

February 8, 2026 + 10:30 A.M.

Sixth Sunday of Epiphany

We Join in Worship

Liturgist: Bonnie Perryman

*If you need extra space for a wheelchair or walker, or if you have young children with you, please feel free to make use of our
Prayground, the extra space across the aisle from the sound booth.*

PRELUDE Light Eternal

Dykes/Walker Baylor

WELCOME

CHORAL INTROIT

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*THE PEACE OF CHRIST

*CALL TO WORSHIP (Adapted from *Psalms* 112)

Leader: Praise the LORD! Happy are those who fear the LORD, who greatly delight in the LORD's commandments. Their descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.

ALL: Wealth and riches are in their houses, and their righteousness endures forever. They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright; they are gracious, merciful, and righteous.

Leader: It is well with those who deal generously and lend, who conduct their affairs with justice. For the righteous will never be moved; they will be remembered forever.

ALL: They are not afraid of evil tidings; their hearts are firm, secure in the LORD. Their hearts are steady; they will not be afraid.

Leader: They have distributed freely, they have given to the poor; their righteousness endures forever; their horn is exalted in honor.

ALL: Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!

*OPENING HYMN: "Arise, Your Light Is Come!" (411)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION:

Leader: Isaiah asks, "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Together let us confess the ways that we distort and break sacred practices.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Merciful God, we raise our voices and bare our hearts to confess how we have distorted and broken the sacred practices to which you call us. We confess that on your fast days we serve our own interests and oppress others. We quarrel and fight. We make spectacles of our devotion. Often our complicity is in our silence. We stand by as the bonds of injustice are maintained. We sit quietly as innocents are imprisoned. We waste food and hold tightly to our resources as people go hungry and homeless. Forgive us for our sinful action and inaction. Inspire us to change so that our light shall break forth once again. In the name of Jesus Christ, our great teacher, we pray. Amen.

KYRIE

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Friends, hear the good news! Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God. God's Spirit assures us of our pardon.
ALL: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

STATEMENT OF FAITH: (from *The Belhar Confession*)

We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation in and through Jesus Christ, that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker, that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness dwells.

We Hear God's Word

EMBODIED WORD FOR DISCIPLES OF ALL AGES

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: (Unison)

God, source of all light, by your Word you give light to the soul. Pour out on us the spirit of wisdom and understanding that our hearts and minds may be opened. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON: *Isaiah 58:1-12*

EPISTLE LESSON: *1 Corinthians 2:1-12*

GOSPEL LESSON: *Matthew 5:13-19*

SERMON *Shining with Flavor*

MUSICAL MEDITATION *On Eagle's Wings*, in memory of Jay Smith

We Respond in Faith

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

OFFERING INVITATION:

Leader: Jesus tells us to let our light shine before others, so that they may see our good works and give glory to God. Let us give our tithes, pledges, and offerings so that we can shine brightly. Please place your offering in the plate as it is passed. If you are worshipping from home, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option on the website. Now let us reflect on and practice stewardship as we listen to today's offertory.

OFFERTORY This Little Light of Mine

Wm. Farley Smith

* DOXOLOGY:

**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. Amen!**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Unison)

O God, we dedicate these gifts to you and to your Kingdom. Give us wisdom as we seek to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. In the name of Jesus Christ, our great teacher, we pray. Amen.

We Go Into the World

* **CLOSING HYMN:** "Christ, Be Our Light" (Glory to God, 314)

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE "Sleepers, Wake!" A Voice Astounds Us

Nicolai/Bach

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* So that we can properly greet people who come to the building during Sunday morning worship, Door A will be the only unlocked external door during the worship service.

PEEK AT THE WEEK:

