

## SONGS FOR THE VIGIL OF EASTER

This is my collection of songs to follow the readings from the Hebrew scriptures at the Vigil of Easter in Episcopal, Lutheran, and other liturgical churches.

When I'm putting together a new song for this collection, generally I start with a text from the eighteenth century and rework the text to reflect my take on the reading, often adding a verse as well. You'll find in my final texts a preference for inclusive language and progressive theology, as well as considerable respect for the stories themselves.

Other songs in this collection are public-domain songs I've found or short, paperless songs I've written. It's an ongoing project; I'm a long way from having every reading matched with a song. Some, like Isaiah 4, I might just let slide.

I've set these texts to folk tunes or to tunes from the Sacred Harp tradition, because these are familiar tunes that can be sung with a melody-only accompaniment such as might be provided by a flute or violin. Many of the tunes are in the current Episcopal or ELCA Lutheran hymnals if a full score is wanted.

I'm glad to help with formatting and image management if you'd like a version with different margins. You can reach me at the address below. If you use one of these as part of your Vigil, I'd be thrilled to hear about it!

May you keep the Feast with joy –

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*A song to follow the Story of Creation – text and melody only*

### ***God Is Seen***

Through all the world be - low, God is seen all a -  
 See spring - ing wa - ters rise, foun - tains flow, riv - ers  
 The Sun, with all his rays, speaks of God as he  
 Though we be made from dust in - to Wo - man and

round, search hills and val - leys through, God is found. The  
 run. The mist that veils the skies hides the sun. Then  
 flies. The com - et in her blaze, "God," she cries. The  
 Man, be - hold what God en - trusts to our hands. The

grow - ing of the corn, the  
 down the rain doth pour, the  
 shin - ing of the stars, the  
 beasts all run - ning free, the

lil - y and the thorn, the pleas - ant and for -  
 o - cean it doth roar and beat up - on the  
 moon as she ap - pears, God's sac - red name de -  
 birds that fill the sky, the crea - tures of the

lorn all de - clare God is there. In  
 shore, all to praise in their lays the  
 clare. See them shine, all di - vine! the  
 seas, all that creeps in the deeps, the

mea - dows dress'd in green, God is seen.  
 God whose wis - dom plans their de - signs.  
 na - ture's mer - cies prove God's great love.  
 wa - ters, earth and air in our care.

WORDS: Verses 1-3 SOUTHERN HARMONY #50, alt. P. G. Smith, Verse 4, P. G. Smith (b. 1948).

May follow the Creation reading at the Great Vigil Of Easter.

TUNE: CAPTAIN KIDD, SOUTHERN HARMONY #50

*A song to follow the Story of Creation – full score*

***God is Seen***

Through all the world be - low, God is seen all a - round, search\_\_\_\_  
See spring-ing wa - ters rise, foun-tains flow, riv - ers run. The\_\_\_\_  
The Sun, with all his rays, speaks of God as he flies. The\_\_\_\_  
Though we be made from dust in - to Wo - man and Man, be -

hills and val - leys through, God is found. The grow-ing of the corn, the  
mist that veils the skies hides the sun. Then down the rain doth pour, the\_\_\_\_  
com - et in her blaze, "God," she cries. The shin - ing of the stars, the\_\_\_\_  
hold what God en - trusts to our hands. The beasts all run - ning free, the\_\_\_\_

lil - y and the thorn, the pleas - ant and for - lorn all de -  
o - cean it doth roar and beat up - on the shore, all to  
moon as she ap - pears, God's sac - red name de - clare. See them  
birds that fill the sky, the crea - tures of the seas, all that

clare God is there. In mea - dows dress'd in green, God is seen.  
praise in their lays the God whose wis - dom plans their de - signs.  
shine, all di - vine! All na - ture's mer - cies prove God's great love.  
creeps in the deeps, the wa - ters, earth and air in our care.

WORDS: Verses 1-3 SOUTHERN HARMONY #50, alt. P. G. Smith, Verse 4, P. G. Smith (b. 1948).

May follow the Creation reading at the Great Vigil Of Easter.

TUNE: CAPTAIN KIDD, SOUTHERN HARMONY #50

*A song to follow the Flood reading –*

***God Over Weary Zion's Hills***

The musical score is written for a single voice part in 4/4 time, using a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are arranged in five systems, each corresponding to a line of music. The first system contains three lines of lyrics, the second and third systems each contain two lines, and the fourth and fifth systems each contain one line. The lyrics are: "God ov - ver wear - y Zi - on's hills the rain - bow sign hath 'Can kind - ly moth - er e'er for - get the in - fant of her 'Now lay a - side thy need - less fears, sus - pi - cions and com - thrown. 'With sol - emn oath I bind my love to womb, and midst a thou - sand bus - y thoughts, her complaints. I am thy God, and I shall not grow show - er mer - cy down. So let thine in - ward nurs - ling find no room? Yet, saith the Lord, 'Though wear - y of my saints. So let thine in - ward joys a - rise and burst in - to a song! Let Na - ture change, and moth - ers heed - less prove, my joys a - rise and burst in - to a song! Let stead - fast love in - spire thy heart, thanks - giv - ings tune thy tongue." peo - ple rest up - on the breast of my e - ter - nal love." stead - fast love in - spire thy heart, thanks - giv - ings tune thy tongue."

