

Osler Mennonite Church
Sunday Worship Service
August 23, 2020

*I would love to live like a river flows,
carried by the surprise of it's own unfolding. –John O'Donohue*

Worship leader: Julie Bergen **Song leaders:** Ben Buhler and Dayna Stefaniuk
Pianist and Children's Time: Lynette Janzen
Sermon: Nora Pederberg **Sound:** Matthew Stefaniuk
Ushers: Lloyd Sawatzky, Anna Peters

Prelude

Welcome/Announcements

Call to Worship: Psalm 138 (Inclusive Bible Translation)

Leader: I thank you with all my heart; I sing your praise before the gods.

People: I bow down in front of your holy temple and praise your name because of your love and faithfulness, for you have put above everything else your name and your word.

Leader: When I called, you answered me – you made me bold and strong of heart.

People: All the rulers of the earth will praise you, Yhwh, when they hear the words of your mouth.

Leader: They will sing about what you have done, Yhwh, and about your great glory.

People: Even though you are so high above, you care for the lowly and see arrogant people from far away. Leader: Even when I am surrounded by troubles, you keep me safe; you oppose the anger of my enemies;

People: and save me with your right hand.

Leader: You will do everything you have promised me. Yhwh, your love is eternal; don't abandon the work of your hands.

Invocation: We give thanks, God, for the opportunity to gather as community Both here in this space and virtually from home. It is good to be together, united by your Spirit.

Gathered as one, united by your Love. Amen

Hymn: Blue/HWB #107 Blessed Savior we adore thee

Scripture Reading – Isaiah 51:1-6 (Inclusive Bible Translation)

Listen closely to what I say, you who pursue justice, you who seek Yhwh, consider the rock from which you were hewn, the quarry from which you were cut: Look to Abraham, your father, and Sarah, your mother who bore you. They were but one couple when I called them, but I

blessed them and made them many. Indeed, Yhwh will comfort Zion, will give comfort to all its ruins— will turn its desert into an Eden; its desert will be like the garden of Yhwh. Joy and happiness will be found there, thanksgiving and the sound of music. “ Hear me, my people! Listen to me, my nation! For Instruction comes from me, and my justice will be a beacon to the peoples. My vindication draws near, my deliverance approaches; my arm will bring justice to the people and the islands will put their hope in me. They will put their future in my hands. Lift your eyes and look up to the heavens, then look to the earth below: for the heavens will vanish like smoke; the earth will wear out like a coat, and those who live on it will die like flies. But my liberation will last forever, my vindication will never fail.”

Hymn: Blue/HWB #174 Blessed be the God of Israel

Children’s Time: Lynette Janzen

Hymn: Blue/HWB #229 Lord you have come to the lakeshore

Offering Prayer/Offertory:

Our thanks to those who continue to donate to the work of the church through e-transfers and automatic deposits. There is a basket in the sanctuary for those who would like to make a deposit in person.

As we take time this morning to reflect on what we give of ourselves for the work of God’s creation, I am reflecting on all that was given by the women in the story from Exodus that we will read. Moses’s mother, sister Miriam, the midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, and Pharaoh’s daughter gave so much for those they loved and for their community. I share this poem, by Carol Penner, in their memory.

“Gentler Waters” by Carol Penner

It doesn’t always go as planned. Bowled over with newborn love, the way ahead seems clear and untroubled, devotion deep and wide enough to weather any storm.

So we say a prayer, Darling Mother, for when the crying baby will not be comforted, and the night knows what we want to do. We say a prayer for when we reach for the tantruming toddler, knowing we barely control ourselves.

Prayers for the endless endless housework, prayers for best things broken, and for the children fighting, prayers for facing down our own anger, bitterness, fears, self-will. Prayers for years of power struggles and learning to let go. And when they walk out the door, and our great love surfaces like a whale coming up for air, be with us as we come to terms with the mothering we’ve done, and the mothering left undone.

Give us grace to apologize, to forgive, even ourselves, as we move into gentler waters of parenting adults no longer children.

Hymn: Green/STJ #49 Rain down

Sharing Joys and Concerns/Prayer of the People:

God of still waters and of rushing streams,
You witness the growth of the gardens and of the children,
the many blessings of our lives.
As a gentle drizzle reminds us of how the earth cares for us,
Remind us to be thankful, to hold up hands to catch the rain.

As a river that winds across the land,
At times over-full and roaring with energy,
At times lazily bending back upon itself,
Journey with us in life's rapids and in the doldrums.
Sustain the life along the edges,
The richness of growth watered along the way.

