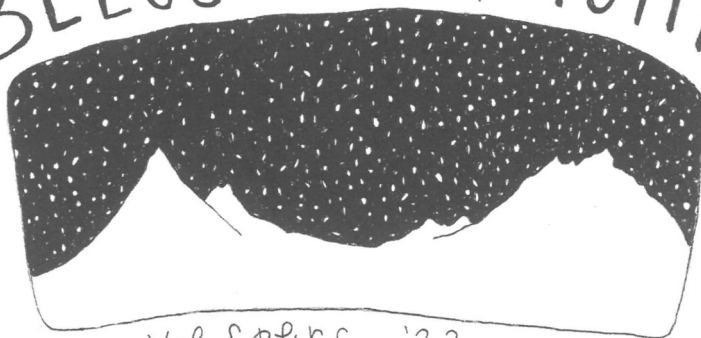


March 13, 2024

BLESS THIS NIGHT



vespers '23

PARTICIPANT BOOKLET

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



First Lutheran Church BOTHELL

STATEMENT OF WELCOME

We, the community of First Lutheran Church of Bothell, proclaim the message that the grace of our Lord is infinitely inclusive and that everyone is welcome. We believe that Christ calls us to reconciliation and wholeness in a world of alienation and brokenness.

As a Reconciling in Christ congregation and as disciples of Christ seeking justice and reconciliation among all peoples, we at First Lutheran Church welcome all into the fullness of God's love. **We welcome everyone, without exception and regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical and mental ability, age, or station in life.** We recognize that each person is a unique creation of God, and through grace, a child of God.

All are welcome at First Lutheran.

All are welcome to worship, to hear the Good News, to receive the sacraments, and to share in fellowship and service. As members of First Lutheran Church, we pledge ourselves and our congregation to exercise our faith in Christ, treasuring one another's similarities while embracing our God-given differences. We pledge that we will strive to live as a reconciling people, in our life together and in our outreach to the world.

BLESS THIS NIGHT

PRELUDE:

WELCOME

GATHERING HYMN: *All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night (ELW 565)*

*Changing the Chanel: Changing how we think about life—Six Feet Under
“Suffering is better than the alternative.”*

Opening Litany

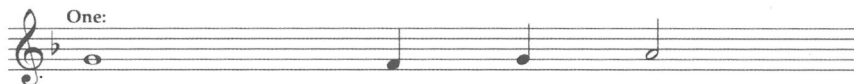
As a chant



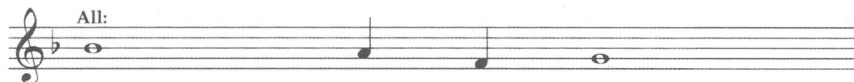
Jesus, you are the life and the truth.



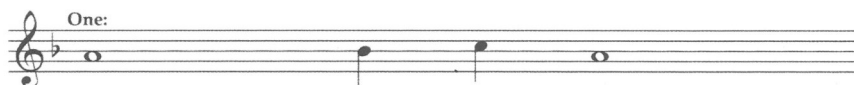
Be with us this eve - ning.



You were there in the be - gin-ning;



You are here with us now.



