

Living into the Promise

There was a woman in my rural congregation who every year would win a handful of blue ribbons for the flower arrangements entered at the county fair. I was told that every flower used came from her garden, which everyone described as “magical.” I had to see this for myself.

One day I stopped by and there she was watering lush pink peonies. I was in awe by the beauty all around and admitted to her that nothing ever grew for me. I even confessed my lack of faith, doubting that a seed would grow each time I covered it with dirt.

She looked at me with shocked eyes, scolding me that my lack of faith was the very thing preventing me from a beautiful garden.

“Remember, pastor, faith is in things hoped for and in things unseen,” she said, citing scripture from Hebrews.

As she filled her rusty watering can from the just as rusty hand pump, she shared with me her secret to gardening.

“I put every seed, sapling and bulb into the ground, trusting that the beauty I cannot see will burst forth,” she said.

Could it be that faith was all I needed to turn my pitiful flowerbeds into a scene worthy of Monet to paint.

When this master gardener quoted Hebrews to me, I was reminded of all God’s children who “by faith” stepped forward to do things that seemed impossible. By faith, Noah built an ark. By faith, Abraham left his home for a new one. By faith, Sarah, his wife, bore a son even though her childbearing days were far behind her. By faith is how they lived, trusting God with a beautiful future even when that future could not be seen.

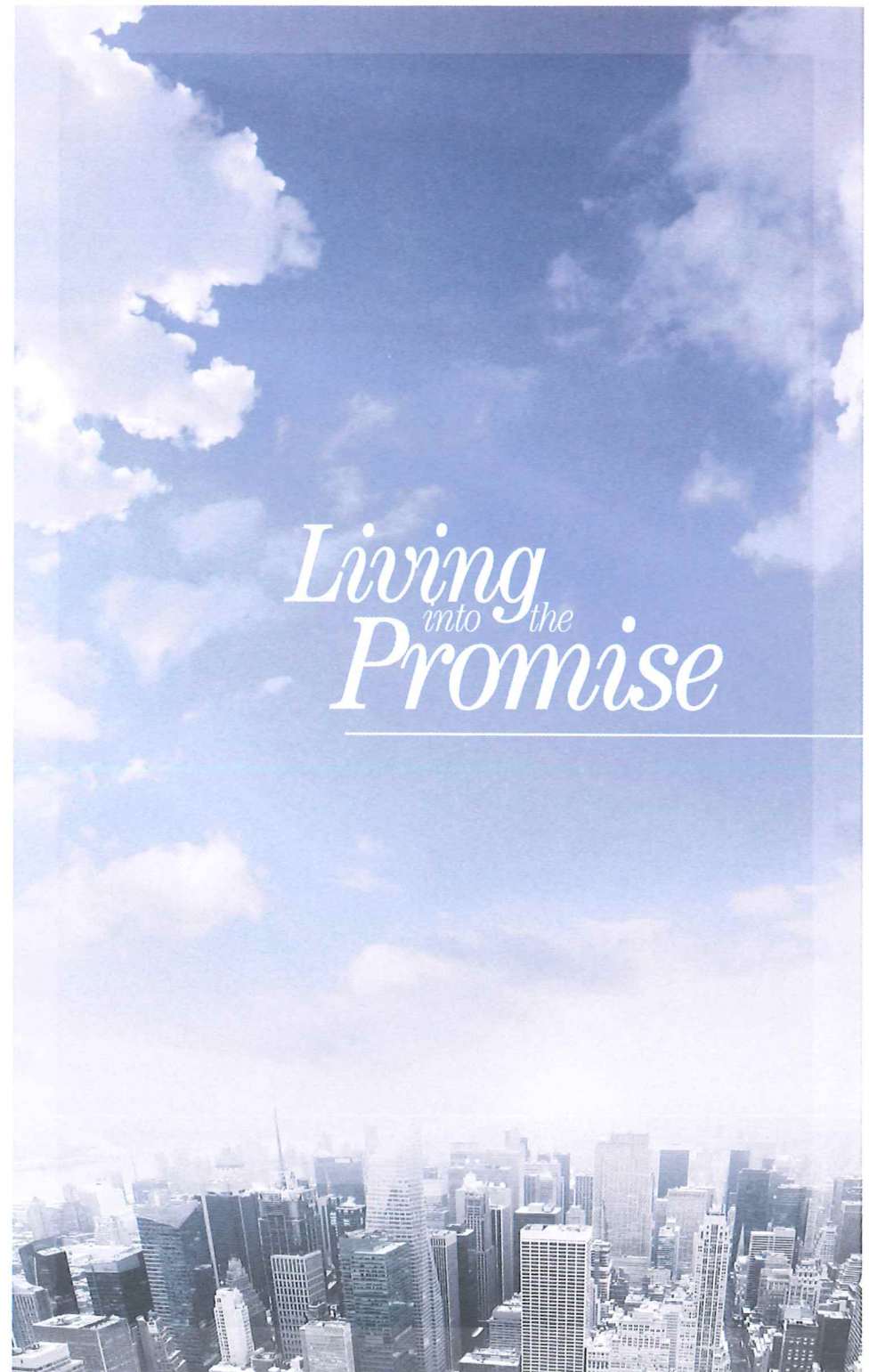
Today, that magical garden is gone, as are all the artistic flower arrangements that came from it. The hands of the one who planted each seed “by faith” is now tending to heavenly gardens. As for me, I am trying my best to have faith in the seeds I now plant.

