


# GATHERING SONG: *All My Heart Again Rejoices* + ELW 273



1 All my heart a - gain re - joic - es as I hear, far and  
 2 Je - sus' voice from low - ly man - ger soft - ly thus calls to  
 3 Come, then, let us has - ten yon - der; here let all, great and  
 4 You, dear Lord, I'll ev - er cher - ish; though my breath fail in



near, sweet-est an - gel voic - es; "Christ is born," their choirs are  
 us: "You are safe from dan - ger; come and see; from all that  
 small, kneel in awe and won - der; love him who with love is  
 death, I will nev - er per - ish: by your side in light e -



sing - ing, till the air ev - 'ry - where now with joy is ring - ing.  
 grieves you you are freed; all you need I will sure - ly give you."  
 yearn - ing; hail the star that from far bright with hope is burn - ing.  
 ter - nal I shall be end - less - ly filled with joy su - per - nal.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607–1676; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.  
 Music: WARUM SOLLT ICH, Johann G. Ebeling, 1637–1676

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## FIRST READING      *Jeremiah 31:7-14*

A reading from Jeremiah:

<sup>7</sup> Thus says the Lord:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,  
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;  
proclaim, give praise, and say,  
“Save, O Lord, your people,  
the remnant of Israel.”

<sup>8</sup> See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north  
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,  
among them the blind and the lame,  
those with child and those in labor together;  
a great company, they shall return here.

<sup>9</sup> With weeping they shall come,  
and with consolations I will lead them back;  
I will let them walk by brooks of water,  
in a straight path where they shall not stumble,  
for I have become a father to Israel,  
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

<sup>10</sup> Hear the word of the Lord, O nations,  
and declare it in the coastlands far away;  
say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him  
and will keep him as a shepherd does a flock.”

<sup>11</sup> For the Lord has ransomed Jacob  
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

<sup>12</sup> They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,  
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord,  
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,  
and over the young of the flock and the herd;  
their life shall become like a watered garden,  
and they shall never languish again.

<sup>13</sup> Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,  
and the young men and the old shall be merry.  
I will turn their mourning into joy;  
I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow.

<sup>14</sup> I will give the priests their fill of fatness,  
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,  
says the Lord.

Word of God. Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

***Psalm 147:12-20***

- <sup>12</sup> Worship the Lord, | O Jerusalem;  
praise your | God, O Zion,  
<sup>13</sup> **who has strengthened the bars | of your gates  
and has blessed your chil- | dren within you.**  
<sup>14</sup> God has established peace | on your borders  
and satisfies you with the | finest wheat.  
<sup>15</sup> **God sends out a command | to the earth,  
a word that runs | very swiftly.**  
<sup>16</sup> God gives | snow like wool,  
scattering | frost like ashes.  
<sup>17</sup> **God scatters | hail like bread crumbs.  
Who can stand a- | gainst God's cold?**  
<sup>18</sup> The Lord sends forth the | word and melts them;  
the wind blows, and the | waters flow.  
<sup>19</sup> **God declares the | word to Jacob,  
statutes and judg- | ments to Israel.**  
<sup>20</sup> The Lord has not done so to any | other nation;  
they do not know God's judgments. | Hallelujah!

## **SECOND READING    *Ephesians 1:3-14***

A reading from Ephesians:

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup> He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup> In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup> so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup> this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Word of God. Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL    *John 1:1-18***

The holy gospel according to John:

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup> From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

HYMN OF THE DAY *Word of God, Come Down on Earth* + ELW 510

1 Word of God, come down on earth, liv - ing rain from  
2 Word e - ter - nal, throned on high, Word that brought to  
3 Word that speaks God's ten - der love, one with God be -

heav'n de - scend - ing; touch our hearts and bring to birth  
life cre - a - tion, Word that came from heav'n to die,  
yond all tell - ing, Word that sends us from a - bove

faith and hope and love un - end - ing. Word al - might - y,  
cru - ci - fied for our sal - va - tion, sav - ing Word, the  
God the Spir - it, with us dwell - ing, Word of truth, to

we re - vere you; Word made flesh, we long to hear you.  
world re - stor - ing, speak to us, your love out - pour - ing.  
all truth lead us; Word of life, with one bread feed us.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

O God, you reveal yourself wherever two or three are gathered in your name. Be with us now, not only in the infant Jesus and resurrected Christ, but in the beloved people of this assembly. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great**

You reveal yourself in the waters of the womb; in brooks, ponds, and oceans; and in the waters of baptism. Grant us wisdom to tenderly care for the earth as a garden watered by your grace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great**

You reveal yourself in blessed diversity. Help us to look for you in people near and far, in bodies of all kinds, and in kindred young and old. Let us seek you in many places, praising you in many tongues. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great**

You reveal yourself in new life. Support those beginning a new job, a new relationship, or a new living situation, especially those displaced because of tragedy or loss. Be with all others who need your life-giving touch this day (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great**