When thunderstorms roll over the prairie,
We witness the awesome beauty of billowing clouds and lightening strikes,
Alongside the fear of hail and heavy winds.
Bring us comfort in our fear,
In the moments when our lives feel unleashed and at risk.
Help us to weather the storms together.
We pray especially for:

As we contemplate the puddles left by the storm,
And feel the summer heat as it dries the wet patches,
May our souls soak up the moisture
Through roots firmly planted in this ground.
Sustained and nourished to weather the drought and the storm.
Amen.

Scripture Reading – Exodus 1:8-2:10 (Inclusive Bible Version)

8 A new Pharaoh—one who did not know Joseph—came to power in Egypt. 9 Pharaoh said to the Egyptians, “Look at how powerful the Israelites have become, and how they outnumber us! 10 We need to deal shrewdly with their increase, against a time of war when they might turn against us and join our enemy, and so escape out of the country.” 11 So they oppressed the Israelites with overseers who put them to forced labor; and with them they built the storage cities of Pitom and Ra’amses. 12 Yet the more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they multiplied and burst forth, until the Egyptians dreaded the Israelites. 13 So they made the Israelites utterly subservient with hard labor, brick-and-mortar work, and every kind of field work. 14 The Egyptians were merciless in subjugating them with crushing labor.

15 Pharaoh spoke to the midwives of the Hebrews—one was Shiprah, and the other Puah- 16 and said, “When you assist the Hebrew women in childbirth, examine them on the birthing-

stool. If the baby is a boy, kill it. If it is a girl, let it live.” 17 But the midwives were God-fearing women, and they ignored the Pharaoh’s instructions, and let the male babies live. 18 So Pharaoh summoned the midwives and asked why they let the male babies live. 19 The midwives responded, “ These Hebrew women are different from Egyptian women; they are more robust, and deliver even before the midwife arrives.” 20 God rewarded the midwives, and the people increased in numbers and in power. 21 And since the midwives were Godfearing, God gave them families of their own. 22 The Pharaoh then commanded all those in Egypt, “Let every boy that is born to the Hebrews be thrown into the Nile, but let every girl live.” 2 :1 There was a man from the house of Levi who had married a Levite woman, 2 and she conceived and gave birth to a boy. And she saw that the baby was good, so she hid it for three months. 3 When she could hide the baby no longer she took a papyrus basket, daubed it with bitumen and pitch, and put the child in it, and placed the basket among the reeds by the banks of the Nile. 4 The baby’s sister watched from a distance to learn what would happen. 5 Pharaoh’s daughter came down to the Nile to bathe, while her attendants walked along the river bank. She noticed the basket among the reeds, and sent her attendant to fetch it. 6 Opening it, she saw the baby—and how it wept! She was moved to pity and said, “ This must be one of the Hebrews’ children!” 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Do you want me to go and find a nurse for you among the Hebrews to suckle the child for you?” 8 “Yes, go,” she answered. So the sister went off and brought the baby’s own mother. 9 Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child with you and suckle it for me and I myself will pay you.” The woman took the child and nursed it. 10 After the child was weaned, she brought it to Pharaoh’s daughter, who adopted it as her own. She called him Moses – “He Who Pulls Out” – for she said, “I pulled him out of the water.”

Scripture Response:

For the Word of God in scripture, For the Word of God among us,
For the Word of God within us

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon: Nora Pederberg

Resistance in the Blind Spots:

Exodus 1:8-2:10, Isaiah 5:1-6, Psalm 138

Hello Everybody,

Today’s scripture texts are full of hope, encouragement, and showcase the power of those who are oppressed. Our call to worship came from Psalm 138, and in this text, we declare that God has “**made me bold and strong of heart.**” The people of Isaiah have witnessed calamity of almost incomprehensible proportion and yet, the text assures them that “**Joy and happiness will be found there, thanksgiving and the sound of music.**” This is a promise of restoration. The highway through the wilderness is a miraculous journey, on which the people of Israel will be

delivered by God's justice. This recalls the story of the exodus journey, which is where we will focus our attention today.

Here we meet bold and strong women of faith, whose subversive resistance speaks to us today, particularly in the actions of Shiphrah and Pua. A new Pharaoh feels threatened by the presence of a people who do not share in his customs and ways, so he puts policies in place to strip them of their humanity. First, through the cruelty of slavery. Our text says that the goal is to make the Israelites "**utterly subservient.**" And when this fails to quell Pharaoh's fear of the 'other,' he puts in place a genocide policy, ordering the murder of male babies. Here is where we meet Shiphrah and Pua; Midwives who had dedicated their lives to assisting in birth, and who Pharaoh has now asked to become hired killers.