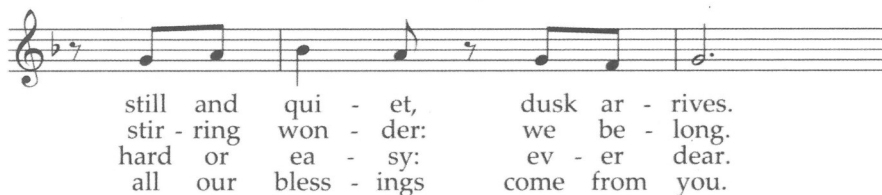
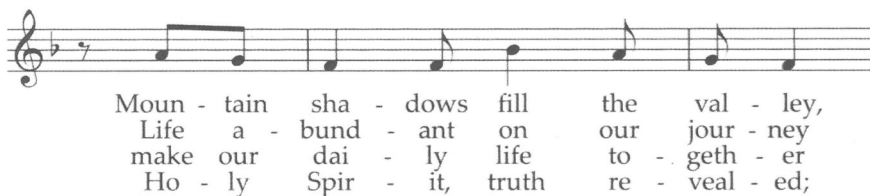
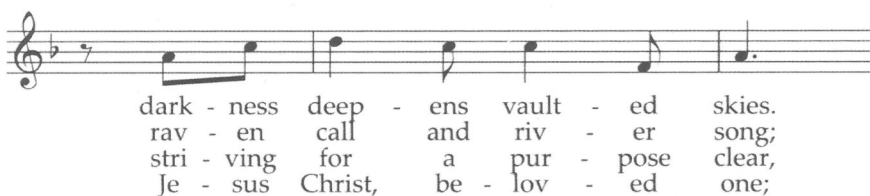
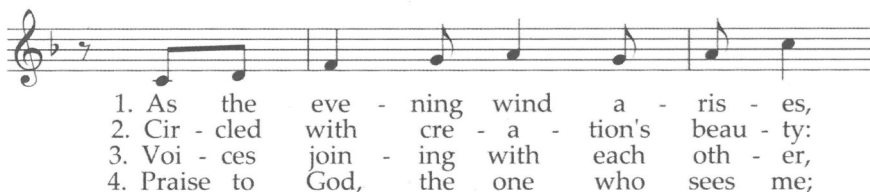
As the day turns to dusk,

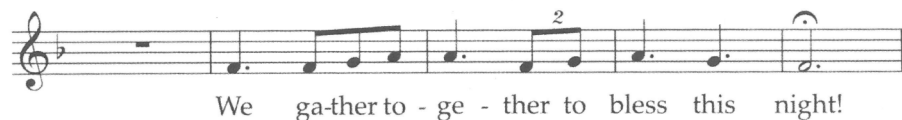
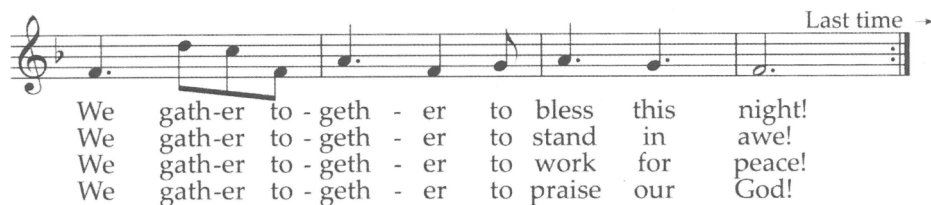
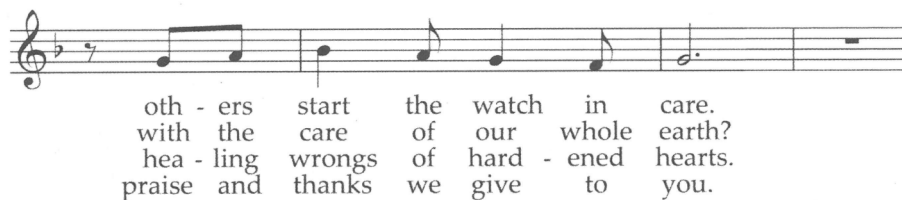
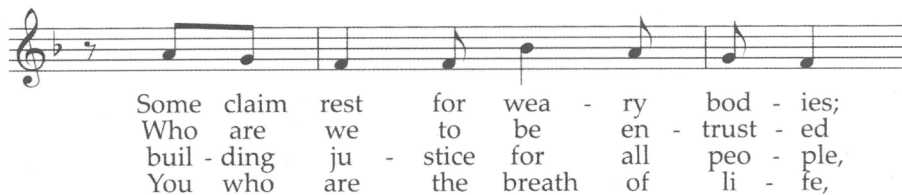
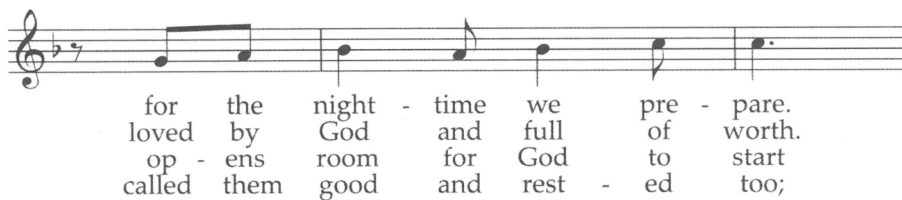


Segue to Evening Hymn

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

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.

