



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025

MAXWELL STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
180 E. Maxwell St. Lexington, KY
www.maxpres.org

Welcome to Maxwell Street! We hope you will consider wearing a nametag so that we might get to know one another better. They can be found in the lobbies outside the sanctuary. You can find more helpful information inside this bulletin.

GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING - O'Carra Family
Children of God, what are we waiting for?
We wait for love that casts out fear,
love that heals what hatred has torn,
love that binds neighbor to neighbor
and stranger to friend.
We wait for love embodied in Christ,
a love fierce, tender and eternal.

HYMN 82 - *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* part of vs. 1
Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.

PRELUDE - *Echo Noel*, Louis Claude D'Aquin (1694-1772)

CALL TO WORSHIP ((Based on Psalm 80))
Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!
Stir up your might, and come to save us!
Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.
How long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.
You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure.
Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.
Then we will never turn back from you; give us life, and we will call on your name.
Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

+ **HYMN 100** - *My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout*

+ **CALL TO CONFESSION**

+ **A PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God our maker, our human failings get in the way of our understanding of Your ways. Our human understanding gets in the way of Your truth. So, let your face shine on us. Let us behold the smile of Your grace. Let us feel the warmth of Your embrace, that we might know Your ways, and Your time, and Your purpose. Having turned our backs on You, we turn towards You again. Restore us, O God; let Your face shine, that we may be saved. Hear now our silent prayers of confession...

- ASSURANCE OF PARDON
- RESPONSE TO FORGIVENESS: Hymn 581, (*Gloria Patri*)

PASSING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PRAYER FOR OPENNESS

Holy God, our hope and strength, by the power of your Spirit prepare the way in our hearts for the coming of your Word, so that we may see the glorious signs of your promise fulfilled; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING - Isaiah 7:10-1

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

This is the written testimony to the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM - *Ding, Dong, Merrily on High*, arr. Charles Wood, Chancel Choir

SCRIPTURE READING - Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

SERMON - *Don't Be Afraid to Dream*, Rev. Matt Falco

STATEMENT OF FAITH - From the Confession of 1967

Out of Israel, God in due time raised up Jesus. His faith and obedience were the response of the perfect child of God. He was the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel, the beginning of the new creation, and the pioneer of the new humanity. He gave history its meaning and direction and called the church to be his servant for the reconciliation of the world.

+ **HYMN 129** - *"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERING

- INVITATION
- OFFERTORY - *But Who May Abide from Messiah*, G. F. Handel
- DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessing flow Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore; One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.**

- PRAYER OF DEDICATION

+ **HYMN 106** - *Prepare the Way, O Zion*

CHARGE & BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE - Hymn 82, *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

**1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.**

**Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.**

POSTLUDE - *How Brightly Shines the Morning Star* (advent hymn), Johann Pachelbel

WELCOME TO WORSHIP



Welcome to Maxwell Street Presbyterian Church. We're so glad you've chosen to be with us today for worship. This bulletin will be a helpful guide to our service, but here is some additional information we hope will help you feel at home.

Maxwell Street Presbyterian is a More Light Congregation. More Light Presbyterians are dedicated to allowing the full participation of LGBTQIA+ people in the life, ministry, and witness of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and in society. You are welcome here, and you are loved.

- A Maxwell Street Presbyterian Church App is available from the Apple and Google App Stores. This App will enable you to register your attendance, make an offering online, and more. You can scan the QR code to the left to access the app. You can also sign in via the app.

- You can also go to www.maxpres.org/give to support our ministry.
- Please be aware that today's service is being live-streamed and recorded. Portions of the service, including video and audio, may be shared online. By attending, you acknowledge that your image and/or voice may appear in these recordings.
- LARGE PRINT BIBLES and BULLETINS are available from the ushers.
- Hearing help is available with a personal amplification device from the ushers.
- For your convenience, an elevator is located in the Lobby off the parking lot/playground.
- WIFI - Router Name: Maxwell - ORBI38 Password: maxpres180
- Accessible restrooms are on the main level and basement level. Baby changing stations are available in the basement restrooms or nursery.

Infants & Toddlers are welcome in the Nursery following Children's Moment or anytime during the morning. Come to the Young Children's Area in the basement. Professional caregivers and church volunteers will greet you there.