What these women do is not only courageous, but both brilliant, and a bit sassy. Shiphrah and Pua ignore Pharaoh's instructions outright, and when they are asked about it, their response to Pharaoh is that "these Hebrew women aren't like the dainty women we know, they just whip out these babies and keep on going before anybody can get there." Now remember, Pharaoh has based his slave powered empire on the argument that these Israelites are no better than animals, deserving no mercy or understanding. He is also so entrenched in the patriarchy that he has decided the best way to eliminate the power of the Israelites is to kill all the boys. He clearly knows nothing about the ways of women.

Here Shiphrah and Pua corner Pharaoh with his own prejudice: either he acknowledges that these women have agency and power to disobey, or he has to take these midwives at their word, to preserve his narrative. If Pharaoh had treated Israelites little better than cattle, how can he argue that their birthing patterns might resemble those of Egyptian women? The ideology that Pharaoh has set up is giving him a blind spot, and it is this space that the women in this story use to protect their children and do what is just, what is good. This subversive action on the part of the oppressed has been a social justice strategy used throughout history. The following story illustrates another act of emboldened hearts in the face of genocide:

"Berlin, 1943: Let Our Husbands Go!" by Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall

On February 27, 1943, SS soldiers and Gestapo agents began seizing the remaining Jews of Berlin. They loaded them onto trucks and took them to an administration building in the heart of the city. These Jews had previously escaped the Holocaust because they or their spouses were

essential for the war effort. But now Hitler called for “Total War” against all Jews as well as Allied armies.

Before long a group of non-Jewish wives gathered on the administration building with food and other items for their Jewish husbands who were inside. Soon they began demanding their spouses’ release. The crowds grew, with women waiting outside day and night, holding hands and chanting “Let our husbands go!” By the second day over six hundred women were keeping a vigil.

Now, this put the authorities in a similar position to the one Pharaoh had been placed in. Jailing the women would have been the rankest hypocrisy: According to Nazi theories, women were intellectually incapable of political action. So, women dissenters were the last thing the Nazis wanted Germans to hear about. Hitler had always sidestepped domestic opposition, and until this point the regime had largely managed to keep genocide against the Jews a secret. But now that secrecy was jeopardized. Berlin was the German base for foreign news. If they were to get wind of the protest, the myth of omnipotent Nazi control could be fractured.

By the third day SS troops fired warning shots into the crowd. That scattered the women to nearby alleyways, but they returned. The crowd soon expanded to include people not in mixed marriages, bulging to a thousand. To stop more from arriving, they closed down the nearest streetcar station, but women walked a mile from another station. By the end of the week they saw no alternative but to let the prisoners go. Some thirty-five Jewish men, already sent to Auschwitz, were ordered to board a passenger train back to Berlin. These women had forced the Nazis to make a choice: They could pay the finite cost 17,000 prisoners set free, if all the intermarried Jews. On May 21 they were all released, everywhere in Europe, from the camps.

Walking with Our Angels

This boldness stands firm against the brutal public policy in place and challenges those in power, speaking for and from the powerless. Absorbing the lessons in our scripture text this week I have been thinking about the children in our world, what it means to stand with Shiphrah and Pua to protect the vulnerable who are not being supported in my communities. It is easier to look back at injustices of the past rather than face where scripture is lived out in the present: the children and youth that are not protected here and now. In addressing my own context, I want to name a trigger warning for anyone listening, please feel free to hit mute or do whatever is needed to take care of your mental health, and join in the service again at our next song.

When I take the exodus story, looking at these policies that are blind to the value the lives of these children, I think of the blind spots here in Saskatchewan. Specifically, my heart is dwelling on the suicide epidemic among Indigenous youth in this province and across the nation. For those of you that do not know, my spouse Matt works primarily with Indigenous youth who are considered ‘at risk.’ This meant that when he asked about dress code for his work apparel, he was told to wear running shoes. Not because they play lots of games, but because when a youth runs from school, Matt needs to be able to race to the nearest risk spots in order to prevent one of his kids from joining the numbers in the suicide epidemic. Unfortunately, this precaution has not been a theoretical part of his work. These are the children that I think of when I listen to today’s scripture and wonder what contemporary policies crush the innocent in my community.