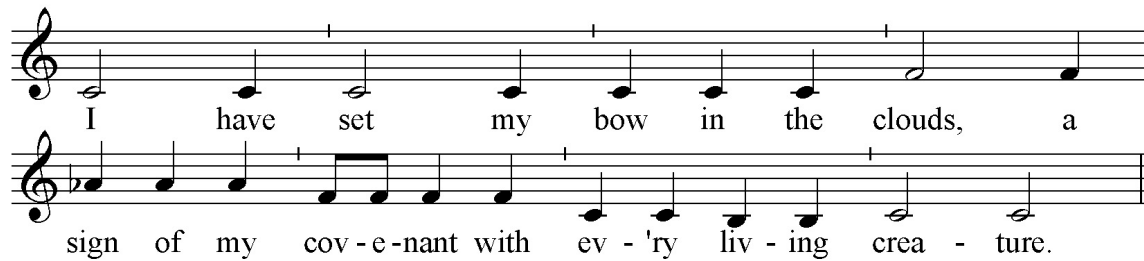
Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748), alt. P. G. Smith (b. 1948).

Music: Forest Green, English melody. An arrangement by Ralph Vaughan Williams for congregational singing may be found in *Hymnal* 1982, # 78.

*A paperless song to follow the Flood reading*

### ***I Have Set My Bow in the Clouds***

*This Refrain is sung by everyone.*

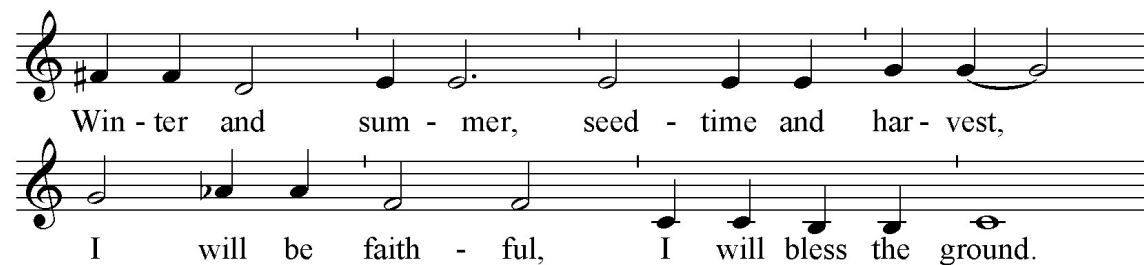


*Song leader-*



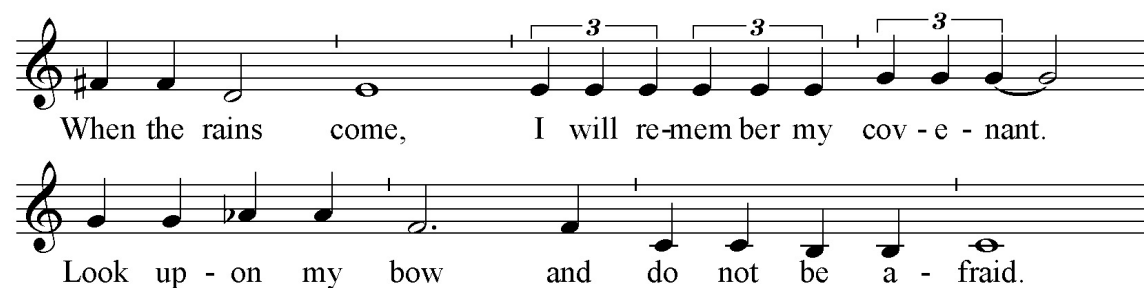
*The Refrain is sung by everyone.*

*Song Leader -*



*The Refrain is sung by everyone.*

*Song leader -*



*The Refrain is sung by everyone.*

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*A song to follow the Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac –*

***Some Test that Abram Had to Take***



Some test that Ab - r'ham had to take? Some point God had to prove?  
Wat - er and earth and fire and air, knit up in Sa-ra's womb,



How can this bear the name of grace, or be the work of Love?  
greet-ed with joy - ful thanks at birth; what we feel here for him



Stand here\_\_ at Mount Mor-i - ah's feet, with fire - pot and knife.  
de - mands for ev' - ry hu-man child our gen - 'rous, lov-ing care.



Look down\_\_ at I - saac's wea - ry\_\_ face.  
Un - til\_\_ we share these mer - cies well,



How can we take his life?  
the fire and knife are here.