For without faith, where would all the great gardens be? Without faith, where would all the great testimonies of ordinary people doing extraordinary things be?

And who knows? Maybe someday the roll call of faith will read, “By faith, a pastor finally grew a beautiful flower.”

God of beauty and grace, help us live more “by faith” this day, holding on always to hope and trusting in all things unseen. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today’s Sunday Bulletin.)



Bismarck-Mandan Area
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



1200 E Highland Acres Rd, Bismarck, ND 58501

701-223-2915 www.uccbismarck.org

August 10, 2025 at 10 AM Worship

Pastor: Rev. Gretchen Deeg | Liturgist: Kirby Kruger

Music: Jeanne Kolberg | Video: Jordan VanBerkum

*Rise in body or in spirit.

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

*NO MATTER

Sing! 35

No matter who, no matter what
No matter where you are on the journey of life;
You're welcome, welcome in this place.
Accepted and welcomed by God's grace.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

All: We are ready!

*OPENING PRAYER¹

*HYMN Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise NCH 1

SCRIPTURE Psalm 33:12-22

TIME WITH CHILDREN

OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, our heavenly host;
Creator, Savior, Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION²

Nurturing Mother, you have given us a world of beauty, and we take it for granted. A world to feed us, and so many go hungry. A world of riches, and we consolidate wealth. A world to care for, and we fall into selfishness. Forgive us, Gracious One, and enable us to see this world as a gift from you to be shared with our neighbors of all races, skin tones, and heritages. Forgive us, Great Creator, and enable us to live among all the creatures and plants of this world as co-created beings, beloved by you. We ask this that your name, may be glorified through the shared beauty of this world and the service of our lives. Amen.

*GLORIA

Glory be to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen

SCRIPTURE Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

CHOIR How Can I Keep from Singing NCH 476

SCRIPTURE Luke 12:32-40

SERMON

HYMN Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning NCH 369

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

HYMN God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending NCH 565

*CARRY GOD'S LOVE

Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from *ONE LICENSE*, License #732302-A.

¹ Adapted. Thom Shuman. *Lectionary Liturgies*. 2019. ² Adapted. John Birch. "Faith and Worship."



Thank You for Worshiping with Us!

Your offerings are essential for the ongoing ministry of this congregation. Donations can be made using this QR code, online at www.uccbismarck.org/donate, mailed to the church, or placed in the offering box.

Sponsor a Sunday - August & Sept. Available

Every sponsorship helps make our Sunday worship services possible in-person and online. Please help us fill the 2025 sponsorship calendar. If you would like to sponsor a future Sunday, contact the church office at 223-2915 or visit uccbismarck.org/donate. Sponsorships are \$500.

Upcoming Summer & Fall Events

- Aug. 24 at 10 AM** **Outdoor Worship & Animal Blessing**
Bismarck UCC
- Sept. 11-13** **Northern Plains Conference**
Annual Meeting
Camp of the Cross in Garrison, ND
- Sept. 18 at 6 PM** **Find Your Balance**
New stress management class that will be held monthly on the third Thursday.
- Sept. 21** **UCC Bowling Tournament**
1 PM to 4 PM Midway Lanes (3327 Memorial Hwy, Mand)
- Sept. 24** **Serve the Banquet**



Block Party - August 13

5:30pm at United Church of Christ with food and games. Free hotdogs and chips—feel free to bring a dish to share. We're also collecting personal hygiene items for Ministry on the Margins.