Tristen Durocher, a northern Saskatchewan Metis, walked over 600km for La Ronge to Regina. He is now taking part in a ceremonial fast on the lawn of the Legislative Assembly to raise suicide awareness, to create space for grieving within his community, and to advocate for change in policies that fail to proactively address this crises. I have been following his journey online. A recent post highlighted Tristen’s similarity to the midwives and the German women. He, too, is taking a bold stance of resistance in the blind spots of those in power. Presently he has been issued a notice for his removal. This is done on the grounds that the tipi he set up is a ‘permanent structure,’ which is unauthorized on government grounds.

Now, the first point of blindness is the misunderstanding of what a tipi is. Tristen points out that by their very nature tipi’s are “mobile structures that can in fact be taken down in 10-minutes and ... can easily walk to the left or to the right ... portable and temporary.” The tipi is not an act of displacement or invasion that a permanent structure would imply. But the bigger marker of this blindness is that behind this tipi lies the parliament building, “a permanent structure built on the traditional lands of Treaty 4 territory, the original lands of the Cree, Ojibwe, Saulteaux, Dakota, Nakota, Lakota, and on the traditional homelands of the Métis.” It is a stark reminder of the history of these nations and the agreements that reconciliation binds them to. An ironic statement about which structure is invasive on the land.

The commentators on today’s scripture names how a new Pharaoh seems to be rushing forward with no memory of the commitment to the past, or the promises of friendship and good will between the nations. It is out of fear that he rejects the blessing of a shared society and begins enforcing policy that is clearly self-defeating, and results in the death of children. Across

the timelines of these stories, we see again how those in power were unable to control those who are determined to work for life. Even in the most catastrophic events of our history, the resistance continues. God's mothering to the vulnerable, to the persecuted, remains with a force that refuses to halt. Our God is one who declares that one little Israelite baby boy is worth saving, worth defying direct orders for. Because that child *is* loved, and valued. It is this same God that declares all our children are worth fighting for, and this God that our Psalmist proclaims makes us **“bold and strong of heart... even when I'm surrounded by troubles you keep me safe ... YHWH, your love is eternal.”** (*Psalm 138*) You do not abandon your little ones, so your people will not abandon your little ones. Amen.

Resources: New Interpreters Bible Commentary; The Impossible Will Take a Little While, Ed. Paul Rogat Loeb; Walking with Our Angels Platform;

Sung Benediction – Blue/HWB #118 Praise God from whom all blessings flow

**For those people worshipping with us here at church, please remain in your seats until the ushers indicate that it is your turn to exit. We ask that you move directly to the parking lot to ensure physical distancing. Thanks for your help in keeping us all safe.

Spoken Benediction [adapted from Joanne Harader]

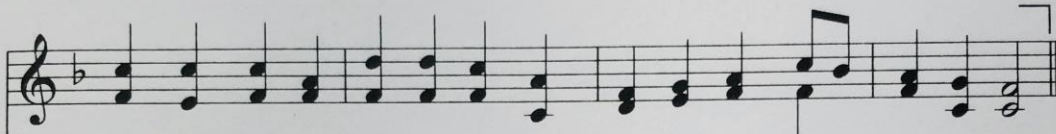
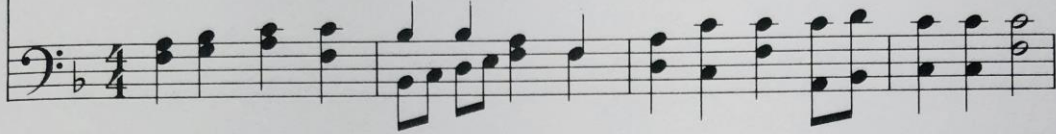
Whatever wilderness you find yourself in:
journey in boldness, as a beloved child of God
journey in peace, under the shelter of the Most High
rest in faith, knowing the God of the Israelite women accompanies you.
Amen

Blessed Savior, we adore thee 107

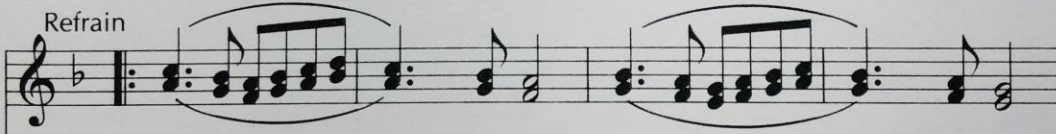
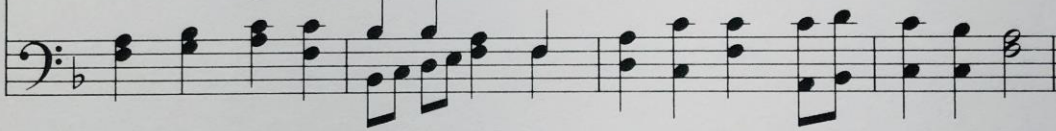
GLORIOUS NAME 87. 87 with refrain



