spoken by all. At the asterisk (\*) please stand in body or rise in spirit. ~

TOWER CHIME

Tim Ohmart

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Sandy King

\*PASSING OF THE PEACE

PRELUDE

ADVENT CAROL

arr. Hal Hopson

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Sue and Jerry Spilecki

“Rejoice in the Lord always;  
again I will say, Rejoice.”  
The world says, “Worry,”  
**but we say, “Rejoice!”**  
The news media says, “Fear,”  
**but we say, “Rejoice!”**

As we light our third advent candle,  
**we pray for hope, peace, and joy.**  
Come now, O child of Mary.  
**Come now, O Prince of Joy.**

\*HYMN No. 105

*People, Look East*

BESANÇON

ADVENT PRAYER

**Loving God, we open ourselves to you,  
trusting that you will guide us to joy-filled lives.  
Show us the creative power of hope.  
Teach us the peace that comes from justice.  
Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared.  
Prepare our lives to be transformed,  
so that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.**

TIME WITH OUR CHILDREN (See “Today at Westminster” on page 2 for more information.)

Sudie Niesen Thompson

SCRIPTURE LESSON

1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

New Testament, page 181

SERMON

Gregory Knox Jones

\*HYMN No. 93

*Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

TRURO

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

*The Four Season: Winter "Largo"*

Antonio Vivaldi  
arr. Martha Lynn Thompson

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE 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.**

\*HYMN No. 611

*Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

HYMN TO JOY

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*The First Nowell*

arr. Kevin McChesney

Westminster Handbell Choir:

Dave Brinkley  
Craig Checkel  
Charles Donaghy  
Jill Getty  
Kathleen Kennan  
Kelly McCullough

Tim Ohmart  
Wendy Perry  
Kristine Qualls  
Susan Rippin  
Beth Singewald  
Susan Spilecki

**New to Westminster?** Welcome! We're so glad you're here. If you are joining us for the first time, please introduce yourself via our contact form on the [I'm New](#) page of our website or scan this QR code to get there from your mobile device. We look forward to getting to know you.



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*The Four Seasons: Winter "Largo"* arr. Martha Lynn Thompson.

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*The First Nowell*, arr. Kevin McChesney.

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# **ECHO Giving for Advent**



*ECHO Giving* provides the opportunity to honor someone by making an *ECHO* gift in their name, while supporting the nine local and three global mission partners of Westminster. Your *ECHO* gift made during this season of giving produces life-sustaining reverberations of kindness and goodwill throughout Wilmington and across the world. Gifts of any size are welcome and 100% of dollars donated go directly to the mission organization you select.



***ECHO Giving* Order Forms are available online at [bit.ly/ECHO-Giving-Advent2023](https://bit.ly/ECHO-Giving-Advent2023)**

**and can also be found at the information table in Walton Community Hall during Advent.**

*You can request gift cards to notify recipients that a gift was made by you in their name.*

# ADULT EDUCATION

TODAY, DECEMBER 17

## Attending to our Emotions During the Holidays

*Facilitated by Janet Steinwedel, Ph.D.*

**10:10 a.m. | Classroom 6 and Zoom**

Zoom link: [bit.ly/wpc-adult-ed-zoom](https://bit.ly/wpc-adult-ed-zoom)

While there is much joy to be had at holiday time, some of us also experience lows. Memories of lost loved ones and difficult gatherings in the past and the current news can overtake us and depress or deplete our overall energy. Attending to our emotions means allowing for them, paying attention to their message, and finding a healthy way to respond. We will discuss how we can have realistic expectations, healthy boundaries, and lighten the emotional load of celebration.



## COMING UP

**Sundays, December 24 and 31  
NO ADULT EDUCATION**

**Sunday, January 7, 2024**

**Congregational Health Network**

*Presented by the Rev. Patti V. Weikart, M.A., M. Div.*

**10:10 a.m. | Classroom 6 and Zoom**

Zoom link: [bit.ly/wpc-adult-ed-zoom](https://bit.ly/wpc-adult-ed-zoom)

The Congregational Health Network are faith communities and service organizations in Delaware that collaborate with Nemours to meet the needs of patients with Sickle Cell Disease and their families. They are offered confidential conversations, mentors, life skills training, and a food coach.