Sunday School During December - Please note there will be no Sunday School through the Advent Season until January, when school begins. Children are welcome in Worship and nursery care will remain open. Children infant - age 7 will be welcome in the nursery during that time.

WAYS TO LEARN MORE

Please visit www.maxpres.org for details about our ministries for all ages and interests. We also have an active Facebook page - www.facebook.com/maxpres. If you would like to be added to our Friday email, which has information about what is going on in the church's life, you may do so at: www.maxpres.org. If you have additional questions, Matt will be happy to talk with you at your convenience; call the church office at (859) 255-1074, 9am-4:30pm Monday-Thursday.

JOYS & CONCERNS

Hugh Huffman, Dan Goulson, Greg Harper, Cindy and Allen Gayheart, Carolyn Hale, Joyce Crofts, Kenny, Elizabeth Leatherman's father; Martin Hendrix's mother

We extend our condolences to Susan Liddle and family on the death of her mother.

Punch is served in the West Parlor by Zane Kerksmar. All are invited.

The flowers are given to the glory of God by The Hart family.

PARTICIPANTS

WORSHIP LEADERS: Rev Matt Falco, Doug Kalika, Rob Wethington, Ted Gentry, Chancel Choir

USHERS: Tracy Bruno, Cynthia Bruno, Alicia Hart, and Zane Kerksmar

VIDEO AND SOUND CREW: Rich Copley, Jim Lump, Bill Smith, Jay Vessels, Jonah Falco

Revised Common Lectionary Readings for Sunday, December 21, 2025

First reading: Isaiah 7.1-10-16

Psalm: 80.1-7, 17-19

Second reading: Romans 1.1-7

Gospel: Matthew 1.18-25

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Wednesday, December 24

7:30pm - Christmas Eve Service: Lessons & Carols
11:00pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion Service

Sunday, December 28

9:30am - Adult Sunday School
9:30am - UKIRK Leadership Meeting
10:30am - Worship

Tuesday, December 30

12:30pm - Centering Prayer

Wednesday, December 31 (New Years Eve)

10:30am - Kerygma
6:30pm - Chancel Choir Rehearsal
7:00pm - UKIRK Campus Group

Friday, January 2

6:30pm - Words and Wine

Sunday, January 4

9:30am - Adult Sunday School
10:30am - Worship

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Today - December 21 at 5pm

We'll share a meal and hot cocoa, then travel in small groups to sing carols to members of our church family who are unable to worship with us. We'd love to see you there!

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Wednesday, December 24

We gather on Christmas Eve at 7:30pm and 11:00pm to celebrate the good news that "The Word became flesh and lived among us, ... full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) More than just a birthday party, we celebrate that God enters into this world to dwell with us, to seek the lost and to save the poor, the oppressed, all of us, from the powers of evil. The Christ child is born for the saving of the world. Joy to the world!

WORDS & WINE

Friday, January 2, at 6:30pm

Words & Wine Book Group will meet Friday, January 2, the book is Playground by Richard Powers. Questions, contact Lauren Falco (laurenfalco@yahoo.com).

NEW ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

Salvation Across the Ages:

Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Johnson, Gutiérrez, and YOU

Begins Jan 11, 9:30am in Library

Rev Douglas Ensminger will lead this AI aided class presenting classic perspectives on salvation from historical figures and modern theologians. It is designed to help participants reflect on their own understanding of salvation by engaging in dialogue with these voices. The conversations will culminate as each participant shares what salvation means to them personally. January 11- Paul and Augustine; 1/18- Aquinas; 1/25- Luther and Calvin; 2/1-Johnson and Guitierrez; 2/8 YOU.

YOUTH

Dec. 21 - No Youth Group - Christmas Caroling at 5pm
Dec. 28 - No Youth Group
Jan 4 - No Youth
Jan 11 - Youth Group After Service
Jan 18 - Youth Group After Service
Jan 25 - Youth Group After Service
Jan. 31 - Ski Trip

CONFIRMATION BEGINS JANUARY 18

In the PC(USA), confirmation is a time for young people to study the Christian faith and publicly affirm the vows made at their baptism. Our 8th and 9th graders will begin their Maxwell Street Confirmation Adventure on January 18 at 9:30 in the Johnston Parlor. Please let Matt know if you plan to participate by December 23 (matt@maxpres.org).