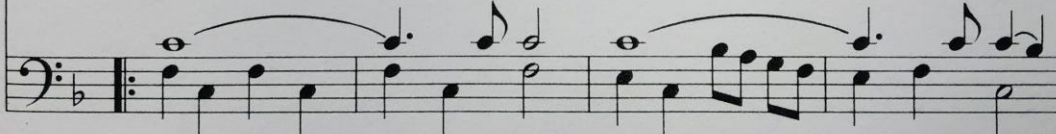
- 1 Bless-ed Sav-ior, we a-dore thee, we thy love and grace pro-claim.
- 2 Great Re-deem-er, Lord and Mas-ter, Light of all e-ter-nal days,
- 3 From the throne of heav-en's glo-ry to the cross of sin and shame,
- 4 Come, O come, im-mor-tal Sav-ior, come and take thy roy-al throne.



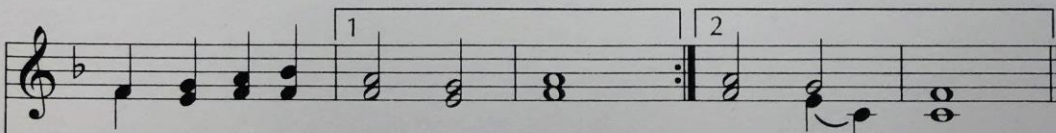
Thou art might-y, thou art ho-ly, glo-rious is thy match-less name!
 let the saints of ev-'ry na-tion sing thy just and end-less praise!
 thou didst come to die a ran-som, guilt-y sin-ners to re-claim!
 Come, and reign, and reign for-ev-er, be the king-dom all thine own!



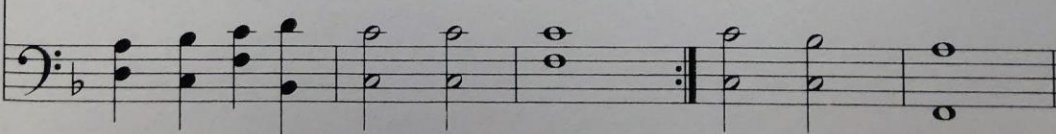
Glo-ri-ous, glo-ri-ous,



Glo-rious is thy name, O Lord! Glo-rious is thy name, O Lord!



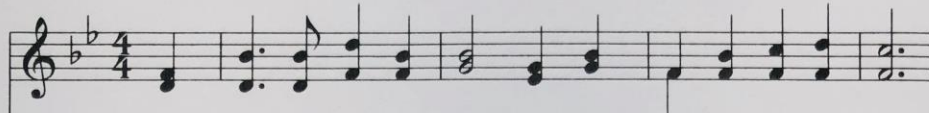
glo-rious is thy name, O Lord! name, O Lord!



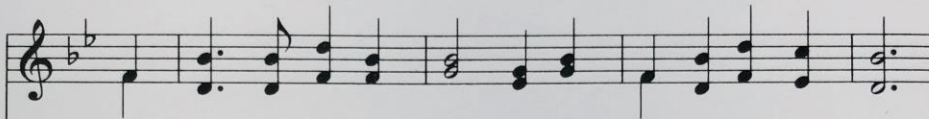
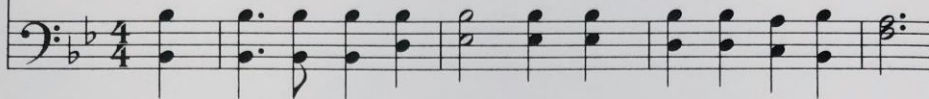
PROCLAIMING: Jesus' Advent