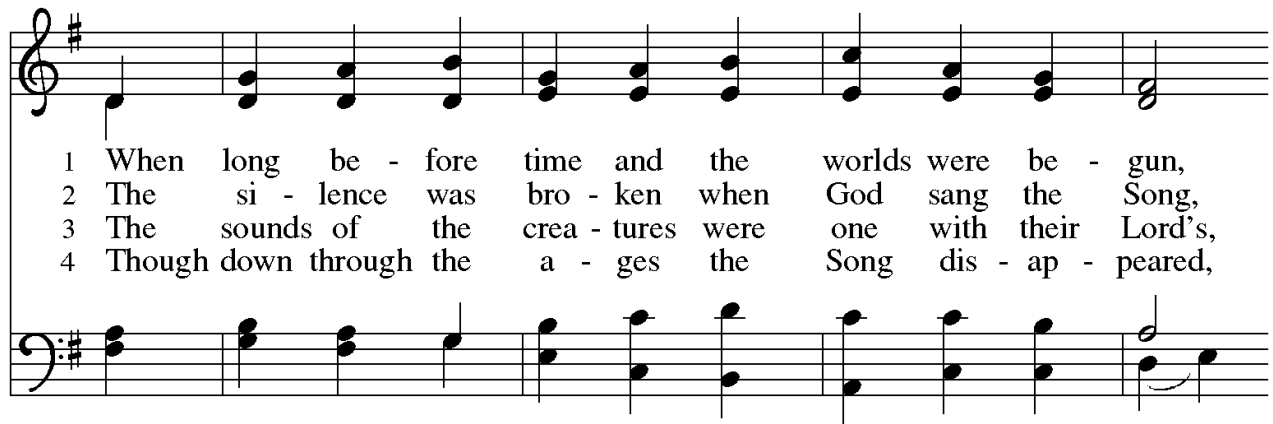
You reveal yourself in holy communion. Sustain all who provide food and fellowship in this congregation and in the wider community. Make our tables signs of your welcoming presence among us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

You promise to turn mourning into joy and to comfort those who weep. We remember those who have died and look to being united with them in your glory. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**


# HYMNS DURING COMMUNION *When Long Before Time* + ELW 861



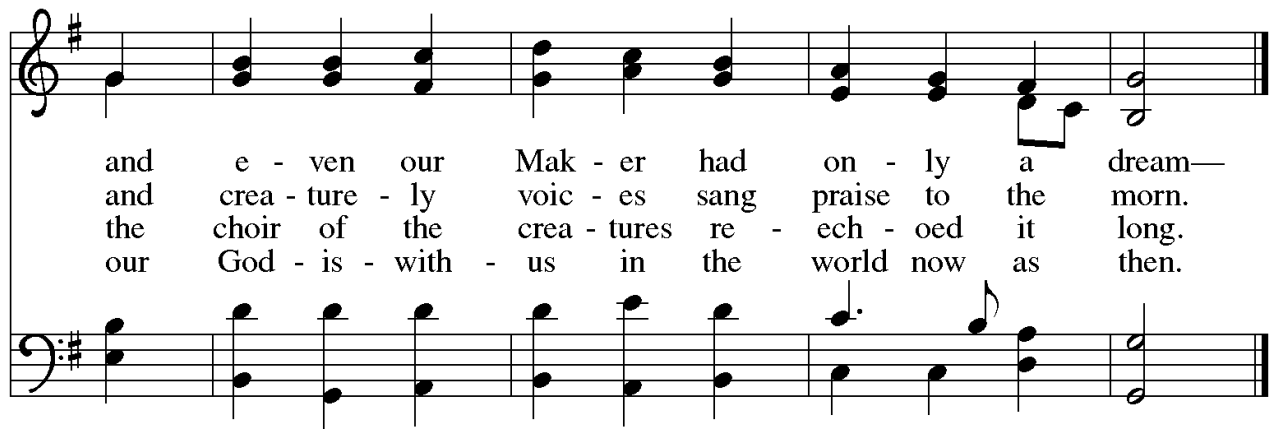
1 When long be - fore time and the worlds were be - gun,  
 2 The si - lence was bro - ken when God sang the Song,  
 3 The sounds of the crea - tures were one with their Lord's,  
 4 Though down through the a - ges the Song dis - ap - peared,



when there was no earth and no sky and no sun,  
 and light pierced the dark - ness and rhy - thm be - gan,  
 their har - mo - nies sweet and be - fit - ting the Word;  
 its har - mo - nies bro - ken and al - most un - heard,



and all was deep si - lence and night reigned su - preme,  
 and with its first birth - cries cre - a - tion was born,  
 the Sing - er was pleased as the earth sang the Song,  
 the Sing - er comes to us to sing it a - gain,



and e - ven our Mak - er had on - ly a dream—  
 and crea - ture - ly voic - es sang praise to the morn.  
 the choir of the crea - tures re - ech - oed it long.  
 our God - is - with - us in the world now as then.