Pastor Pat is Chaplain/ Research Associate at Nemours Children's Health and has been a Chaplain there since 2016.

## ONGOING/WEEKLY

### Online Bible Studies

**Midweek Manna Bible Study**

**Wednesdays | 12 p.m. | Zoom**

*Facilitator: The Rev. Sudie Niesen Thompson*

Contact: [sniesenthompson@wpc.org](mailto:sniesenthompson@wpc.org)

**Thursday Evening Bible Study**

**Thursdays | 6–7 p.m. | Zoom**

*Facilitators: Randy Williamson  
and Mary Anne Peters*

Contact: [randywilliamson1@comcast.net](mailto:randywilliamson1@comcast.net)

### Peace and Justice Thursday Evening Education Event

**“Originalism” in Interpreting the  
United States Constitution**

*With Garrett Moritz, Attorney,  
Ross Aronstam & Moritz*

**December 21 | 7 p.m. | Zoom**

Zoom link: [bit.ly/peace-justice-zoom](https://bit.ly/peace-justice-zoom)

Hosted by our Peace & Justice Work Group.

[zoom.us/join](https://zoom.us/join) | Meeting ID: 860 2752 1655

For full descriptions of our programs and more adult education and small group opportunities, visit [WPC.ORG/ADULTS](https://WPC.ORG/ADULTS) or check our events calendar at [WPC.ORG/EVENTS](https://WPC.ORG/EVENTS). Select adult education programs are available as a livestream/recording on our [YouTube channel](#).

# CHRISTMAS OFFERING 2023

**Thank you for your generous support of Christ's work!**



Our Christmas Offering bolsters the work of Christ as we empower our brothers and sisters worldwide, shelter and support individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and work for justice and peace. Every dollar you give goes beyond our walls to ministries that share the love of God with those in need. See the [letter](#) we mailed for more information on how your gifts will be distributed.

Please mail your check to the church or place it in the offering plate on a Sunday in December. Or, use our online giving option on the Westminster website – visit [wpc.org/donate](http://wpc.org/donate) and click the DONATE NOW button. Please choose “Sign In” if you have a login with our *Realm* system or “Give Online” to continue as a guest; then select Christmas Offering from the fund drop-down list.

If you have questions, please contact Colleen Falasco at [cfalasco@wpc.org](mailto:cfalasco@wpc.org) or (302) 654-5214 ext. 131.

# Experience Christmas at Westminster

*Please join us in celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior!*

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING: HOME DELIVERY

**Sunday, December 17 • 12–2:30 p.m. • Walton Community Hall**

Team up with the Westminster Choir and our Board of Deacons to share the joy of Christmas at four local retirement communities: Cokesbury, Country House, Maris Grove, and Stonegates. Lunch is provided at 12 Noon followed by a 30-minute rehearsal and departure to each caroling site. All ages are welcome! For more information about this caroling opportunity, contact [TonyThurman@wpc.org](mailto:TonyThurman@wpc.org) or (302) 654-5214, ext. 121.

## THE LONGEST NIGHT: A SERVICE OF WHOLENESS AND HEALING

**Wednesday, December 20 • 6 p.m. • Rodney Chapel**

For many, the holidays bring fresh waves of grief. This contemplative worship service will offer a space for both heartache and hope as we wait in darkness for the Light of the World. On the eve of the longest night of the calendar year, we invite you to join us in this candlelight service of healing and wholeness, with music by the Westminster Choir.

## CHRISTMAS EVE

**Sunday, December 24 • Sanctuary**

**Morning Worship, 10 a.m.** – The Fourth Sunday of Advent will be celebrated with joyful music and the lighting of the fourth candle in our Advent wreath. The Rev. Sudie Niesen Thompson will offer an inspired sermon to bring the season of Advent to a close while we wait in anticipation of our Savior's birth.