YOUTH SKI TRIP

Saturday, January 31 | 8:30am



The youth group hits the slopes at Perfect North on Saturday, January 31st. We will leave the church around 8:30AM and leave Perfect North to return home at 7:30PM. The cost per skier is \$40 plus about \$15-20 for lunch, but scholarships are available. Don't let cost prevent you from joining us! Sign up with the QR Code.

THAT'S AMORE!

YOUTH SPAGHETTI DINNER FUNDRAISER

Save the Date: Sunday, February 22

YOUTH MISSION TRIP 2026

APPALACHIAN SERVICE PROJECT

Sunday July 19, 2026 - Saturday, July 25, 2026

Cost: \$350 (Scholarships Available)



Each summer, ASP serves 20-30 communities across Central Appalachia. This year we'll be in eastern Kentucky, providing home repairs while offering our youth a meaningful cultural and transformational experience. There's no deposit due today, but please register

ASAP so we can plan. A \$100 deposit is due February 1, with the remaining balance due June 1. Scholarships are available—contact Rob for details.

MISSION

KROGER REWARDS HELP FEED OUR COMMUNITY!

When you shop at Kroger, a portion of your purchase can support MSPC's hunger ministries at no extra cost. Sign in to your Kroger account, select Community Rewards and choose Maxwell Street (VK950)

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Learn more about this offering with the qr code.

100 My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

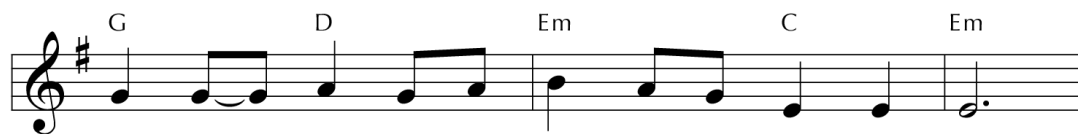
Canticle of the Turning



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2 Though I am small, my God, my all, you
 3 From the halls of power to the for - tress tower, not a
 4 Though the na - tions rage from age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
 work great things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
 jus - tice tears ev - ery ty - rant from his throne.
 liv - er us from the con - quer-or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 The hun - gry poor shall weep no more, for the
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the

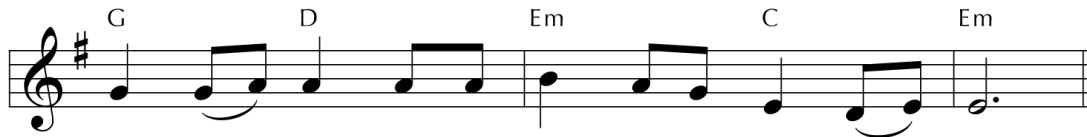


weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread; ev - ery
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be

By employing an energetic Irish folk song for its melody, this ballad-like paraphrase of the *Magnificat*, Mary's song at her meeting with her relative Elizabeth (Luke 1:46-55), recaptures both the wonder and the faith of the young woman who first recognized what God was doing.


JESUS CHRIST: ADVENT

G D Em C Em



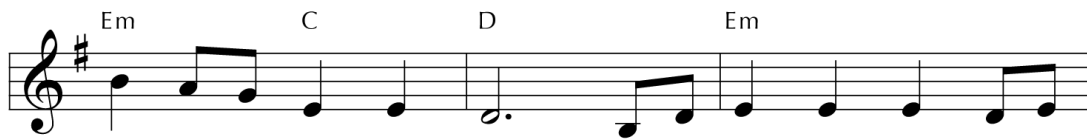
name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.