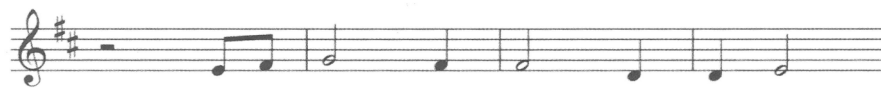
One: I invite you to join me in a spirit of prayer:

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

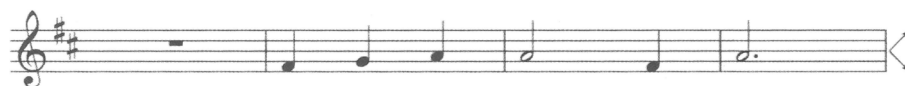
In the beginning you blessed the night and day, and everything in between. As we gather this evening, may we remember your love for us. May we share that love and be renewed to work for justice and peace. Amen.



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

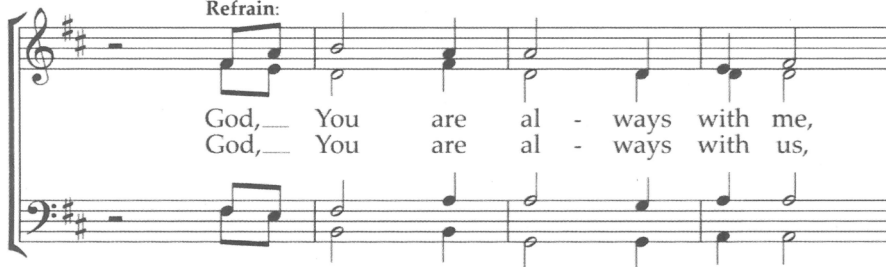


I re - mem - ber my cre - a - tor.
on our way through un - known per - il,

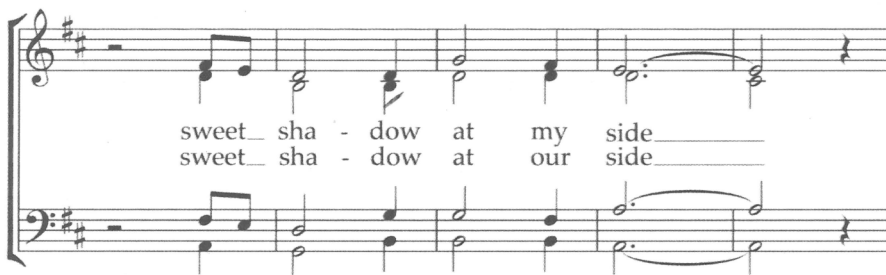


You are my help in need.
You watch and stand close by.

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.

Word

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

Mark 6:45-52

Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray. When evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. When he saw that they were straining at the oars against an adverse wind, he came towards them early in the morning, walking on the sea. He intended to pass them by. But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out; for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Then he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

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?"
 Then she ex-claimed with fear and joy:

Segue to Magnificat ↗

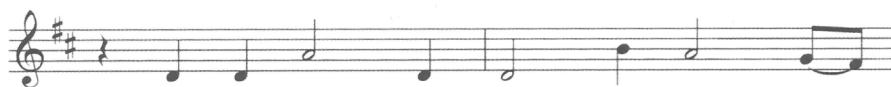
Mary's Song — Magnificat



My soul mag-ni-fies the Lord! And my



spir - it de - lights in my sav - ior!



God has seen my low - li - ness and



blessed me.

I will serve.



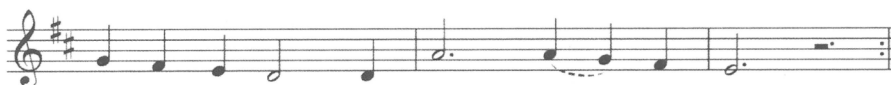
1. Of all the peo - ple in this day and time
2. God's arm of ju - stice ri - ses high.



I have been set a - part; my heart is a - flame.
Ar - ro-gant peo - ple scatt-ered, chaff in the wind.



Pow - er - ful in - vi - ting love re - vealed!
Ty-rants torn down, the low - ly lift - ed up.