174 Bless'd be the God of Israel

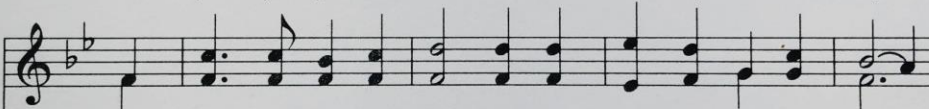
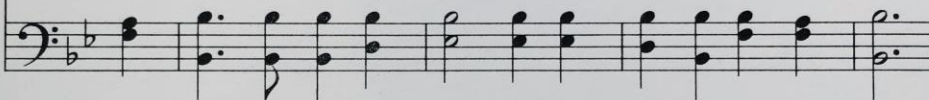
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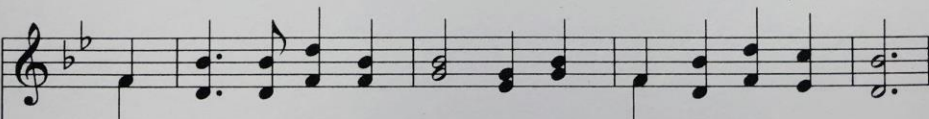
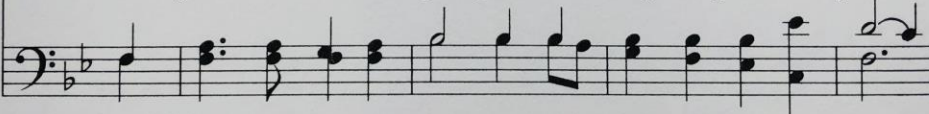
1 Bless'd be the God of Is - rael, who comes to set us free,
2 Now from the house of Da - vid a child of grace is giv'n,
3 On pris - on - ers of dark - ness the sun be-gins to rise,



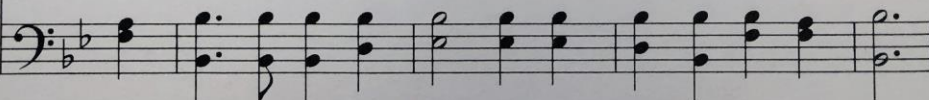
who vis - its and re - deems us, and grants us lib - er - ty!
a Sav - ior comes a - mong us to raise us up to heav'n.
the dawn-ing of for - give - ness up - on the sin - ner's eyes,



The proph - ets spoke of mer - cy, of free - dom and re - lease;
Be - fore him goes the her - ald, fore - run - ner in the way,
to guide the feet of pil - grims a - long the paths of peace.



God shall ful-fill the prom - ise to bring our peo-ple peace.
the proph - et of sal - va - tion, the har - bin - ger of day.
O bless our God and Sav - ior with songs that nev - er cease!



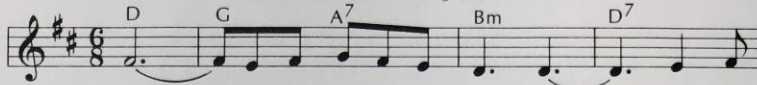
Text: based on Luke 1:68-79, Michael Perry, *Psalm Praise*, 1973

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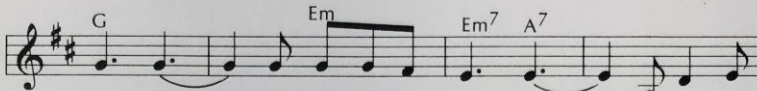
Music: George J. Webb, 1830, *The Odeon*, 1837

229 Tú has venido a la orilla (Lord, you have come to the lakeshore)

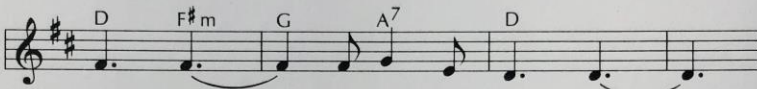
PESCADOR DE HOMBRES* Irregular with refrain



1 Tú has ve - ni - do a la o - ri - lla, no has bus -
 2 Tú sa - bes bien lo que ten - go; en mi
 1 Lord, you have come to the lake - shore look - ing
 2 You know so well my pos - ses - sions; my boat

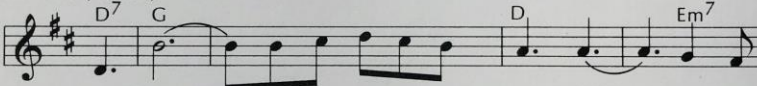


ca - do ni - a sa - bios ni - a ri - cos, tan só - lo
 bar - ca no hay o - ro ni es - pa - das, tan só - lo
 nei - ther for wealth - y nor wise ones. You on - ly
 car - ries no gold and no weap - ons; but nets and

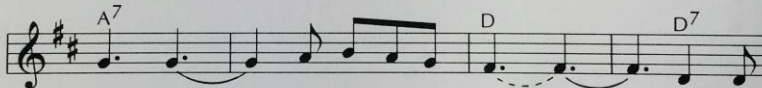


que - res que yo te si - ga.
 re - des y mi tra - ba - jo.
 asked me to fol - low hum - bly.
 fish - es - my dai - ly la - bor.