7:00pm at Lutheran Church of the Cross with dessert and bounce house.

Bring friends, family, and neighbors! Let's make this our largest yet.

Vacation Bible School Starts TODAY!

Aug. 10-13, 6pm – 8pm with a light supper served at 5:30pm. This year's theme is "Health and Wellness"—spiritual, physical, mental, and relationships. We have lessons, games and crafts planned. Registration is open for kids age 3 through 5th grade. Register by the bulletin board, online at <https://shorturl.at/CG8pf>, or at the door.



THIS WEEK'S OPPORTUNITIES: August 10 - 17

- Sunday:** 11 AM Fellowship & 12 Noon [Online](#) Fellowship
5:30 PM Light Supper Prior to VBS
6 PM Vacation Bible School
- Monday:** 5:30 PM Light Supper Prior to VBS
6 PM Vacation Bible School
- Tuesday:** 1 PM Quilting/Knitting
5:30 PM Light Supper Prior to VBS
6 PM Vacation Bible School
- Wednesday:** 5:30 PM Highland Acres Block Party
6 PM Vacation Bible School
6:30 PM Stewardship & Mission(in-person & [online](#))
7 PM Dessert and Bounce House
at Lutheran Church of the Cross
- Thursday:** 5 PM Scripture Circles
(Missouri Slope 4916 N Washington St, Bis.)
- Friday:** 8:30 AM Bible Study (in-person & [online](#))
- Sunday:** 10 AM Worship (in-person & [online](#))
11 AM Fellowship & 12 Noon [Online](#) Fellowship

Northern Plains Conference Annual Meeting

The Northern Plains Conference Annual Meeting is Sept. 12-13. Registration is now open. We are gathering at Camp of the Cross in Garrison, ND with an online option to explore God's call for ourselves, our churches and our Conference. Members who want to attend from Bismarck UCC can contact Pastor Gretchen or the church office for registration information.

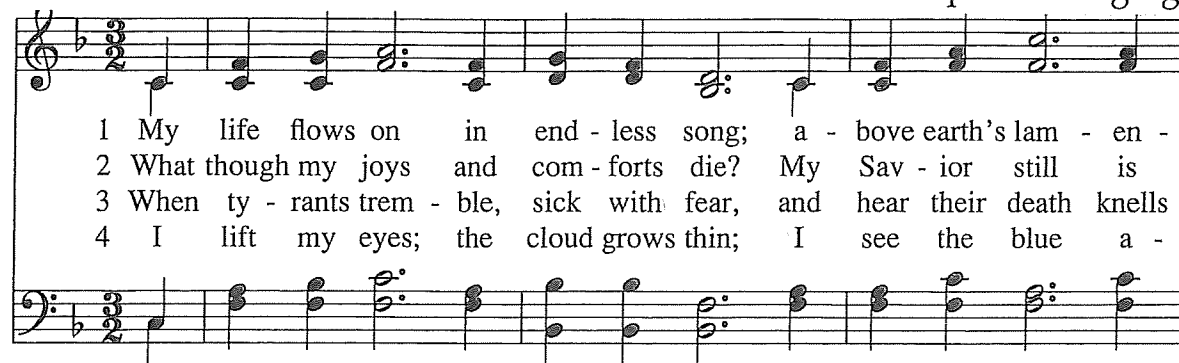
OUR PRAYER LIST

Family of Clem Weber (Maria Roll-Schlecht's father), Joyce Rosene, Pam Crawford, Fredrick Krause (Kerri Kraft's grandfather), Opal Eisenbraun, Jennifer Held, Family of Macyeo Franks (Jane Thomson's grandson), Family of Rodney Olhauser (Paulette DeVos' brother), Don Robison, Leona Staiger (Helen Lindgren's sister), Fran Mack, Matthew Nitschke, Ryan (Mary Blumhagen's son), Ashley Seykora (Betty Picard's daughter), Dick Smith, Laurie Schreiner, Colby (Janice & Gary Sather's son), Wade Rosene (Joyce Rosene's son), Chad Gent (Joyce Rosene's nephew), Scott Waters (Tamara Waters-Wheeler's brother), Robyn Richter (Kyle Eisenbraun's aunt), Maggie Demaree, Doretta Reule, Bruning family, Perry Weekes, Howard Etson, Camille Grothier, East Timor, Refugees

