



Thy Holy Spirit lead us on  
until our glorious goal is won;  
eternal praise, eternal fame  
be offered, Savior, to thy name!

\*Praise Songs

**God You're So Good**

God you're so good. God you are kind.  
God you are wonderful. My God, you are excellent...

Excellent is Thy name. Excellent is Thy might.  
God you are wonderful. My God you are excellent...

**Me yi N'aye (I Will Praise Him)** [Feel free to sing in either language]

Me yi n'aye, Me yi Nyamea' ye...

Me yi Nyamea' ye, Halleluyah, Halleluyah, Halleluyah ...

I will praise God, I will praise my God...

I will praise my God, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah...

Common Prayer (*unison*)

**God of our salvation,  
you straighten the winding ways of our hearts  
and smooth the paths made rough by sin.  
Keep our conduct blameless, keep our hearts watchful in holiness,  
and bring to perfection the good you have begun in us.  
We ask this through him whose coming is certain,  
whose day draws near;  
your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, forever and ever. Amen.**

Children's Time

Prayers of the People & the Lord's Prayer

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

UMH 230, v. 4

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

**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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

The Offering

Offertory Anthem

The Son of God is Coming Again

Composer Unknown

The Son of God is coming again. Let the people sing Alleluia,  
Sing, Alleluia, sing, sing, Alleluia, Let the people sing, Alleluia.

\*Doxology

UMH 94

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise God, all creatures here below.  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host.  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

\*Prayer of Dedication

\*Passing of Peace

“Shalom”

Mensah Essilfie

God’s peace be unto you,  
We wish you Shalom!  
The peace of God which transcends all  
understanding be with you forevermore.

\*Gospel Reading

Luke 3:2b-6

Anthem

“O Come, Emmanuel”

Merri Lynn Braman, cellist  
Elaine Hagenberg (b. 1979)

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

O come thou Dayspring come and cheer our spirits by Thine Advent here,  
And drive away the shades of night, and pierce the clouds and bring us light!

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to Thee O Israel.

O come Desire of nations, bind all people in one heart and mind;  
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease, and fill the world with Heaven's peace.

Message

Holy Communion

“The Great Thanksgiving”

UMH 13-14

***The United Methodist Church practices Open Communion. All who desire to live  
in the love and peace of Jesus Christ are welcome to the bread and cup of communion.***

***At the direction of the ushers, come forward using the center aisle to stand or  
kneel at the communion rail for distribution of the elements. After consuming the elements and private prayer  
at the rail, you may return to your seat via the side aisles. Please alert the ushers to anyone wishing to be  
served while remaining seated in the sanctuary.***

***Non-alcoholic grape juice is used, and gluten-free wafers are available.***

Announcement

Heralds of Christ, who bear the King’s commands,  
immortal tidings in your mortal hands,  
pass on and carry swift the news you bring;  
make straight, make straight the highway of the King.

Through desert ways, dark fen, and deep morass,  
through jungles, sluggish seas, and mountain pass,  
build now the road, and falter not, nor stay;  
prepare across the earth the King’s highway.

Lord, give us faith and strength the road to build,  
to see the promise of the day fulfilled,  
when war shall be no more, and strife shall cease  
upon the highway of the Prince of Peace.

An Order of Farewell to Church Members

Congregational Response (*unison*)

**We feel sorrow in your leaving, yet we rejoice with you in anticipation of this new phase of your life. We will miss your love and support, yet we know you will add much to the lives of those who will be your new church family, as you have added much to our lives.**

**We will pray for you and for the whole family of God.**

\*Benediction

Contemplative Postlude

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Lewis H. Redner  
Arr. Fred Bock

## MUSIC NOTES

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) wrote this beloved Christmas hymn for the Sunday school children at his Philadelphia parish, Holy Trinity Church, following a pilgrimage to Bethlehem in 1865, according to British hymnologist J. R. Watson. The hymn was printed on an informal leaflet in December 1868 and then appeared in *The Sunday School Hymnal* in 1871.

In the United States, the hymn is generally sung to its original tune, ST. LOUIS by Louis H. Redner (1931-1908), a wealthy real estate broker who served as a church organist for his avocation. *UM Hymnal* editor Carlton Young notes that Redner “increased Sunday school attendance at Holy Trinity Episcopal, where Phillips Brooks was rector, from thirty-six to over one thousand during his nineteen years as superintendent.” According to the story, Brooks traveled on horseback between Jerusalem and Bethlehem on Christmas Eve. “Before dark we rode out of town to the field where they say the shepherds saw the star. It is a fenced piece of ground with a cave in it, in which, strangely enough, they put the shepherds... Somewhere in those fields we rode through, the shepherds must have been. As we passed, the shepherds were still ‘keeping watch over their flocks,’ or leading them home to fold.”

Dr. Watson sums it up well: “Not only does the hymn beautifully describe the little town asleep in the December night; it also gracefully modulates from a description of Christmas into an examination of the meaning of Christmas: first in its encouragement of charity and faith, and then into the coming of Christ into the human heart.”

--Dr. Hawn is professor of sacred music at Perkins School of Theology, SMU

Worship Leaders: Gifty Bentum-Asante, Rhianna Burke, Desmond Cheetham, David Dagle,  
Ronna Davis, Donna Hirtle, Chris Kerns, Byungmoo Lee, Debbie O’Driscoll, David Potts,  
Jennifer Quansah, Chancel Choir, Ghanaian Choir, Worship Tech Team

Advent Candle Lighting – *Come, Let Us Adore Him: Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy*, by Lisa Hancock,  
The United Methodist Church Discipleship Ministries

Common Prayer – *Book of Common Worship*, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, p. 174.

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