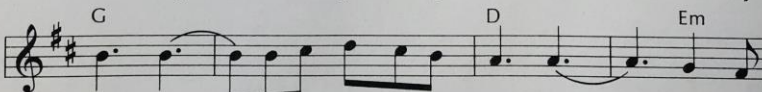
Estribillo (Refrain)



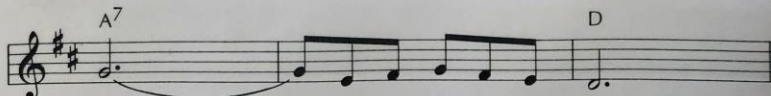
Se - ñor, me has mi - ra - do a los o - jos y son -
 O Lord, with your eyes you have searched me, kind - ly



rien - do has di - cho mi nom - bre. En la a -
 smil - ing, have spo - ken my name. Now my



re - na he de - ja - do mi bar - ca; jun - to a
 boat's left on the shore - line be - hind me; by your



ti bus - ca - ré o - tro mar.
 side I will seek o - ther seas.

3 Tú necesitas mis manos,
 mi cansancio que a otros descanse,
 amor que quiera seguir amando.

Estribillo

4 Tú, pescador de otros mares,
 ansia eterna de almas que esperan,
 amigo bueno, que así me llamas.

Estribillo

3 You need my hands, full of caring,
 through my labors to give others rest,
 and constant love that keeps on loving.

Refrain

4 You, who have fished other oceans
 ever longed-for by souls who are waiting,
 my loving friend, as thus you call me.

Refrain

PRAYING

49

Rain down

Refrain *f* F A7/E Dm Irregular F7/C Bb

Rain down, rain down, rain down your

F/A G9 C C7 F A7/E Dm

love on your peo - ple. Rain down, rain

F7/C Bb C C7 Bb/F F Fine

down, rain down your love, God of life.

mf F A7/E Dm F7/C

1 Faith - ful and true is the word of our God.
 2 We who re - vere and find hope in our God
 3 God of cre - a - tion, we long for your truth;

mp

1-3 Ooh,

PRAYING

B \flat F/A G9 C C7

All of God's works are so wor - thy of trust.
live in the kind - ness and joy of God's wing.
you are the wa - ter of life that we thirst.

ooh,

F A7/E Dm F7/C

God's mer - cy falls on the just and the right;
God will pro - tect us from dark - ness and death;
Grant that your love and your peace touch our hearts,

ah,

B \flat C7 F C7 D.C.

full of God's love is the earth.
God will not leave us to starve.
all of our hope lies in you.

mf D.C.

1 Full of God's love is the earth.
2 God will not leave us to starve.
3 All of our hope lies in you.

mf

118 Praise God from whom

DEDICATION ANTHEM (606)

*Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow,
 *Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow,
 *Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow,

praise him all crea - tures here be - low, praise him all
 praise him all crea - tures here be - low, praise him all
 praise him all crea - tures here be - low, praise him all

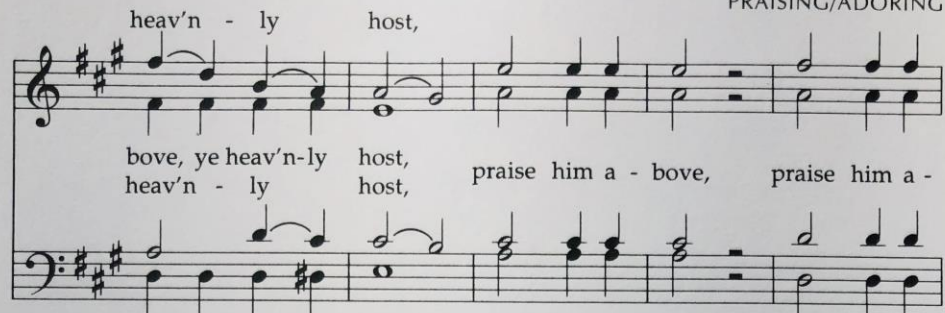
praise him all crea - tures here be - low, praise him all
 crea - tures here be - low, praise him a - bove,
 crea - tures here be - low, praise him a -
 crea - tures here be - low, praise him a - bove,

crea - tures here be - low, praise him a -
 praise him a - bove, praise him a - bove, ye
 bove, praise him a - bove, praise him a -
 praise him a - bove, praise him a - bove, ye
 bove, praise him a - bove, praise him a -