Refrain G D




My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the

Em C D Em



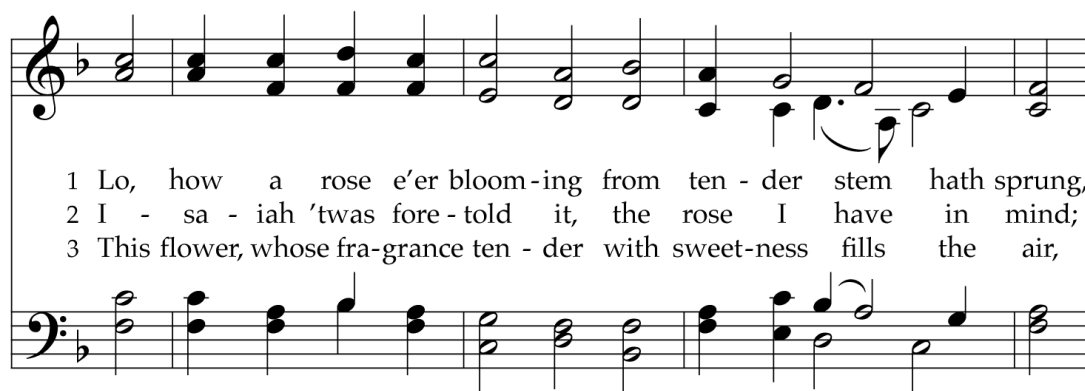
fires of your jus - tice burn. Wipe a - way all tears, for the

C D Em C Em

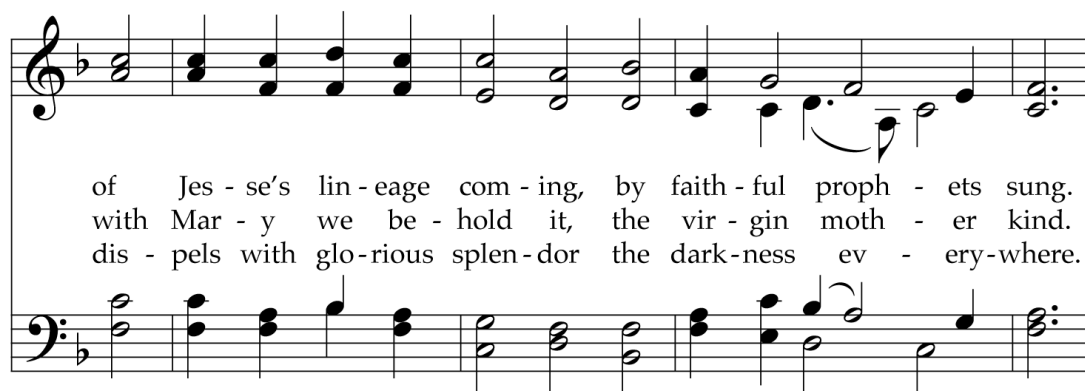


dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

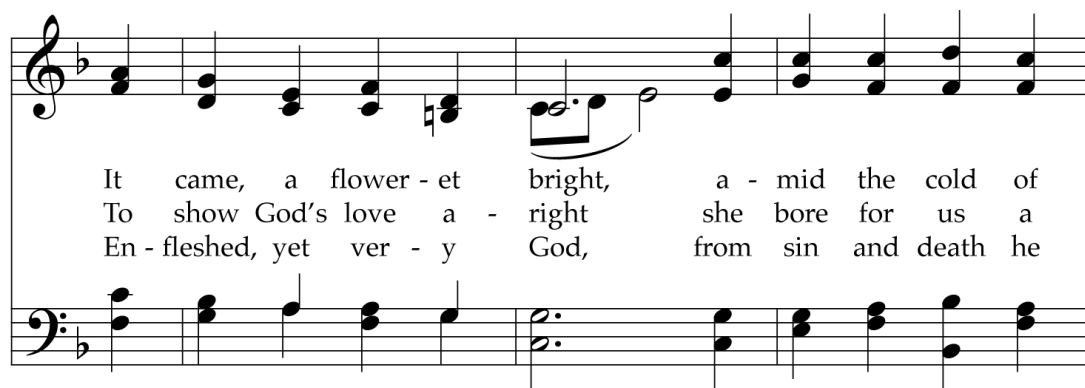
Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming 129