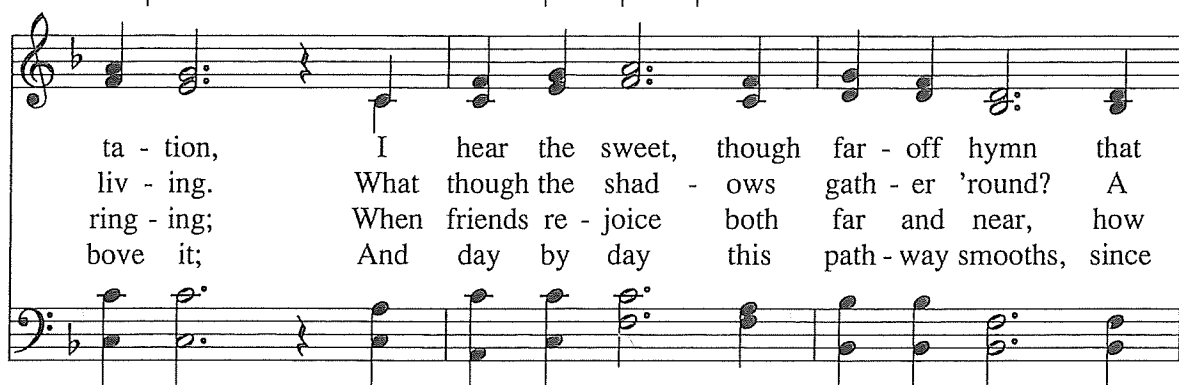
*Contact the church office to be added to our weekly prayer list.

My Life Flows on in Endless Song

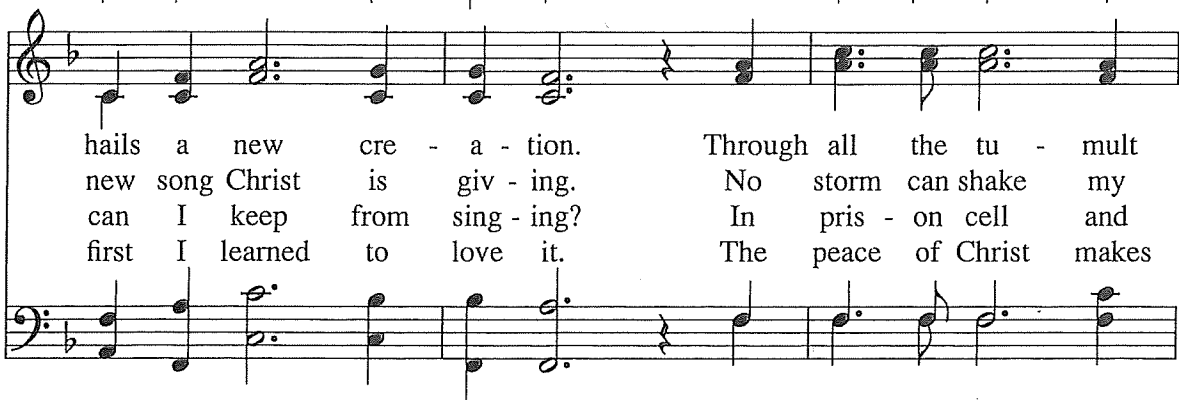
(How Can I Keep from Singing)



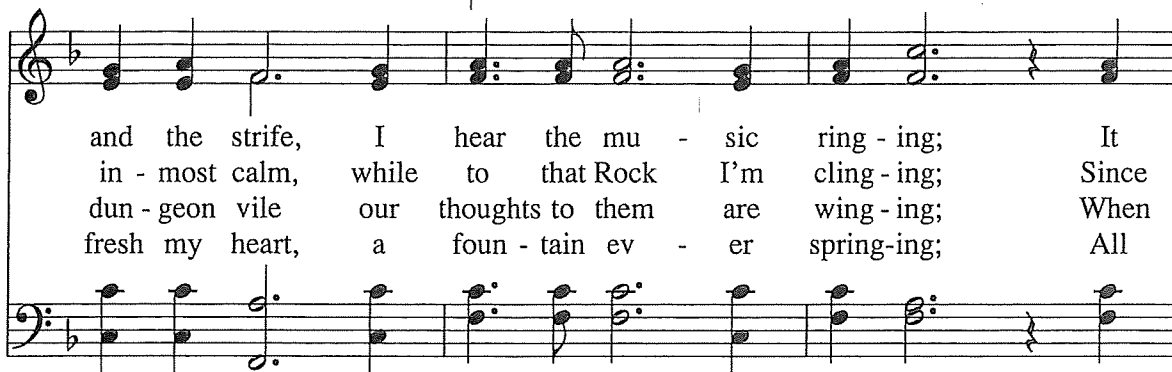
1 My life flows on in end - less song; a - bove earth's lam - en -
 2 What though my joys and com - forts die? My Sav - ior still is
 3 When ty - rants trem - ble, sick with fear, and hear their death knells
 4 I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin; I see the blue a -