SUNDAY 2/8:	Adult Study – 9:00 AM Worship in Person & Online – 10:30 AM
MONDAY 2/9:	GA – 6:30 PM Al-Anon – 7:00 PM Lake Shore Comm. Concert Mtg. 7 PM (FH)
TUESDAY 2/10:	Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) Mission – 6:00 PM Stewardship/Finance – 6:30 PM AA – 7:30 PM
WEDNESDAY 2/11:	Trustees – 10:00 AM Private Flute Lessons 2-8 PM (FH) “Bring Your Own Bible” Bible Study 7-8 PM (Zoom) GA – 7:00 PM
THURSDAY 2/12:	Choir – 7:00 PM
SATURDAY 2/14:	Cook for Shelter – 1:00 PM AA – 6:30 PM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **SOUP SALE NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH** Come prepared to purchase delicious food and support our church's general fund! You won't want to miss out!
- **MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH** We will receive the mark of the cross as we mark the start of Lent. Be sure to join us for this meaningful service at 7:00 PM!
- **“BYOB”** (Bring Your Own Bible) discussion group meets on Wednesday evenings from 7-8 pm online using Zoom. Each week this group takes a look at the scriptures from our Sunday worship services, asking questions, bringing up different perspectives, and hopefully encountering the Holy Spirit in a fresh way. The link for the Zoom meetings is emailed out weekly. You can connect to Zoom with a smart phone, tablet or computer. If you're not familiar with how to use Zoom, or to get on our e-mail list, please contact Pastor Tyler or Heather Casiano.
- **“THE BIBLE IN TODAY'S WORLD”** class meets on Sunday mornings from 9-10 am in the middle classroom (across from Pastor Tyler's office). This group is reading through the book, “A is for Alabaster” by Anna Carter Florence. Each week is independent of the other weeks, so come as you are able. If you need a book, or for any other questions, contact Heather Casiano.
- **FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!** If you don't already follow us on Facebook and Instagram, please start doing so @firstpchighland on both Facebook and Instagram.
- **INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF FPCH?** You are always welcome here, whether a member or not! If you are interested in joining as a member, though, we would love to have you! Please talk to Pastor Tyler if you would like to learn more.

Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:

- **BLESSING BOX** Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates!
- **HELP STOCK OUR PANTRY!** Please pick up a beautifully decorated grocery bag in the narthex and fill it to help the church's food pantry.

Prayer List

Anthony
Brady Vanes
George Griner
Guy Hendricks
Bill and Anettia Holmes
David Markley
David Kingen
Diana and Ray Mendoza
Janet Orem
Cindy Waltz and Sister
Yvonne Suroviak
Georgette Sknerski
Jakob Holden
Denise Matthys
Jan Oprea
Florance Cody
Kathy & Chuck Pumnea
Laura Buono Domsic
The Windstrups
Rick Parker
Gary Everhart
Caroline Studer
Darlene O'Brien
Doug & Sue Matthews
Janet Terpstra
Glen Nahler
Tom
David Hamblin
Jana Tolley
Larry & Bonnie Perryman
Delta Rose
Winnie Owen
Breeanne
Mom Bechtler
Victor
Marian Clayton
Ella P
Melissa J.

Rita Stronczek
Keren, Zuriel, and Gedeon
OGB
Edna Cruz
Charlie
Jerry & Rena Martinez
Nicole
Greg
Pastor Jane
Mary Ellen Edeus
Jane and David
Flora R.
Tyler Gall
Phil
Luana Sulkowski
Sonny Buono
Shannon Sutton
Robin
Eunice
Betsy
David
Trina & Scott
Joe & Kathy
Breanne Polan
Tammy
Alex
Ben
Mike Kelly
Sue Heth
Ron Toren
Tony
Mildred
Neal
Rita
Carolyn

Isaiah 58:1-12

58 Shout out; do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgments;
they want God on their side.

³ “Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day
and oppress all your workers.

⁴ You fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?

⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you;
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, “Here I am.”

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,

then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹ The Lord will guide you continually
and satisfy your needs in parched places
and make your bones strong,
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water
whose waters never fail.

¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

1 Corinthians 2:1-12

2 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the testimony of God to you with superior speech or wisdom. ² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³ And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴ My speech and my proclamation were made not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

⁶ Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are being destroyed. ⁷ But we speak God's wisdom, a hidden mystery, which God decreed before the ages for our glory ⁸ and which none of the rulers of this age understood, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the human heart conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

¹⁰ God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹ For what human knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. ¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

Matthew 5:13-19

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Shining with Flavor

Isaiah 58:1-12; 1 Corinthians 2:1-12; Matthew 5:13-19

I have the distinct blessing and pleasure of being married to a top-tier chef—or, as Vima likes to put it, I am spoiled! My own expertise in the kitchen tends towards washing the dishes and cleaning up the space, but when I do venture into helping out with the meal prep Vima always reminds me of the importance of salting dishes well. The right amount of salt brings out the best in the dish. It makes the flavor shine! Now *that* sounds like something Jesus was very much aware of as he taught his followers upon the mountainside. Jesus was a brilliant teacher, and he understood that his students would learn best if his lessons were tied to their senses. He selected metaphors that would be automatically accessible in their minds and bodies—upon their tastebuds and before their eyes—salt and light. Taste and vision. Flavor. Shining.

