



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH “Center Church”



United Church of Christ - ONA
One Church Street
South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075
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We, the congregation of the First Congregational Church of South Hadley, MA, UCC, also known as Center Church, declare ourselves to be Open and Affirming. Our congregation is welcoming to all, embracing those of differing sexual orientation, transgender/gender identity and expression, marital status, age, mental and physical health and ability, racial and cultural background/identity, and educational/socioeconomic status. We are open to all to share in Christ's bountiful love through life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys. In the spirit of Paul in Galatians, we celebrate the diversity in which God has created us!



**** The two center sections of the sanctuary are equipped with a hearing loop.
Turn on the T-coil in your hearing aid and sit in one of these sections
for better hearing**

October 19, 2025

The most misleading assumptions are the ones you don't even know you're making.
Douglas Adams, professor of Christianity and the Arts at Pacific School of Religion

PRELUDE

*Aria on St Anne
Tell Me the Old, Old Story*

R.G. te Velde
T. Hustad & D. Smith

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: God is here! As we your people,

People: Meet to offer praise and prayer.

Leader: May we find a fuller measure,

People: What it is in Christ we share.

***HYMN** *God Is Here! As We Your People Meet* black #70
*At the conclusion of the hymn, the children will leave to go to "The Promised Land " as
the congregation sings the first verse of On River Jordan's Banks I Stand.*

*On River Jordan's banks I stand, and cast a wishful eye,
Upon the fair and happy land where my possessions lie;
I am bound for the promised land, I am bound for the promised land,
Oh, who will come and go with me? I am bound for the promised land.*

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

MORNING PRAYERS

Prayer of Confession

**So often, Gracious One, we act with indifference, either
because we wish not to assume responsibility, or do not care.
Embolden us to live justly. Soften our hearts to love tenderly. This
we pray in Jesus' name, Amen**

Assurance of Forgiveness

In our brokenness, God is ever near. In our times of need, God
surrounds us. Be open to receive it. Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Pastoral Prayer

Silence

Lord's Prayer (debts)

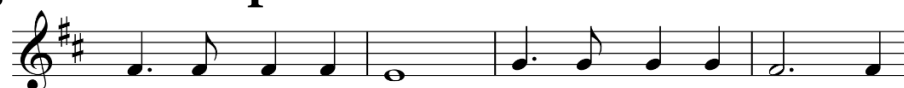
*Our Creator/Father/Mother, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

*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 yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen

Congregational Response



Hear our prayer, O God, hear our prayer, O God; in -



cline your ear to us, and grant us your peace. A - men.

READING FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Luke 18:1-8

18 Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. ² He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my accuser.' ⁴ For a while he refused, but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.' " ⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? ⁸ I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

SERMON PERSISTENCE BREAKS DOWN ASSUMPTIONS

*HYMN

O Day of God, Draw Near

black # 611

OFFERING

Invitation

Offertory

Shine On Me, a traditional Spiritual arr. by Rollo Dilworth.

***Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low,

Praise Holy Spirit evermore,

One God triune whom we adore. Amen

Prayer of Dedication

***HYMN**

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

red # 1

***BENEDICTION**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE** *Threefold Amen*

POSTLUDE

Abbot's Leigh

M. Burkhardt

We invite you to remain quietly and celebrate the conclusion of worship in the postlude.

The Deacons are asking you to refrain from clapping. If moved by the postlude or worship, please shout out "AMEN!" We are implementing this to move away from worship being a performance, to sharing a sentiment of having been filled by worship/music.

**Please stand if you are comfortable.*



We hope that you find your worship experience meaningful.

If you are new to the community, we invite you to make this your church home.

*Please stay after worship for refreshments and fellowship
downstairs in the Fellowship Hall.*

In our Service Today

Preacher:	Rev. Lori J. Souder
Scripture Reader:	John Anz
Organist:	Larry Schipull
Pianist:	Cynthia J. Morrell
Choir Director:	Ben Coakley
Deacon:	Randy Hyvonen



THE MINISTRY AT CENTER CHURCH

Ministers:	All Church Members
Senior Minister:	Rev. Lori J. Souder

Christian Education Program

Children:	Vicki Scherer, Coordinator - Julie Burke, Emily Mulder
Youth Coordinator:	Kenneth Mulder
Nursery Caregiver:	Annabelle Burke

Music

Organist:	Larry Schipull
Choir Director:	Ben Coakley
Associate in Music:	Cynthia Morrell
Office Administrator:	Cynthia Jubinville
Sexton:	Robert Farman





If you are visiting with us today, **WELCOME**. At the close of the service, please take a small welcome gift found in the baskets located at the sanctuary narthex and crossway doors. It is our token of saying "thank you for sharing worship with us, we truly feel blessed and we hope to see you again soon."

PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE IN YOUR PRAYERS

Continual:

Barbara Blank, on Hospice at Reeds Landing
Joan Duffy
Martha Guild's mother, June
Eileen Halkyard
Tom Hazen
Eunice Howes
Leila Mulder, attending boarding school
Fay Paquette
Nikki Wolf, Linda's granddaughter
Those struggling with addiction
Those struggling with cancer



If you have submitted one of these requests for prayer, please let us know when it is time to remove someone's name from the list.

Situational:

Rick Anderson, recovering from knee surgery
Bobbie Ayers and family, on the passing of her sister, Nancy Lutes
Cynthia Baker
Dennis Banks, friend of Karen and Estelle Anderson, with cancer
Audrey Heaphy, recovering from a fall
Elisa Morrison's mother Sandy, and brother Carl, with heart issues
Elisa's young friend Elija, for addiction recovery
Mary Nelsons father, Dave Nelson, with cancer
Katie (Daniels) Bobel's brother-in-law, Gary Nicolls, severely injured in a car accident
Nancy Perman's cousin Katherine, in rehab
Kendall Johnson-Smith, Preston Smith's daughter, with cancer
Vicki Scherer's grandfather, Sam Thompson, with cancer

This Week at Center Church

Tuesday	DTC Meeting 4pm	Girl Scouts 6pm
Thursday	Bible Study @ Loomis 11am	AA 1:30pm
	Dance Lessons 6pm	
Friday	Church Office Closed	
Sunday	Worship 10am	Discussion re: Safe Church, to follow



Center Church Announcements

Please sign up to read Scripture during Sunday worship. There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the Bock Crossway. Also, please consider being a greeter as folks come into the Sanctuary – signup sheet also in the Crossway.

In the next weeks we will be drawing from the lectionary and concentrating on one word. A week ahead of time, you will learn what that word or words are, and are invited to contemplate on the word or phrase throughout the week. **This week is Assumptions. Next week will be Humility.**

There will be a **Memorial Service for Nancy Lutes**, Bobbie Ayers' sister, on October 24th at noon in the Sanctuary. Internment will follow at 1pm.

Church Safety – On October 26th, we will be shortening the worship service to go over our procedures for Church Safety.



On **All Saint's Sunday, November 2nd**, we will lift up the names of those who have died in the last year (between Nov 1, 2024 and October 31, 2025). In celebration of each life, we read their name and a brief commemoration. If your loved one has died, please send in a few sentences about him/her/them to be read by Rev. Souder and a deacon. If you wish to include a family member or a friend, we invite you to do so. All Saints Day is sacred and made holy by your loved ones.

Please submit the names/commemoration by October 27
centerchurch@verizon.net



On Oct. 16, and 23 we will discuss passages from the **Gospel of Thomas**.

Ever heard about this gospel? It never made it into the Canon (the authorized Bible) but is still considered Holy and reveals aspects of Jesus' life. Join us at **11am in the Conference Room at Loomis**. Readings are available on the table inside the Church St door.
All are welcome!

Call to attend an Installation

Members of the Hampshire Association, UCC are invited to attend the installation of

Rev. Mark Seifried

Haydenville Congregational Church
143 Main Street
Haydenville, MA 01039

Sunday, October 19, 2025 3PM



Harvest of Generosity

""Growing a Harvest of Generosity: Our annual Center Church financial generosity season is underway! You may have already received the Center Church pledge packet in the mail. If not, it will be in your mailbox this week! Please read the materials and prayerfully consider how

your generosity provides a "harvest" of ministry locally & globally through Center Church. Make a plan for your financial pledge and bring your completed pledge form to worship on Nov 9th, where we will commit and consecrate our financial pledges, and celebrate after worship with an intergenerational lunch! Let's sow some seeds together, with our generosity! Thank you for your gift to Center Church!""