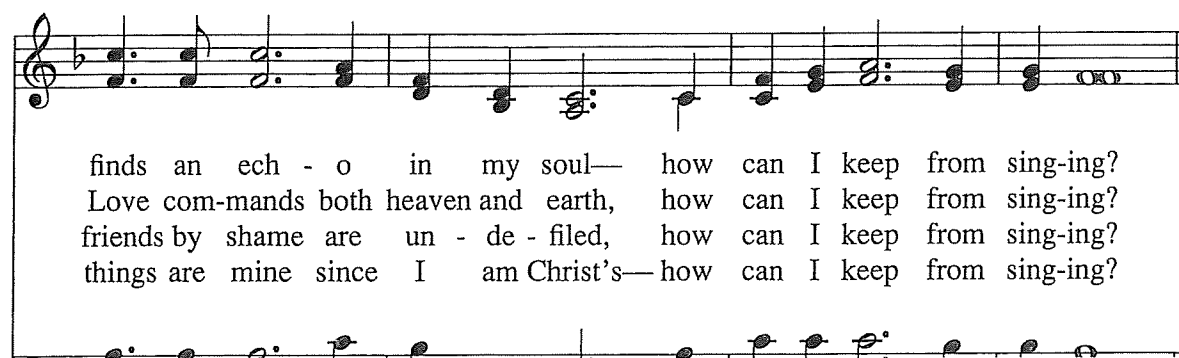
ta - tion, I hear the sweet, though far - off hymn that
 liv - ing. What though the shad - ows gath - er 'round? A
 ring - ing; When friends re - joice both far and near, how
 bove it; And day by day this path - way smooths, since



hails a new cre - a - tion. Through all the tu - mult
 new song Christ is giv - ing. No storm can shake my
 can I keep from sing - ing? In pris - on cell and
 first I learned to love it. The peace of Christ makes



and the strife, I hear the mu - sic ring - ing; It
 in - most calm, while to that Rock I'm cling - ing; Since
 dun - geon vile our thoughts to them are wing - ing; When
 fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring - ing; All



finds an ech - o in my soul— how can I keep from sing - ing?
 Love com - mands both heaven and earth, how can I keep from sing - ing?
 friends by shame are un - de - filed, how can I keep from sing - ing?
 things are mine since I am Christ's— how can I keep from sing - ing?

369

Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning

Matt. 25:1-13; Gal. 6:9

African-American spiritual

1 Keep your lamps trimmed and burn-ing, keep your lamps trimmed and burn-
 2 It's our faith makes us hap-py, it's our faith makes us hap-
 3 We are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-der, we are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-
 4 Ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er, ev-ery round goes high-er, high-

-ing, keep your lamps trimmed and burn-ing, for this work's al-most done.
 -py, it's our faith makes us hap-py, for this work's al-most done.
 -der, we are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-der, for this work's al-most done.
 -er ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er, for this work's al-most done.

