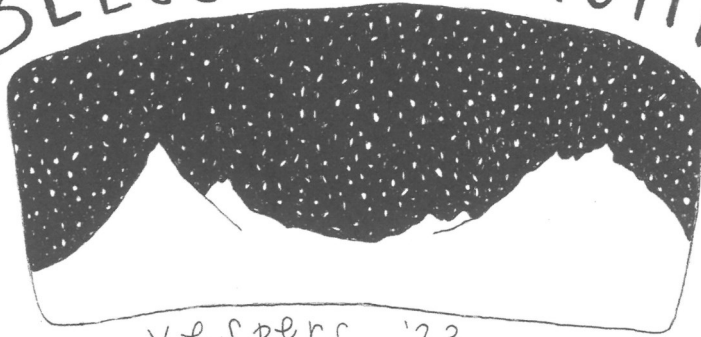


February 21, 2024

BLESS THIS NIGHT



vespers '23

PARTICIPANT BOOKLET

G. Mark Griffith  
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## *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:** O Day of Rest and Gladness (ELW 521)

*Changing the Channel: How do we welcome?*

*Designing Women: Mary Jo goes to church*

## Opening Litany

As a chant



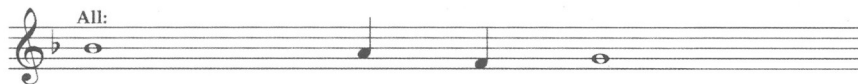
Jesus, you are the life and the truth.



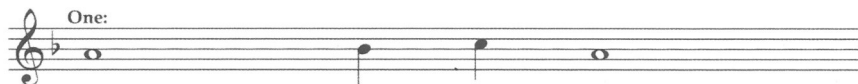
Be with us this eve - ning.



You were there in the be - gin-ning;



You are here with us now.



As the day turns to dusk,



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

Evening Hymn

...(bless - ings.)

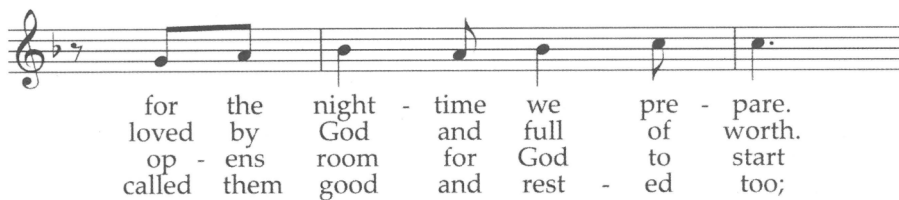
1. As the eve - ning wind a - ris - es,  
2. Cir - cled with cre - a - tion's beau - ty:  
3. Voi - ces join - ing with each oth - er,  
4. Praise to God, the one who sees me;

dark - ness deep - ens vault - ed skies.  
rav - en call and riv - er song;  
stri - ving for a pur - pose clear,  
Je - sus Christ, be - lov - ed one;

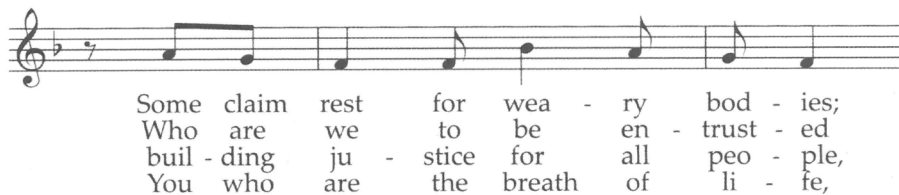
Moun - tain sha - dows fill the val - ley,  
Life a - bund - ant on our jour - ney  
make our dai - ly life to - geth - er  
Ho - ly Spir - it, truth re - veal - ed;

still and qui - et, dusk ar - rives.  
stir - ring won - der: we be - long.  
hard or ea - sy: ev - er dear.  
all our bless - ings come from you.

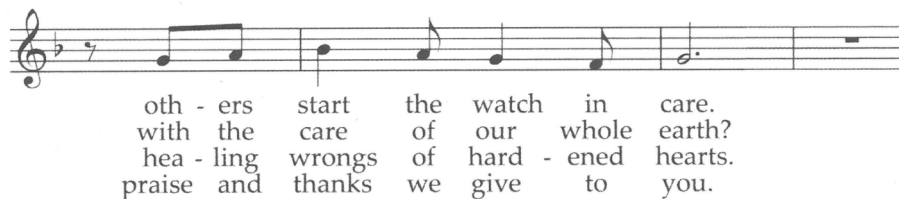
In the good - ness of the dark  
We em - brace deep my - ste - ry,  
Prac - tice in com - mu - ni - ty  
Mak - er of the day and night,



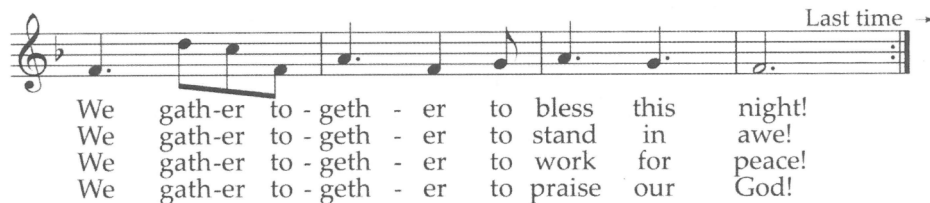
for the night - time we pre - pare.  
 loved by God and full of worth.  
 op - ens room for God to start  
 called them good and rest - ed too;