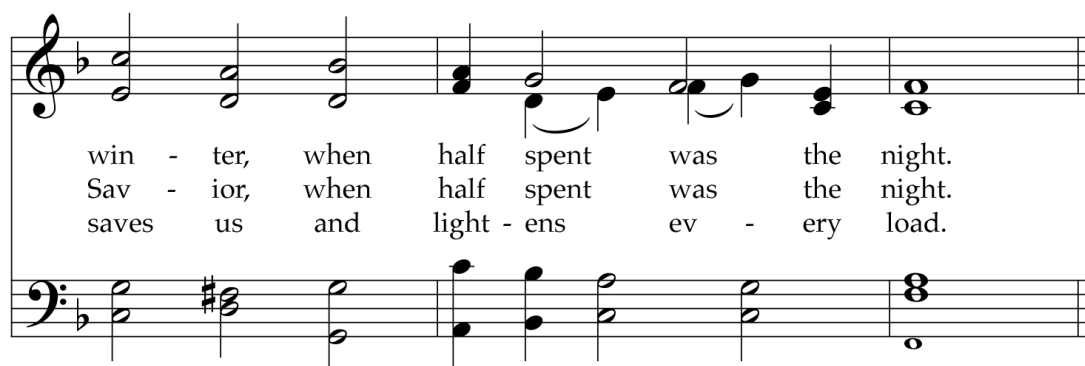
1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom-ing from ten - der stem hath sprung,
 2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the rose I have in mind;
 3 This flower, whose fra-grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the air,



of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing, by faith - ful proph - ets sung.
 with Mar - y we be - hold it, the vir - gin moth - er kind.
 dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the dark-ness ev - ery-where.



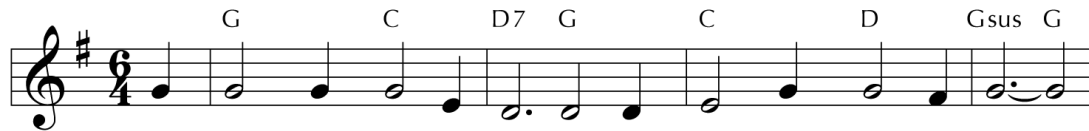
It came, a flower - et bright, a - mid the cold of
 To show God's love a - right she bore for us a
 En - fleshed, yet ver - y God, from sin and death he



win - ter, when half spent was the night.
 Sav - ior, when half spent was the night.
 saves us and light - ens ev - ery load.

Although the early copies of this 15th-century German text include many more stanzas than are printed here, this simpler, shorter form has much to commend it. This early 17th-century harmonization of the traditional chorale melody invites and rewards singing in parts.

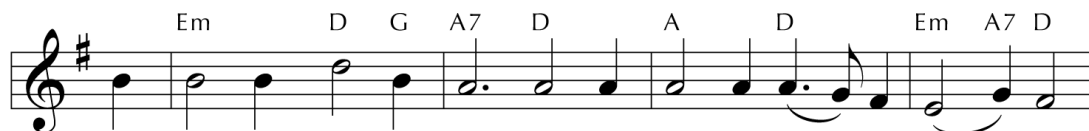
Prepare the Way, O Zion 106



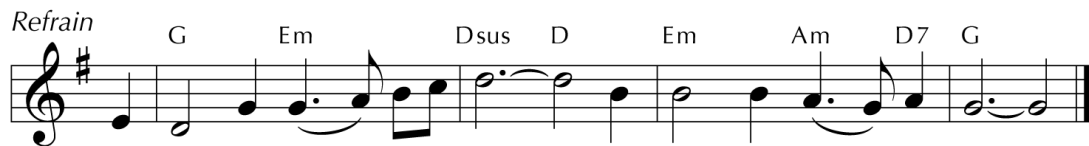
1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw-ing near!
 2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.
 3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sav - ior's rule em - brace,



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.
 His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.
 and ti - dings of sal - va - tion pro-claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore-told in sa - cred sto - ry.
 Lift high your praise re-sound-ing, for grace and joy a - bound-ing.
 All lands will bow re - joic - ing, their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.



O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

This engaging Advent text based on Isaiah 40:3–5 and Psalm 24:7–10 has been in use in the Church of Sweden for almost two hundred years. It is set to a version of an even older Swedish tune, which in turn seems to be derived from a German folktune that spread to Scandinavia.

TEXT: Frans Mikael Franzen, 1812, rev. 1819; trans. Augustus Nelson, 1958;
 adapt. Charles P. Price, 1980, alt.

MUSIC: *Then Svenska Psalmboken*, 1697; arr. *American Lutheran Hymnal*, 1930
 Text © 1982 Hope Publishing Company

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN
 7.6.7.6.7.7 with refrain