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

What did Jesus mean by it all? Why would he put two such seemingly unrelated things together like that? Salt and Light? Let's get into it! Let's do some exploring! We'll start by spelunking—now that's a word I never thought I'd get to use in a sermon!

In the ancient world, salt was precious for several reasons. In many places it was considered to be worth the same as gold. There were salt trade routes across the world, with much of the salt in Palestine at the time probably coming from the markets in Timbuktu in modern day Mali. Historians have found that foundational cities in ancient civilizations were often formed around salt repositories, for the ability to access salt allowed for the preservation of food and therefore allowed communities to stay in one place throughout different seasons. It wasn't just used for food preservation, though. It was used for medicinal purposes—hey we still gargle salt water today! It was used in religious rituals—with salt being part of temple sacrifices. And, most importantly for Jesus' imagery, it was used for seasoning—for tastiness and enjoyment, to make those flavors shine!

Salt was harvested in two ways. There was the salt of the sea and the salt of the earth. The salt of the sea was gathered through evaporation and would have been well known to this community so close to the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. But Jesus called his followers “the salt of the earth.” And *this* is where we get to do our

spelunking—our exploration of caves! You see, the salt of the earth comes from gigantic underground repositories of what are called sedimentary evaporite minerals—meaning minerals that have built up over the millennia from salt left behind by dried up lakes and seas. From the skeleton craters of these underground lakes and seas grow beautiful, brittle crystals of halite, the mineral form of sodium chloride...NaCl...salt. Like diamonds, halite can be clear or colorful—blue, pink, yellow, green, purple.

So, when Jesus used the metaphorical imagery of the salt of the earth, he was not referring to the commonplace white powder that inhabits our every cabinet and tabletop, albeit often in fun-themed shakers next to their pepper companions. He was referring to a rare, precious mineral—a beautiful, multi-colored, multifaceted crystal used for preservation, for healing, for worship, and, MOST IMPORTANTLY, for flavor. He was saying, “You are rare. You are precious. You are colorful. You are beautiful. You are flavorful. And you bring all of those wonderful things to others’ lives when you bring them the love of our God. But if you let the powers and principalities of this world overwhelm you, pulverize you, package you, standardize you, and consume you...if you become basic table salt, then what’s the point?”

Let’s think of it like this. With the salt of the earth imagery, Jesus was telling his followers then and his followers now that we must be grounded in the truth of God’s love as made manifest in our distinctly, beautifully made and beautifully diverse identities. We must embrace the personality quirks and body traits and voice tones and accents and smiles and interests and passions and talents and values and desires and goals and stories and cultural contexts that make us who we are. To be salt of the earth is to be down to earth. It is to be authentically ourselves, in the flavor that God made us to be, without apology. For, to be vulnerable and courageous in sharing our flavor with the world is to share the beautiful truth of God’s love with the world!

So, we have this concrete, grounded reality of tasty salt. And then we have this ethereal, unbounded image of light—a phenomenon without concrete substance and yet another sensory-rich metaphor. Our scriptures say a lot about light shining in darkness. Indeed it is the source of this season of Epiphany that we have been celebrating over the past several weeks. The light of a star shone out in the darkness, and so the magi were able to find the full majesty of God made manifest in the mess of the stable meant for livestock in that little town of Bethlehem. And that followed the lineage of a prophecy, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light!” And that same prophet blessed us today with the words, *“And then you have If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.”*

Yes, the image of light is used as a teaching tool throughout the scriptures, and Jesus knew it well. By drawing upon it on the mountainside, he was drawing upon a deep well of understanding that his followers would have had. It was also a deep well of meaning! For, light means so much! Light reveals. Light clarifies. Light shows the way. Light gives life. Light gives warning. Light gives warming. Light marks the day. Light marks the covenant, shining through droplets of water and emblazoning the sky with color. Light inspires hope. Light inspires beauty. Oh yes, there is much to be said about light, and there is much that is being said when light is evoked as an image. *You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.*