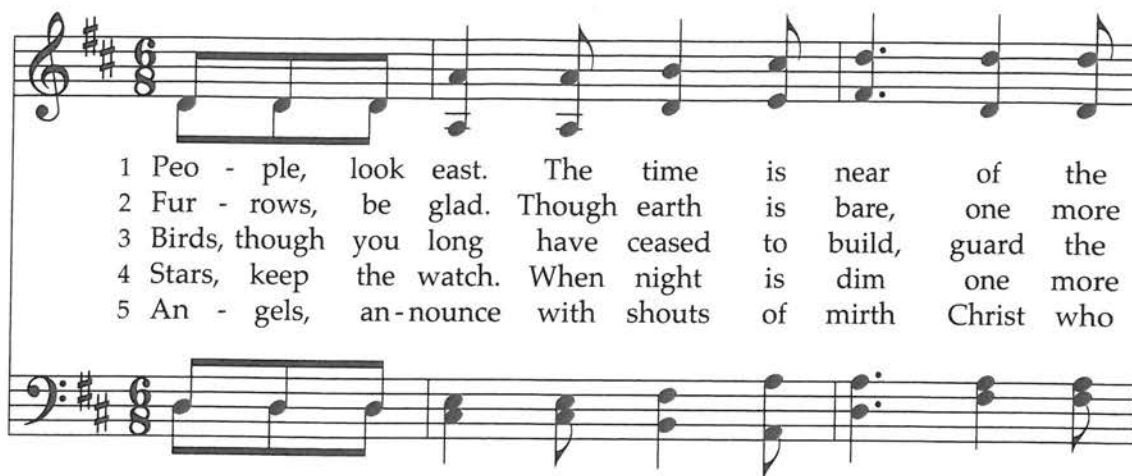
**Children's Pageant, 4 p.m.** – O come, little children, O come, one and all. This lively service featuring a living crèche and our children's choir will be no silent night! All children are invited to participate in the pageant. Gather for costumes in the Preschool Suite at 3:30 p.m.

**Service of Story and Song, 5:30 p.m.** – O come, all ye faithful. The Westminster-by-Heart Storytellers will bring new life to ancient scriptures. Westminster's professional soloists, brass, and percussion will trumpet the joy of Jesus' birth! We will celebrate communion (offered to all) and sing by candlelight.

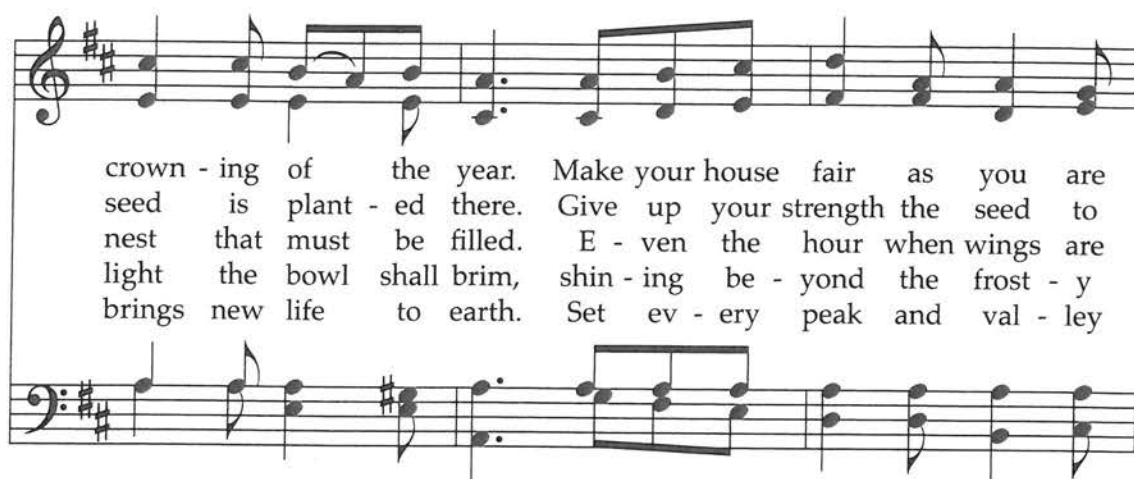
**Candlelight Communion Service, 8 p.m.** – On Christmas night all Christians sing to hear the news the angels bring: news of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful Savior's birth. Our traditional candlelight communion (offered to all) service will include a stirring sermon by the Rev. Dr. Gregory Knox Jones and anthems by the Westminster Choir accompanied by organ, piano, and percussion.