CELEBRATING THE HARVEST OF GENEROSITY - ACTIVITY AND LUNCH - NOVEMBER 9TH

All are welcome to share a family friendly activity and meal together following worship on Sunday, November 9th. Please save the date to celebrate our blessings and gifts on Stewardship Sunday - during and after worship! Vegetarian Chili will be served for lunch, and you are invited to bring cornbread, corn chips, or cookies. So that we may get an approximate idea of attendance, please RSVP electronically <https://forms.gle/KQRZFB6GDi4FLcNi7>, or sign-up in the Crossway or in Fellowship Hall. The gathering will begin with a seed planting activity, and then lunch served family-style. Please join this opportunity to give thanks for our collective generosity and the many blessings we share as a community.

Warmly,

Kate Hoffman Khoffman0203@gmail.com





On **November 7 from 5pm - November 8, 6pm**, people are invited to Center Church to **share their story about their roots**. This is a non-partisan event, meant to celebrate the rich voices that have informed our country and honor our ancestors. *Our Roots, Our Voices* provides a platform for adults and youth age 16+ from all walks of life to talk about their roots, their passions and dreams, and the futures they see for themselves and our country. As we approach our nation's 250th anniversary, this is an opportunity to give voice to our own unique perspectives, and share stories of the courage and tenacity of our ancestors. When individual voices can be heard, respected, and valued, we learn and understand more about each other and our shared humanity.

There will be 15 minute segments (10 minutes speaking) with different people speaking during the 25 hours., including state and national reps, in person, and up to 100 online. We are co-hosting it with the DTC. In addition to be willing to speak regarding your own roots, we will need volunteers to help with refreshments and to serve as hosts during the 25 hours. Lori is committed to being present during the "wee hours." This is our opportunity to bring community together peacefully. If interested, please talk to Rev Souder.

Google Forms

Having trouble viewing or submitting this form?

[Fill out in Google Forms](#)

Our Roots, Our Voices is a non-partisan, non-sectarian platform for adults and youth age 16+ from all walks of life to share their unique perspectives and give voice to the courage and tenacity of our ancestors. When individual voices can be heard, respected, and valued, we learn and understand more about each other and our shared humanity.

Free and open to the public from Friday, November 7, 2025 at 5:00pm and *through the night and around the clock* to Saturday, November 8, 2025 at 6:05pm+

Save the date and plan to tell your story. Come and support other participants, or just come to hear the many different voices, stories, and perspectives of those around us. All are welcome to stop in at any time during the event's 25+ hours to respectfully listen and stay for as little or as long as they wish. There is no admission charge, but donation box contributions are gratefully accepted.

A NON-PARTISAN, NON-SECTARIAN CIVIC EVENT

Co-sponsored by Center Church and the South Hadley Democratic Town Committee

The timeline is inspired by the 25-hour and 5-minute Senate floor speech

by New Jersey Senator Corey Booker's on March 31, 2025



Holiday Bazaar NOVEMBER 22 and 23

Donations: Donations will be accepted **Sundays after church services in October, and October 28th - 31st, (Tuesday - Friday), from 9am to noon.**

In November donations will be accepted on Sundays - the 2nd and 9th, after services. Then, during set up times November 3 - 7, Monday through Friday, from 9am to noon, you may bring your donations to Fellowship Hall. The VERY LAST day for donations is November 9th. If these dates do not work for you, call the office, and leave a message. An Activities Team member will call you back to make arrangements. Please respect the November 9th cut off for donations. There is only so much time in the day for the volunteers to do the work.

**Donations accepted: Christmas merchandise Winter merchandise
Toys Puzzles Jewelry Books Unused gifts that need a new home**

Questioning your items? kindly ask. Donations need to be clean and in working order. We sincerely appreciate all the donations.

This is what makes the Bazaar successful!!!

To make the bazaar happen, **set up** needs to happen. In all honesty, a crew is truly needed. Getting ready starts 4 weeks out. What needs to be done is setting up tables and shelving in Fellowship Hall, unpacking and sorting merchandise to put into categories, then displaying, pricing, food preparation, wreath making, and continual cleaning as we move along. All of this takes time. **Volunteers make the difference at getting the bazaar ready. You are needed. Please consider lending a hand.**

Work Schedule Time:

October 28 to 31, 9am to noon

November 3 to 7, 9am to noon

November 10 to 15, 9am to 4pm

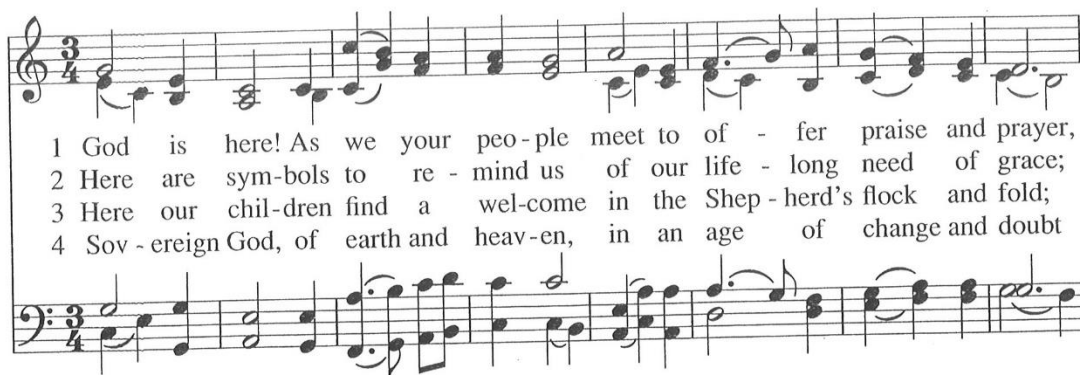
November 17 to 21, 9am to 4pm

None of these times work? Only available evenings and weekends? That can happen. Please contact either Karen Anderson (413-374-9156) or Corinne Chartrand (413-219-6563) with the times you are going to help or would like to help. Come and enjoy working and getting to know fellow parishioners

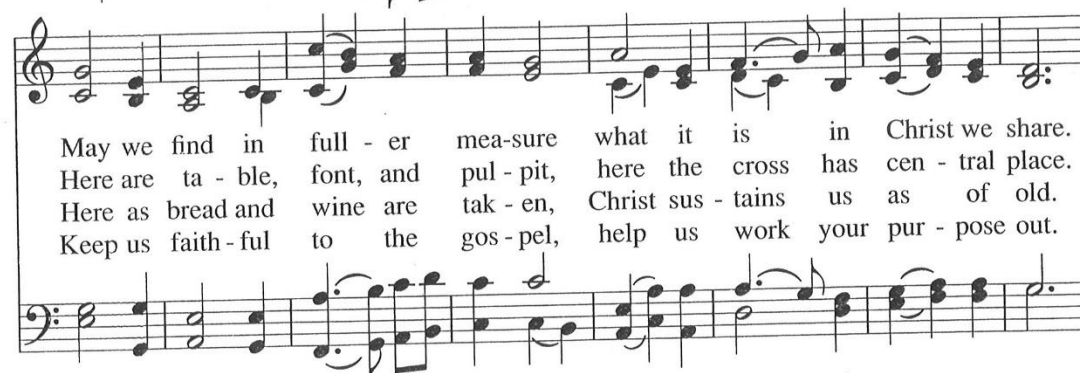
For the **Holiday Bazaar November 22-23**, we will host talented crafters, as we did last November. We want to **open the invitation to crafters to plan to join us for the weekend of November 22-23**, and I will forward an application as soon as crafter inquiries arrive. Let us know if you have any contacts I should reach out to.

Corinne

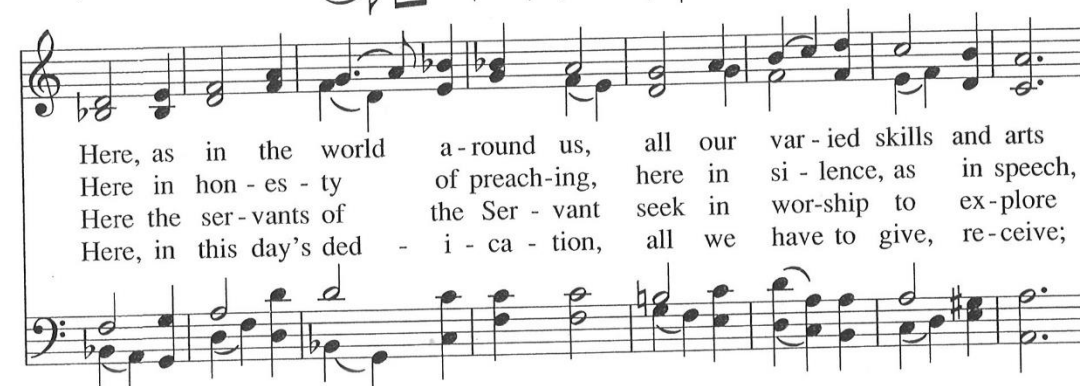
God Is Here! As We Your People Meet

Fred Pratt Green, 1978; alt.