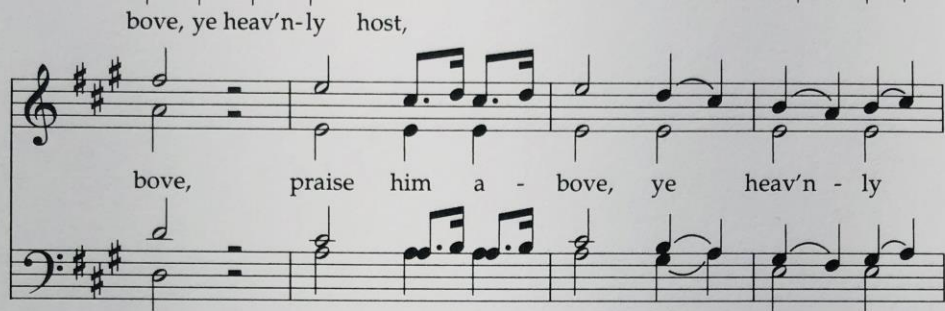
*Alternate phrases: Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise God all creatures here below, praise God above, ye heav'nly host

PRAISING/ADORING

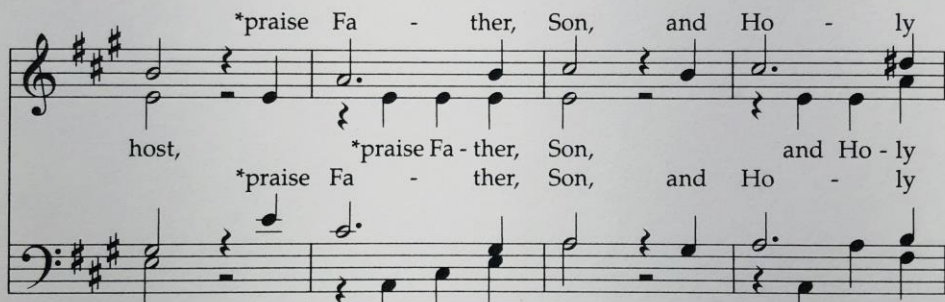
heav'n - ly host,
bove, ye heav'n-ly host, praise him a - bove, praise him a -
heav'n - ly host, host,



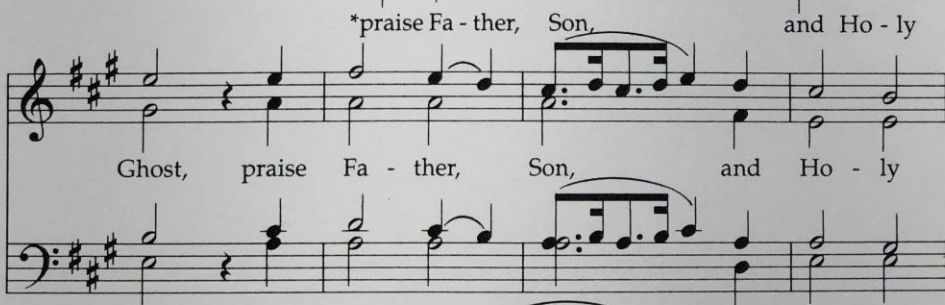
bove, ye heav'n-ly host,
bove, praise him a - bove, ye heav'n - ly



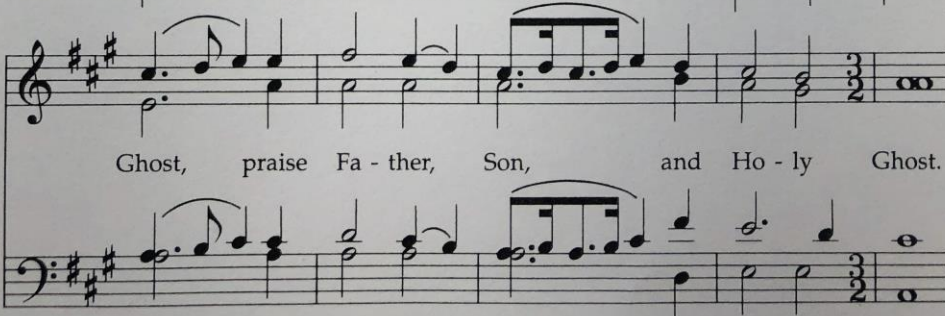
*praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly
host, *praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly
*praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly



*praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly
Ghost, praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly



Ghost, praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.



*Alternate phrase: O praise our God, bless'd Three-in-One

Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, a -

men, a - men, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah,

lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah,

lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, a - men, a -

men, hal - le - lu - jah, a - men, hal - le - lu - jah, a - men.