**Join us in person or online! All Christmas Eve worship services will be livestreamed at [WPC.ORG/WATCH](https://wpc.org/watch) and on Westminster's [YouTube channel](#). If you missed our two Christmas concerts, check out the recordings on [YouTube](#)!**

## People, Look East

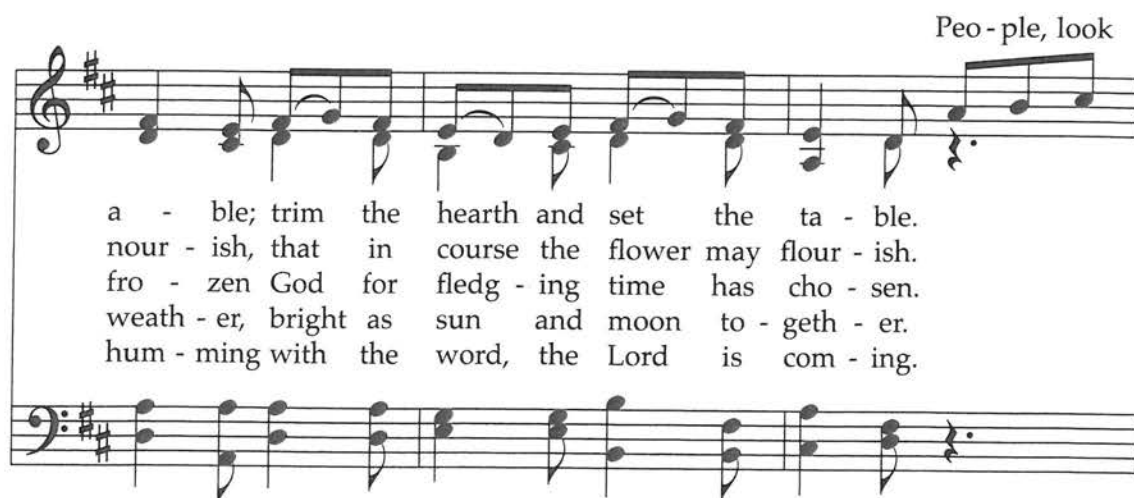


1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the  
 2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more  
 3 Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the  
 4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more  
 5 An - gels, an - nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who



crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are  
 seed is plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to  
 nest that must be filled. E - ven the hour when wings are  
 light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y  
 brings new life to earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley


Peo - ple, look



a - ble; trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.  
 nour - ish, that in course the flower may flour - ish.  
 fro - zen God for fledg - ing time has cho - sen.  
 weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.  
 hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.


This text was written to provide a new Advent text for an existing carol tune, here named for the city in eastern France where it originated. The author has imaginatively expressed the cosmic implications of Christ's coming by addressing each stanza to a part of creation.

east and sing to - day:

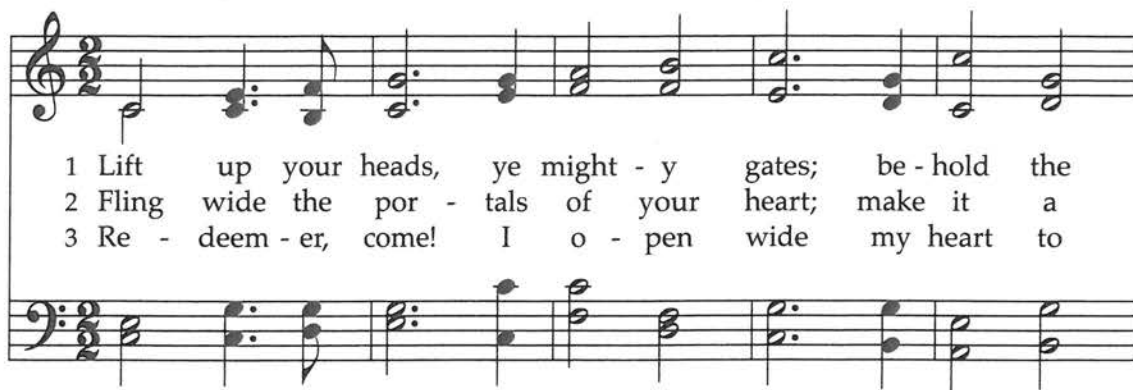


Peo - ple, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.  
Love, the Rose, is on the way.  
Love, the Bird, is on the way.  
Love, the Star, is on the way.  
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

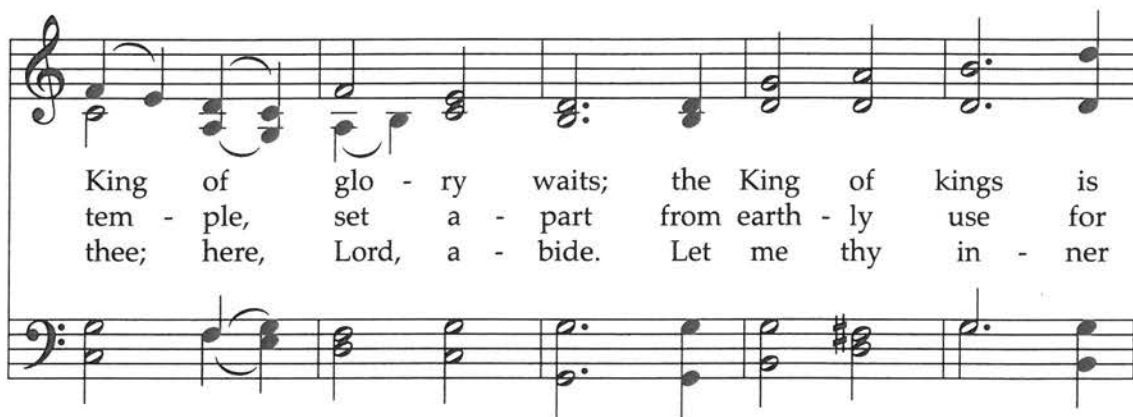
Peo - ple, look east: (Love is on the way.)



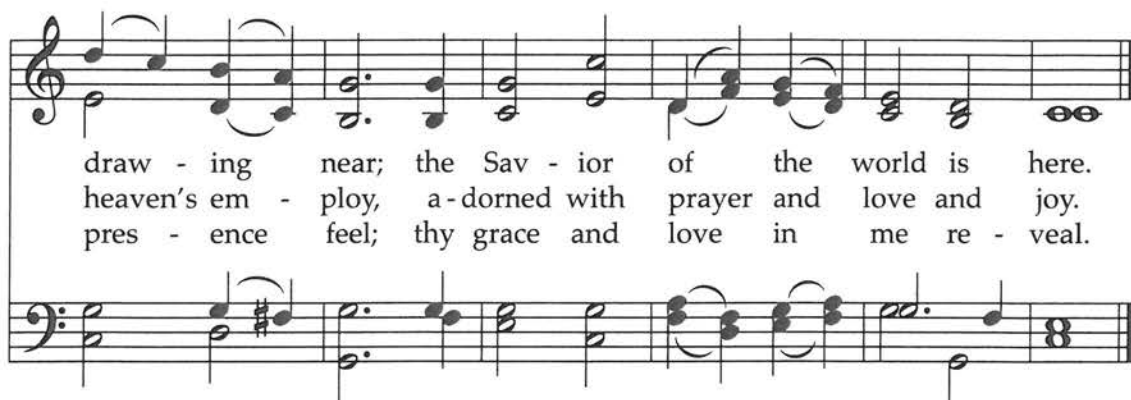
## Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates 93