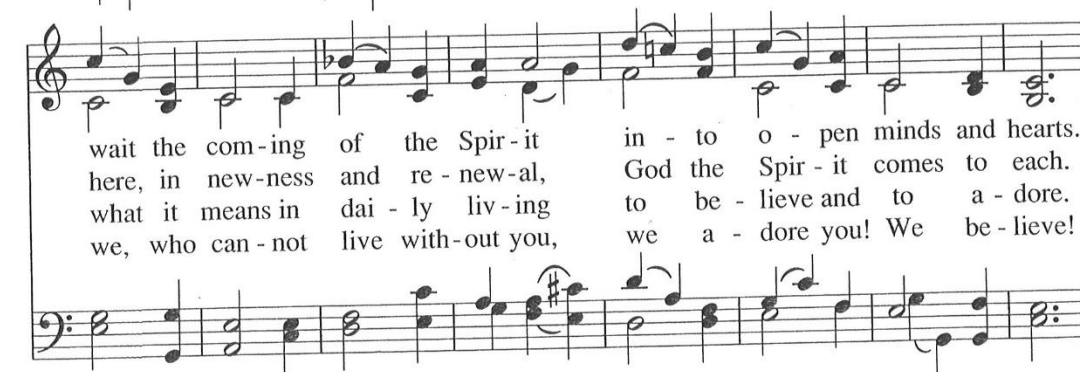
1 God is here! As we your peo-ple meet to of - fer praise and prayer,
 2 Here are sym-bols to re - mind us of our life - long need of grace;
 3 Here our chil-dren find a wel-come in the Shep - herd's flock and fold;
 4 Sov - ereign God, of earth and heav-en, in an age of change and doubt



May we find in full - er mea-sure what it is in Christ we share.
 Here are ta - ble, font, and pul - pit, here the cross has cen - tral place.
 Here as bread and wine are tak - en, Christ sus - tains us as of old.
 Keep us faith - ful to the gos - pel, help us work your pur - pose out.



Here, as in the world a - round us, all our var - ied skills and arts
 Here in hon - es - ty of preach - ing, here in si - lence, as in speech,
 Here the ser - vants of the Ser - vant seek in wor - ship to ex - plore
 Here, in this day's ded - i - ca - tion, all we have to give, re - ceive;



wait the com - ing of the Spir - it in - to o - pen minds and hearts.
 here, in new - ness and re - new - al, God the Spir - it comes to each.
 what it means in dai - ly liv - ing to be - lieve and to a - dore.
 we, who can - not live with - out you, we a - dore you! We be - lieve!

Though he retired in 1969, this distinguished British poet has continued to write hymns. In addition to administering several circuits and local congregations, Fred Pratt Green published plays, translations, and poems. Emory University in Atlanta awarded him an honorary doctorate.

Tune: ABBOT'S LEIGH 8.7.8.7.D.
 Cyril V. Taylor, 1941

O Day of God, Draw Near

611

R. B. Y. Scott, 1937; alt.

Ps. 105:7; 2 Pet. 3:8-15

1 O Day of God, draw near in beau - ty and in power,
2 Bring to our trou - bled minds, un - cer - tain and a - fraid,
3 Bring jus - tice to our land, that all may dwell se - cure,
4 Bring to our world of strife your sov - ereign word of peace,
5 O Day of God, draw near as at cre - a - tion's birth;

Come with your time-less judg-ment now to match our pres - ent hour.
The qui - et of a stead-fast faith, calm of a call o - beyed.
And fine - ly build for days to come foun - da - tions that en - dure.
That war may haunt the earth no more and des - o - la - tion cease.
Let there be light a - gain, and let your reign be - gin on earth.