Ho - ly and great is God's glor - i - ous name!
To those who hun - ger: food with - out end!

Coda ☐

I will serve.

3. We re-mem-ber God's prom - is - es to all, de -

clared to our an - ce - stors Sar - ah and Ab - ra - ham:

just-ice and mer-cy for all, just-ice and mer-cy for all!

My soul mag-ni - fies the Lord! And my

spir - it de - lights in my sav - ior!

God has seen my low - li - ness and

blessed me. I will serve.

Please be seated

Prayers

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...*]

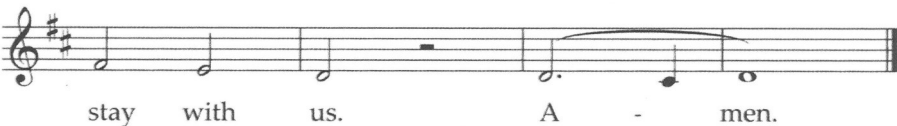
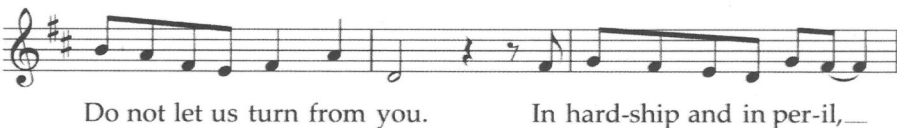
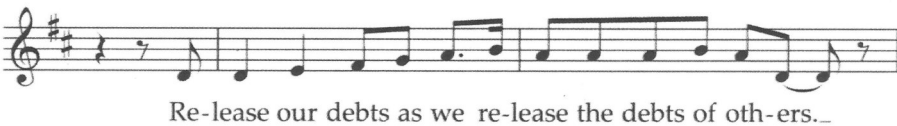
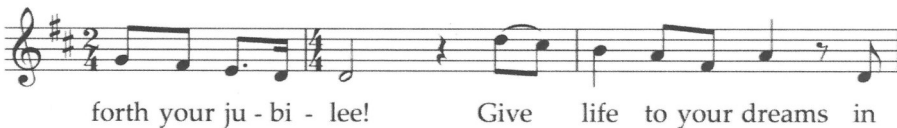
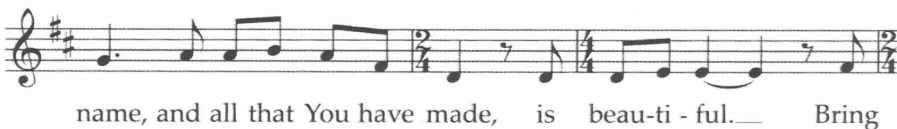
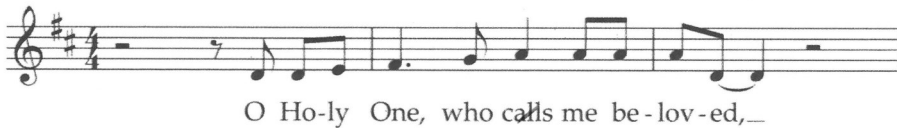
We pray:

God of mercy, be with us.

The Prayer of Jesus:

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray.

He said, when you pray, pray like this:



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 the slave Hagar—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

About Lent

The Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday (February 14) and lasts 40 days (excluding Sundays which are “little Easters”). The English word *Lent* is a shortened form of the Old English word *lencten*, meaning “spring season.” This liturgical season is a time for reflection, repentance (turning back to), affirmation of our baptisms, deepening of our spiritual practices, in short a time for rebirth and renewal. For us in the Northern Hemisphere these are themes we associate with the coming spring time. It is a time to prepare ourselves for Easter through a rehearsing of the story of Jesus’ arrest, suffering, crucifixion, death, and resurrection.

Holy Week worship begins with Palm Sunday (March 24). This is the day that we remember Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his quick betrayal. There is no real benediction since we understand that we are in worship the entire week. Wednesday we will have prayer around the cross. Maundy (Latin for command) Thursday we are taught about the giving of the command to love one another and the institution of the Lord’s Supper. Good Friday we gather to hear the story of Jesus’ suffering and death through a choral Tenebrae service.

The expectation is that the worshipping community experiences this story together to prepare for the Easter Season.