1 Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates; be - hold the  
 2 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a  
 3 Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to



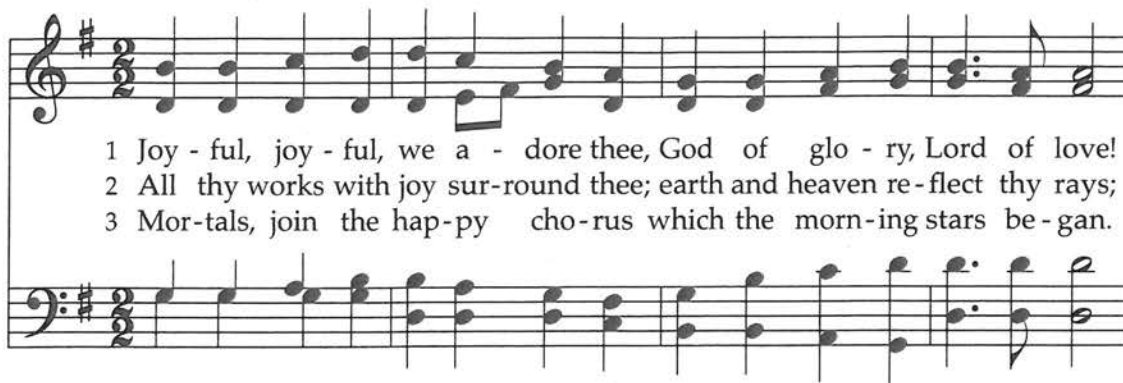
King of glo - ry waits; the King of kings is  
 tem - ple, set a - part from earth - ly use for  
 thee; here, Lord, a - bid. Let me thy in - ner



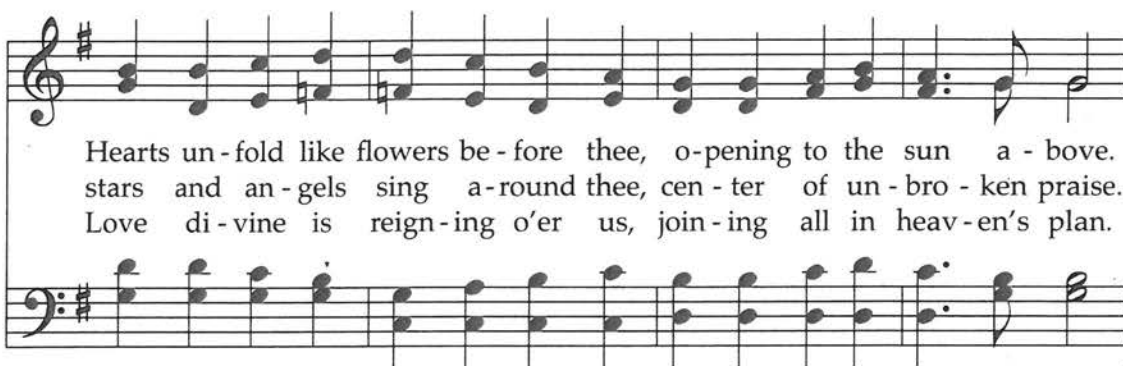
draw - ing near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.  
 heaven's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.  
 pres - ence feel; thy grace and love in me re - veal.

Beginning as a paraphrase of Psalm 24:7–10, this text then applies the door imagery to the singer's heart, and concludes with the individual's welcome of the approaching Savior. It is set to a very effective anonymous 18th-century English tune that has served many texts.