## He Came Down + ELW 253

1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;  
2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;  
3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;  
4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;

he came down that we may have love;  
he came down that we may have light; hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er - more.  
he came down that we may have peace;  
he came down that we may have joy;

Text: Cameroon traditional

Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional; arr. John L. Bell, b. 1949

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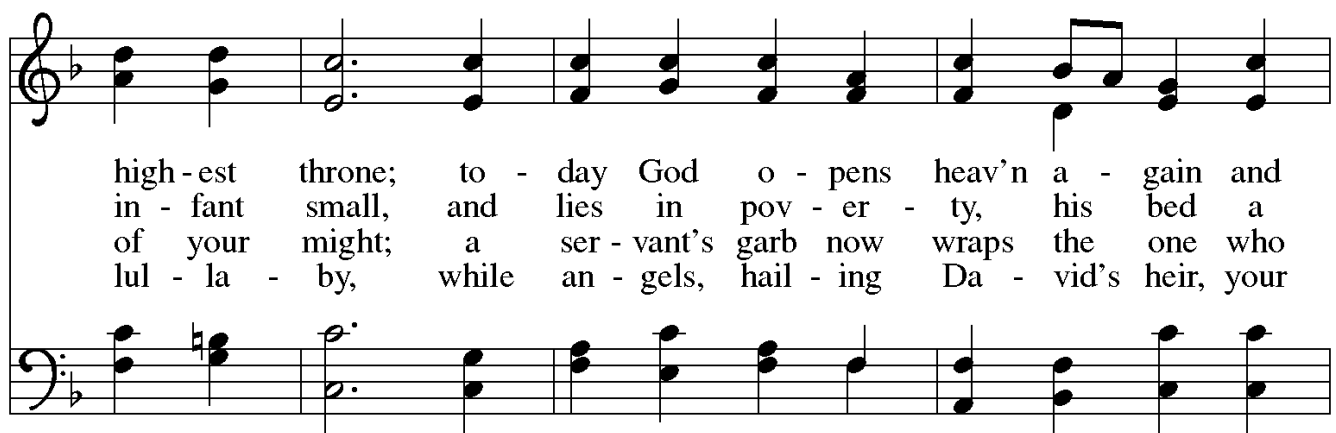
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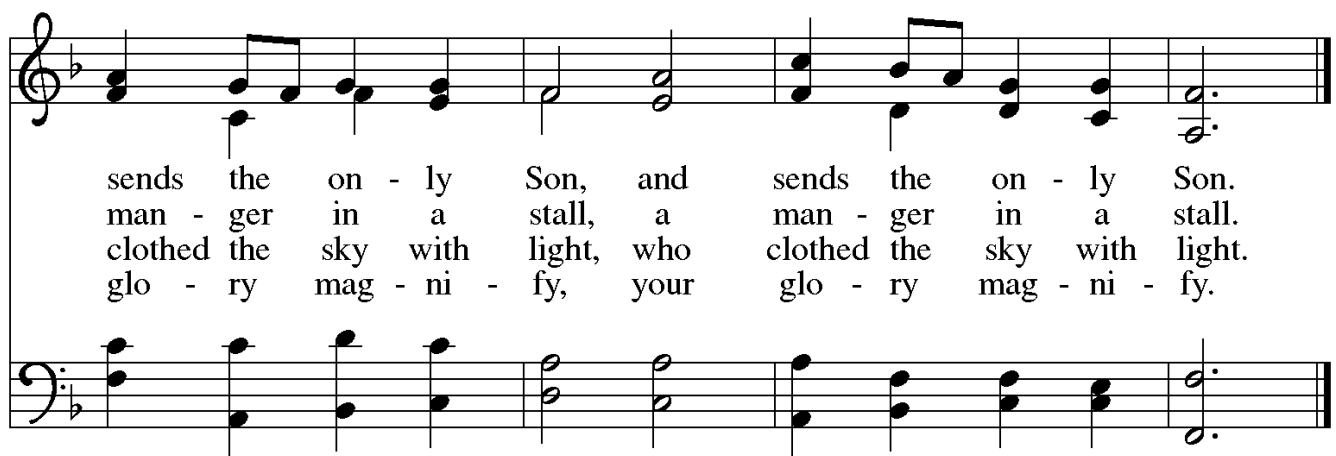
**SENDING SONG** *Let All Together Praise Our God* + ELW 287, verses 1, 3, 5, & 6



1 Let all to - geth - er praise our God be - fore the  
2 From God's right hand the Son de - scends, is born an  
3 O ten - der Child, you veil in flesh the splen - dor  
4 Your moth - er feeds you ten - der - ly, sings you a



high - est throne; to - day God o - pens heav'n a - gain and  
in - fant small, and lies in pov - er - ty, his bed a  
of your might; a ser - vant's garb now wraps the one who  
lul - la - by, while an - gels, hail - ing Da - vid's heir, your



sends the on - ly Son, and sends the on - ly Son.  
man - ger in a stall, a man - ger in a stall.  
clothed the sky with light, who clothed the sky with light.  
glo - ry mag - ni - fy, your glo - ry mag - ni - fy.

5 A wonderful exchange you make:  
you take our flesh and blood,  
and in return give us to share  
the shining realm of God,  
the shining realm of God.

6 Unlock the door again today  
that leads to paradise;  
the angel bars the way no more.  
To God let praises rise,  
to God let praises rise!