Some claim rest for wea - ry bod - ies;  
 Who are we to be en - trust - ed  
 buil - ding ju - stice for all peo - ple,  
 You who are the breath of li - fe,

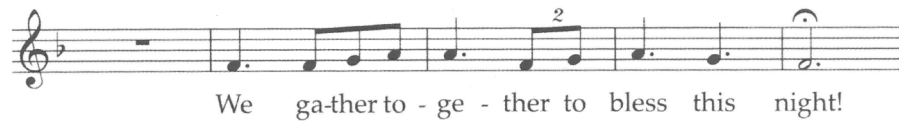


oth - ers start the watch in care.  
 with the care of our whole earth?  
 hea - ling wrongs of hard - ened hearts.  
 praise and thanks we give to you.



We gath - er to - geth - er to bless this night!  
 We gath - er to - geth - er to stand in awe!  
 We gath - er to - geth - er to work for peace!  
 We gath - er to - geth - er to praise our God!

Last time ->



We gath - er to - ge - ther to bless this night!

## Gathering Prayer

One: God be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

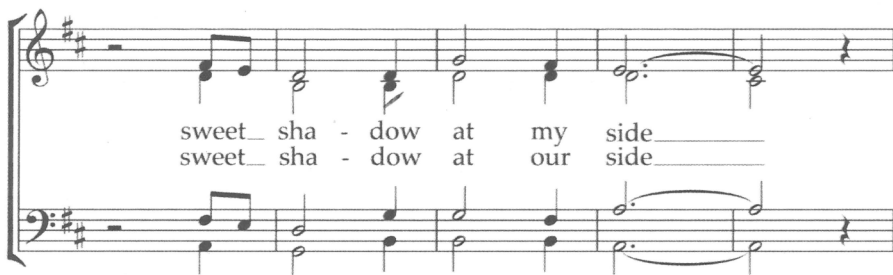
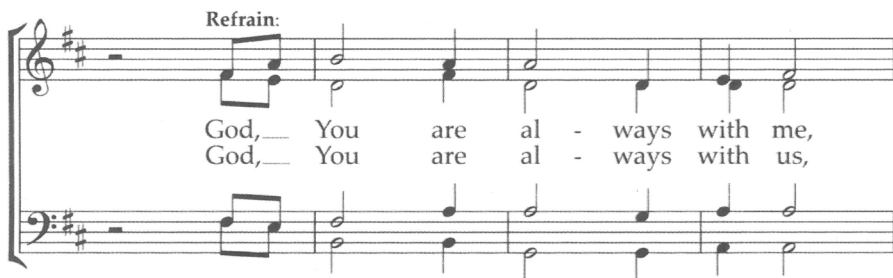
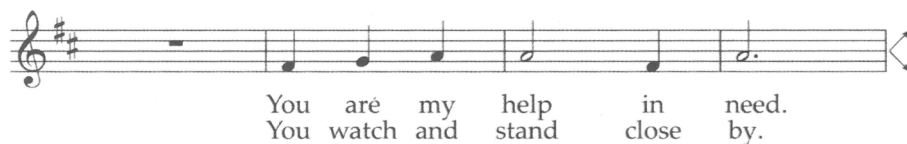
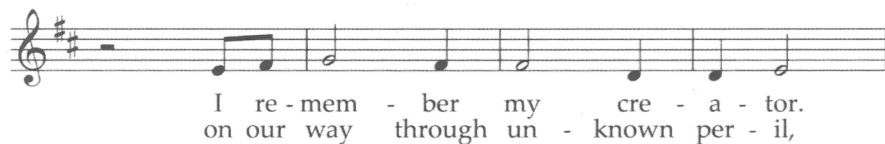
One: Let us give thanks to our Creator.

**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.**



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 10:13-16

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

## 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 ↗

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a vocal part, likely a soprano or alto. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 4/4. The score consists of ten staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. The music features various rhythmic values including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests. There are some dynamic markings like 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte). A '3' indicates a triplet. The score ends with a 'Segue to Magnificat' instruction and an arrow pointing to the right.

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.



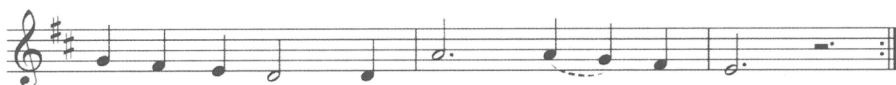
1. Of all the peo - ple in this day and time
2. God's arm of ju - stice ri - ses high.



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*

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:**



God of mer - cy, be with us.

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.

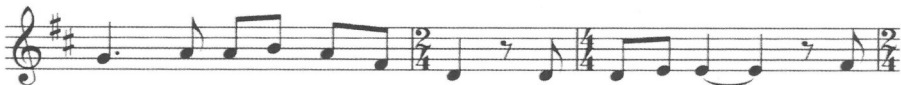
He said, when you pray, pray like this:



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.

The musical score consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment is written on two staves (treble and bass clefs) with the same key signature and time signature. The lyrics are placed below the vocal line. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

## 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.