Last time, end

Refrain

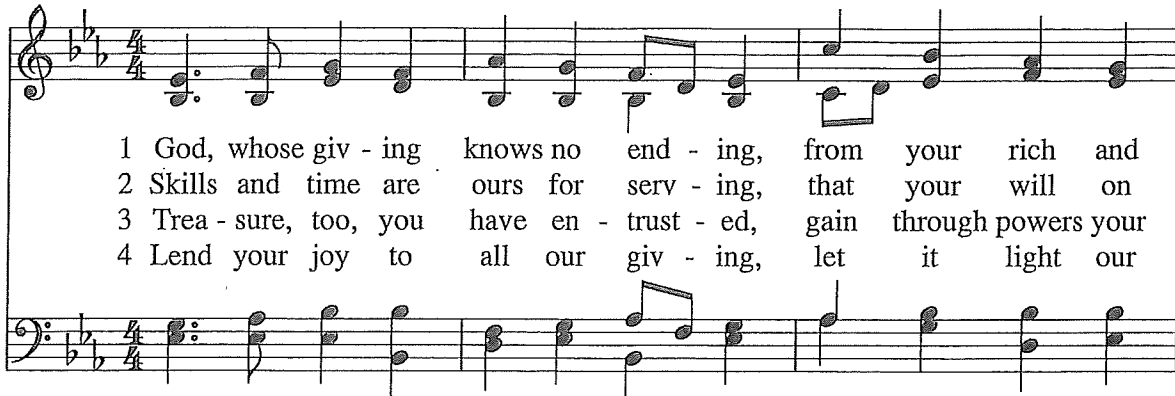
Sis-ters, don't grow wear-y, broth-ers, don't grow

wear-y, chil-dren, don't grow wear-y, for this work's al-most done.

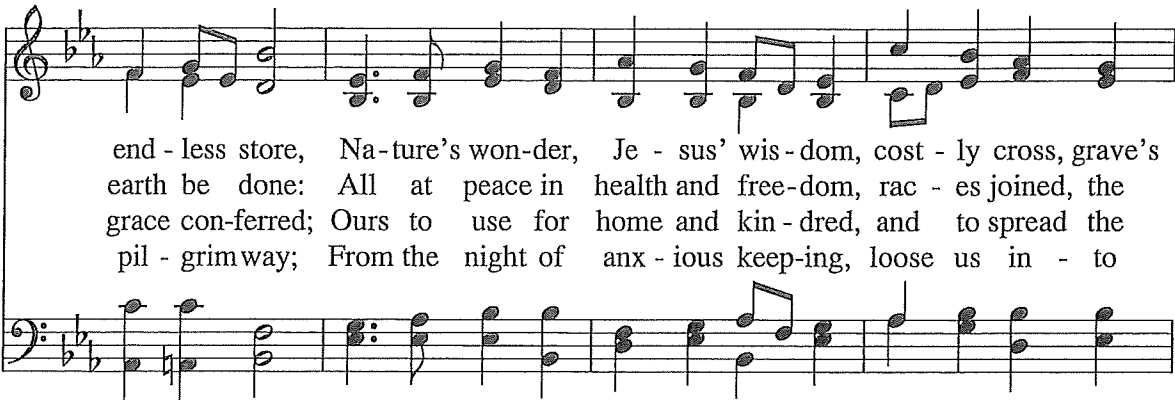
By tradition, a leader may call out substitute words for the refrain, such as "Christians don't grow weary, Christians don't grow weary, . . ." etc., or "people," "preacher," or any others that may be appropriate.