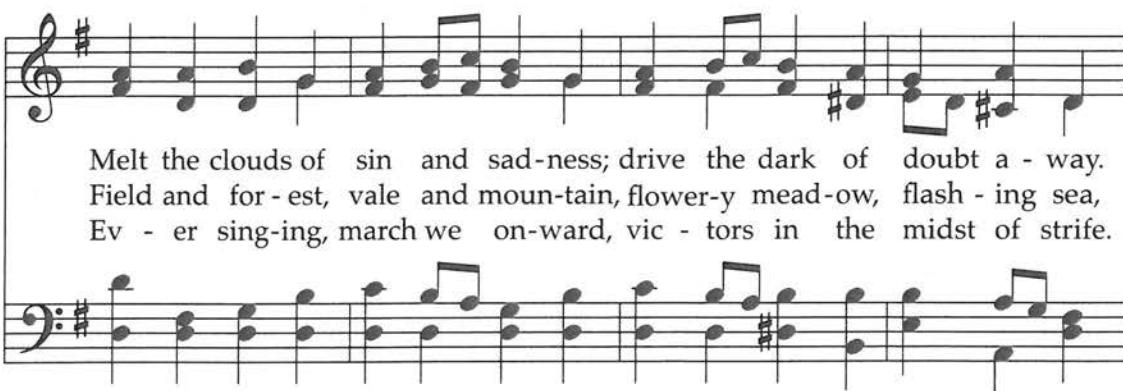
## 611 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee



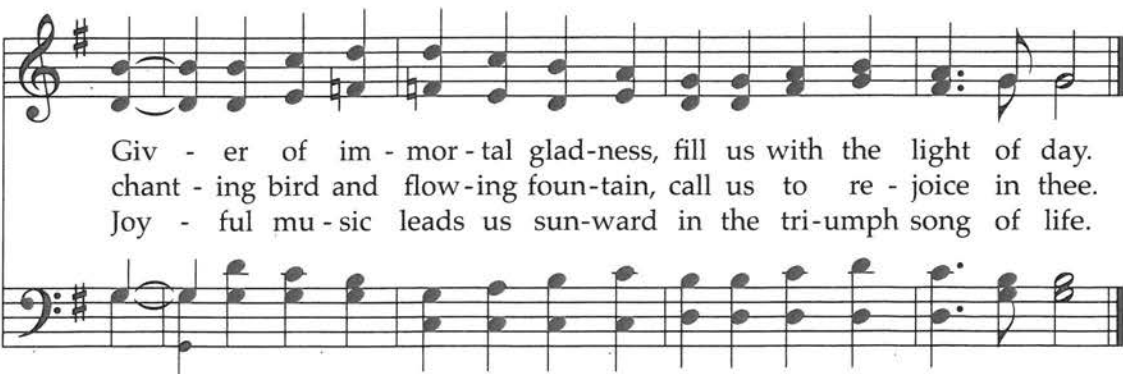
1 Joy - ful, joy - ful, we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!  
 2 All thy works with joy sur-round thee; earth and heaven re-flect thy rays;  
 3 Mor-tals, join the hap-py cho-rus which the morn-ing stars be-gan.



Hearts un-fold like flowers be-fore thee, o-pening to the sun a-bove.  
 stars and an-gels sing a-round thee, cen-ter of un-bro-ken praise.  
 Love di-vine is reign-ing o'er us, join-ing all in heav-en's plan.



Melt the clouds of sin and sad-ness; drive the dark of doubt a-way.  
 Field and for-est, vale and moun-tain, flower-y mead-ow, flash-ing sea,  
 Ev-er sing-ing, march we on-ward, vic-tors in the midst of strife.



Giv-er of im-mor-tal glad-ness, fill us with the light of day.  
 chant-ing bird and flow-ing foun-tain, call us to re-joice in thee.  
 Joy-ful mu-sic leads us sun-ward in the tri-umph song of life.

This well-known melody was created to provide a choral setting for J. C. F. von Schiller's poem, "An die Freude" (To Joy), as the final movement of the composer's *Ninth Symphony*. The author, a prominent Presbyterian pastor and author, wrote the words with this tune in mind.