In years past I used the signal fire chain from the *Lord of the Rings* to illustrate Jesus’ lesson, with giant bonfires being lit up from mountaintop to mountaintop, sending a clear message across massive spans of geographical distance. If you know the reference, I invite you to envision it again. For, it is a great way of understanding what Jesus is talking about. If you do not know that scene from the movies, then picture a lighthouse. Light upon great height is visible for miles away and thus can be used to communicate—warning, caution, welcome, hope. A city built on a hill is most visible at night, when the city lights shine bright. We are to *be* those bright lights shining for the world to see! People should be able to see our good works and then light up with their own good works, starting a chain reaction that communicates God’s love to the world. Indeed, we

are to be the moon reflecting the light of God's Sun, showing the world that the light does not go away even in the darkest of times, even if it is just the slightest of crescents showing. When people are at their lowest and may have trouble imagining even the possibility of the goodness of God, they should still be able to look up and see us, to see God's light in us.

And *that* is where all of this comes together! Salt and light, concrete and ethereal, physical and spiritual, grounded and boundless. For, God's light shines brightest in us when we are being the salt of the earth, when we are being our authentic selves and deLIGHTing in who God created us to be. When we make use of our God-given gifts for the good of the world, when we not only accept ourselves but love ourselves, when we inspire others to love themselves, when we shine light on the truth that every single one of us is a beautifully and wonderfully made child of God in the image of Love, when we treat each other with the honor and dignity required by this revelation, when we shine in our saltiness, when we shine with flavor, when others see our good works and are moved to let their own flavors shine, and it spreads from mountaintop to mountaintop, there shall be a glory that transforms the world!

When Jesus spoke upon the mountain, he stood upon the shoulders of his prophetic ancestor Isaiah, who said it best:

"Is not this the fast that I choose:

to loose the bonds of injustice,

to undo the straps of the yoke,

to let the oppressed go free,

and to break every yoke?"

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry

and bring the homeless poor into your house;

when you see the naked, to cover them

and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,

and your healing shall spring up quickly;

your vindicator shall go before you;

the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard." Amen!

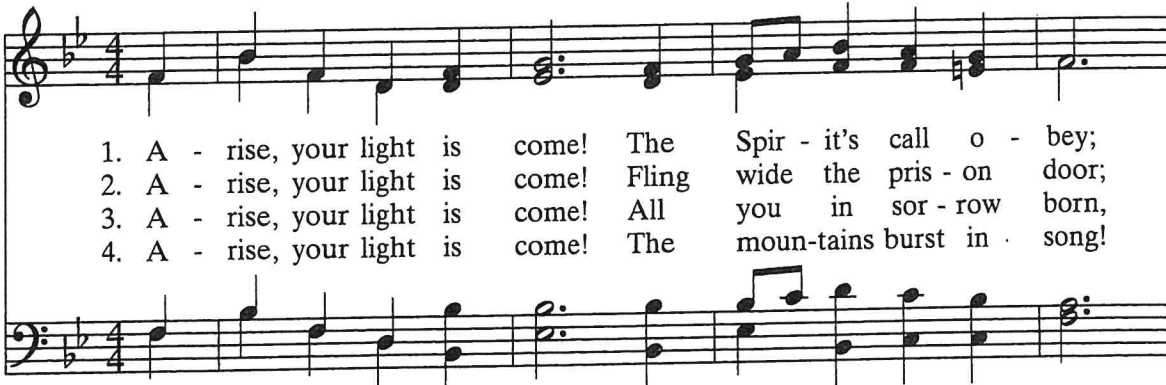
Arise, Your Light Is Come!