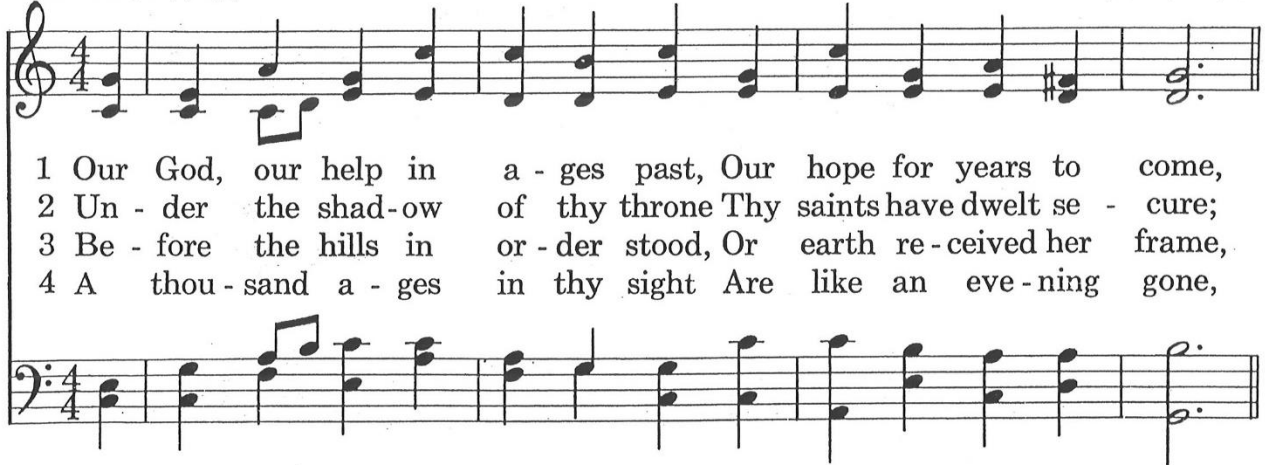
R. B. Y. Scott was a theologian, Old Testament scholar, and social reformer who taught at McGill University, Montreal, and at Princeton University. A minister in the United Church of Canada, he wrote this text in 1937 for the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order.

Tune: ST. MICHAEL S.M.
Trente quatre Pseaumes, Geneva, 1551
Adapt. William Crotch, 1836

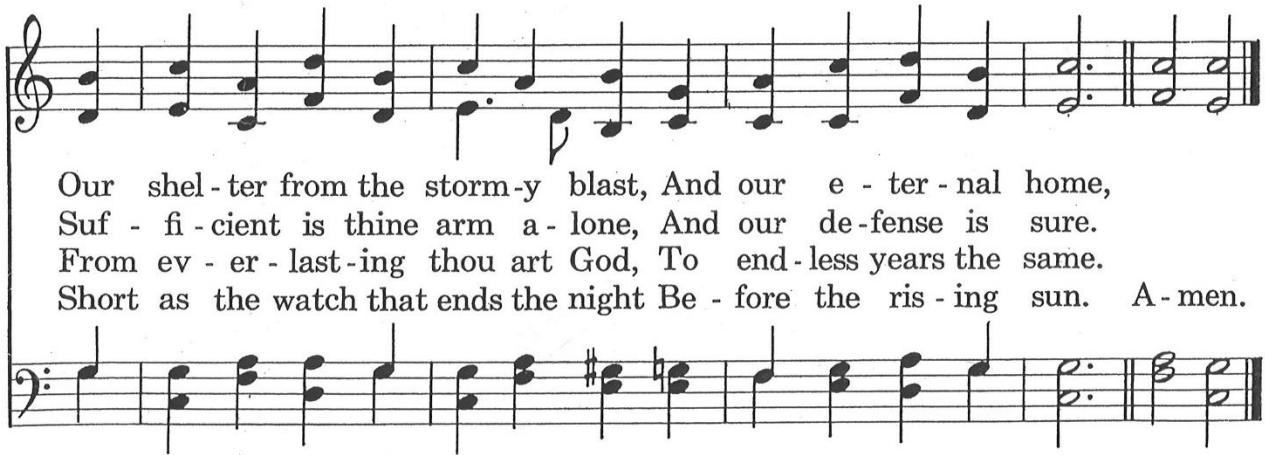
Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

Based on Psalm 90
Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

ST. ANNE C.M.
Attr. to William Croft, 1678-1727



1 Our God, our help in a - ges past, Our hope for years to come,
2 Un - der the shad - ow of thy throne Thy saints have dwelt se - cure;
3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood, Or earth re - ceived her frame,
4 A thou - sand a - ges in thy sight Are like an eve - ning gone,



Our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, And our e - ter - nal home,
Suf - fi - cient is thine arm a - lone, And our de - fense is sure.
From ev - er - last - ing thou art God, To end - less years the same.
Short as the watch that ends the night Be - fore the ris - ing sun. A - men.

- 5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.
- 6 Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

escant may be found at No.583

ADORATION AND PRAISE