This spiritual is possibly one of the code songs in which to keep

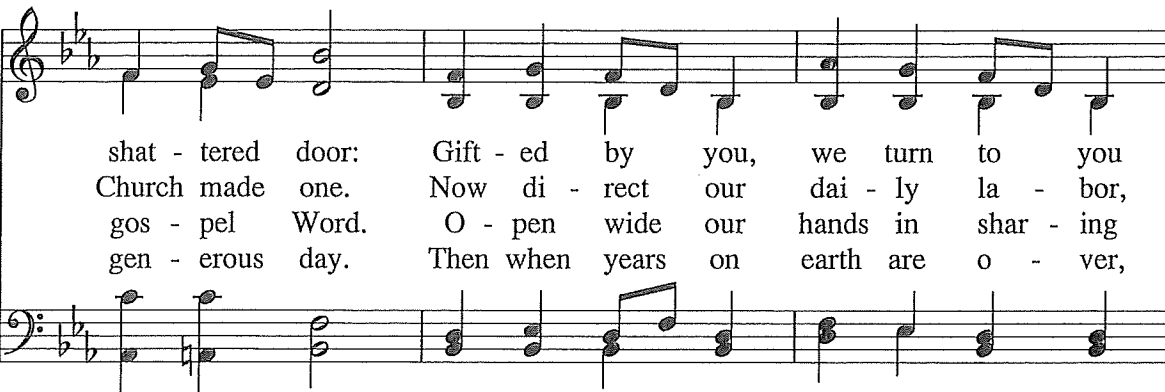
Tune: KEEP YOUR LAMPS 7.7.7.6.6.6.6.6



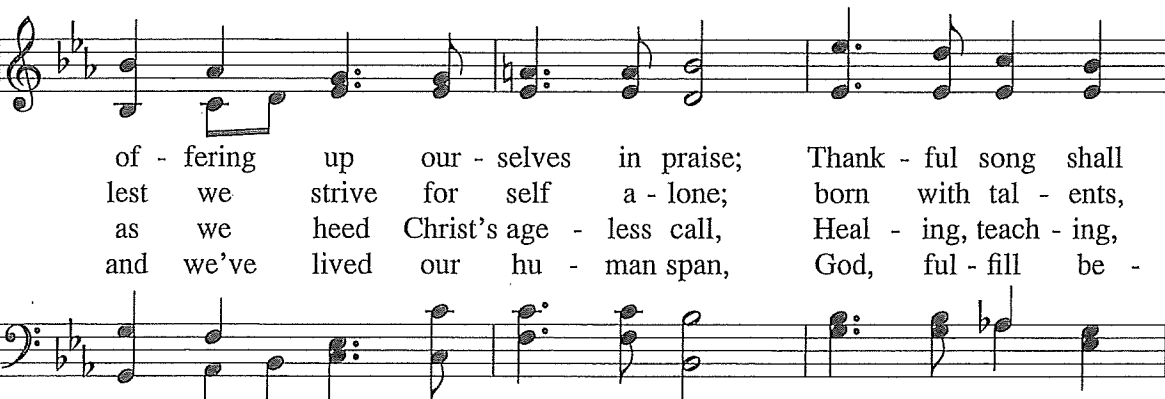
1 God, whose giv - ing knows no end - ing, from your rich and
 2 Skills and time are ours for serv - ing, that your will on
 3 Trea - sure, too, you have en - trust - ed, gain through powers your
 4 Lend your joy to all our giv - ing, let it light our



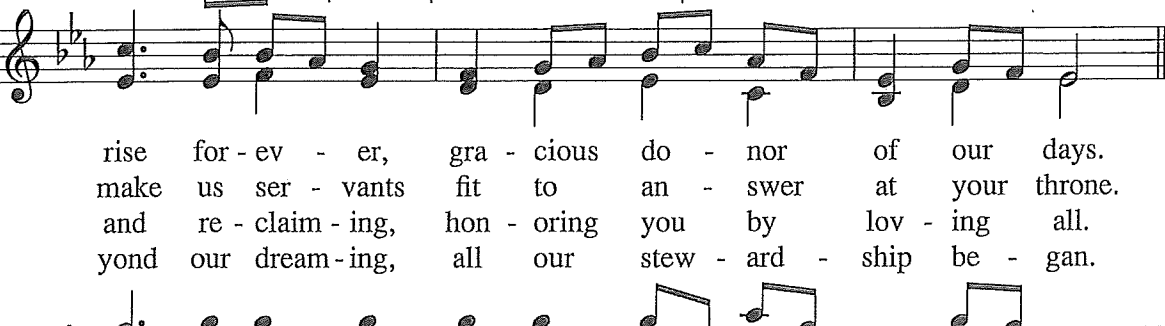
end - less store, Na - ture's won - der, Je - sus' wis - dom, cost - ly cross, grave's
 earth be done: All at peace in health and free - dom, rac - es joined, the
 grace con - ferred; Ours to use for home and kin - dred, and to spread the
 pil - grim way; From the night of anx - ious keep - ing, loose us in - to



shat - tered door: Gift - ed by you, we turn to you
 Church made one. Now di - rect our dai - ly la - bor,
 gos - pel Word. O - pen wide our hands in shar - ing
 gen - erous day. Then when years on earth are o - ver,



of - fering up our - selves in praise; Thank - ful song shall
 lest we strive for self a - lone; born with tal - ents,
 as we heed Christ's age - less call, Heal - ing, teach - ing,
 and we've lived our hu - man span, God, ful - fill be -



rise for - ev - er, gra - cious do - nor of our days.
 make us ser - vants fit to an - swer at your throne.
 and re - claim - ing, hon - oring you by lov - ing all.
 yond our dream - ing, all our stew - ard - ship be - gan.