411

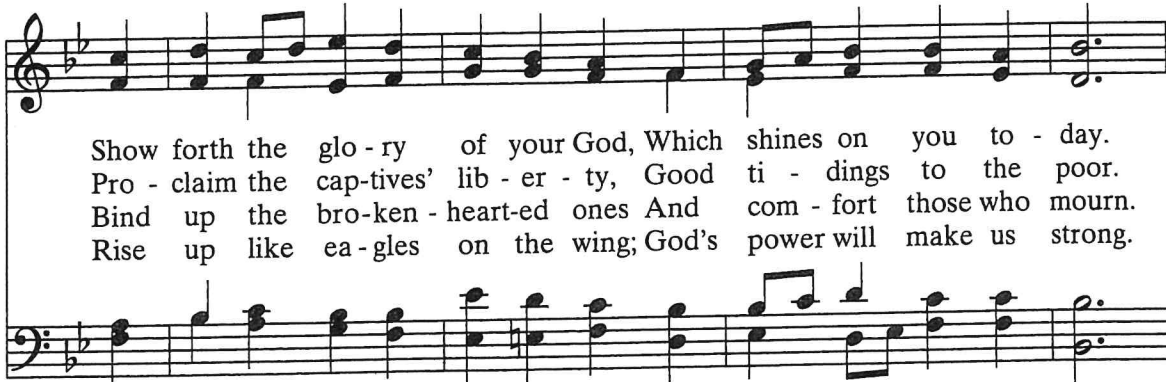
FESTAL SONG SM

Ruth Duck, 1974

William H. Walter, 1894



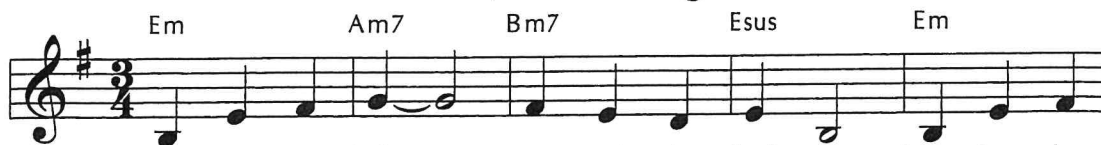
1. A - rise, your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;
2. A - rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris - on door;
3. A - rise, your light is come! All you in sor - row born,
4. A - rise, your light is come! The moun-tains burst in song!



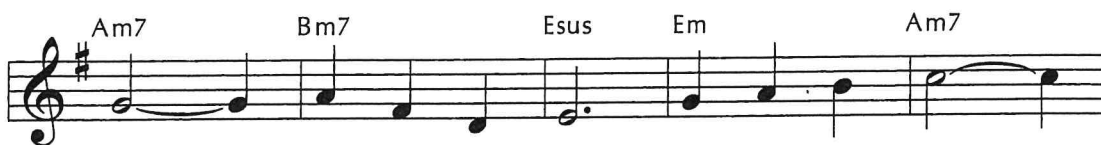
Show forth the glo - ry of your God, Which shines on you to - day.
Pro - claim the cap-tives' lib - er - ty, Good ti - dings to the poor.
Bind up the bro-ken - heart-ed ones And com - fort those who mourn.
Rise up like ea - gles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness 314

Christ, Be Our Light



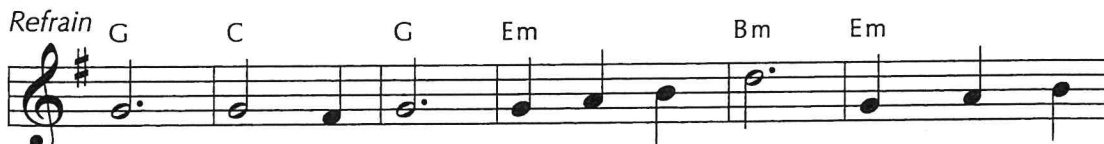
1 Long-ing for light, we wait in dark-ness. Long-ing for
 2 Long-ing for peace, our world is trou-bled. Long-ing for
 3 Long-ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long-ing for
 4 Long-ing for shel-ter, man - y are home-less. Long-ing for
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



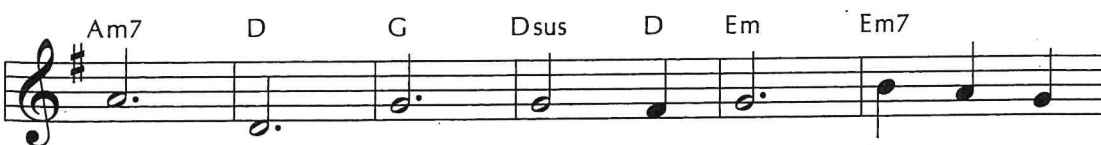
truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
 has power to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
 bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
 shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
 to one an - oth - er, mak - ing your king - dom come.



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.