Words: Pamela Grenfell Smith (1948). Copying for local nonprofit use is permitted and encouraged.  
Tune: THIRD MODE MELODY, Thomas Tallis (1505-1585)

*A possibly paperless song to follow the reading of Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea*

*This wonderful song/canon is in the public domain.*

*Find a lead sheet for it at: <https://hymnary.org/media/fetch/95914>*

*Here's the text – it could use an inclusive-language workover:*

I will sing unto the LORD,  
for he has triumphed gloriously,  
the horse and rider thrown into the sea.  
I will sing unto the LORD,  
for he has triumphed gloriously,  
the horse and rider thrown into the sea.  
The LORD, my God, my strength and song,  
has now become my victory.  
The LORD, my God, my strength and song,  
has now become my victory.  
The LORD is God, and I will praise him,  
our covenant God, and I will exalt him.  
The LORD is God, and I will praise him,  
our covenant God, and I will exalt him.

*A song to follow the reading of Salvation offered fully to all, Isaiah 55*

*Surely it is God who saves me*, Hymnal 1982 #679, a metrical version of the First Song of Isaiah, is an obvious and delightful choice. I wish there were an inclusive language version, though.

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*Wisdom & Proverbs readings* – I'm still looking

*A paperless song to accompany the first reading from Ezekiel, A new heart and a new spirit*

## Great Maker

*Freely*



Great Ma- ker, we place\_ in your hands these bro-ken trees, this poi-soned land.\_\_\_\_

Re- store, re - gen - er - ate,\_\_\_\_ re- new, and teach us how to\_\_\_\_ work with you.\_\_\_\_

*Written to accompany the Ezekiel 36 reading for the Vigil of Easter.*

*Text: Pamela Grenfell Smith, 2020. Copying and adaptation for local nonprofit use is permitted and encouraged.*

*Tune: MARTYR DEI Medieval Plainsong, Mode VI, arr. P. G. Smith*

*A song to follow the second reading from Ezekiel, the Valley of Dry Bones –*

***Sin Spreads Its Trophies on the Ground***



Sin spreads its tro - phies on the ground and  
And can these si - lent corp - ses live? And  
If your bright Spi - rit sends its breath, life  
Yours is the power to raise these bones. Your



scat - ters grief and sor - row round. Now send your peo - ple  
can these per - ished bones re - vive? You chal - lenge us to  
springs through - out the realms of death, dry bones o - bey your  
Word can change our hearts of stone! Yours is the cour - age



here we cry, the grace and strength to pro - phe - sy!  
preach, O Lord, and trust the pow - er of your Word.  
pow'r - ful voice, they stand, they wak - en, they re - joice.  
we must seek to look up - on these wastes and speak.

Words: Philip Doddridge (1702-1751); alt. & verse four Pamela Grenfell Smith (1948).  
Copying for local nonprofit use is permitted and encouraged.  
Tune: Distress, W. Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835.

*A song to follow the Gathering of God's people, Zephaniah 3 –*

Still looking for one.

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*God's presence in a renewed Israel, Isaiah 4 –*

I'm still looking. Not my favorite reading, TBH

*This version of Pascha Nostrum [page 83, BCP] has been formatted with sung alleluias to be greet the news of the Resurrection at the Vigil of Easter according to the rubric on page 294.*

**Christ our Passover** *Pascha nostrum*

*1 Corinthians 5:7-8; Romans 6:9-11; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22*

*Sung by all:* a paperless Alleluia (examples follow on the next page)

*Chanted or read by a song leader:*

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us;  
therefore let us keep the feast,  
Not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil,  
but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

*Sung by all:* repeat the paperless Alleluia

*Chanted or read by a song leader:*

Christ being raised from the dead will never die again;  
death no longer has dominion over him.  
The death that he died, he died to sin, once for all;  
but the life he lives, he lives to God.  
So also consider yourselves dead to sin,  
and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Sung by all:* repeat the paperless Alleluia

*Chanted or read by a song leader:*

Christ has been raised from the dead,  
the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.  
For since by a man came death,  
by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.  
For as in Adam all die,  
so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

*Sung by all:* repeat the paperless Alleluia

**Hymn 817** [paperless], *Christ has risen from the dead*

*These Alleluias and many more can be found in the invaluable **Music for Liturgy**, published in 1999 by Saint Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco and now, sadly, out of print. If you inexplicably failed to buy one thirty years ago you can't borrow mine because I'm guarding it with my life, but I'll photocopy something out of it for you.*

*If you want to find a copy, here are the ISBNs.*

- **ISBN-10:** 0615166423
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0615166421

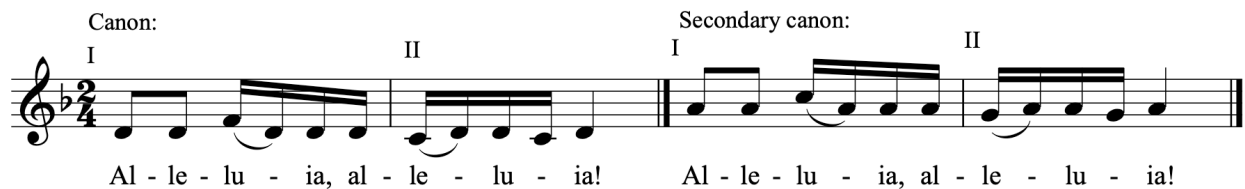
*Any of these Alleluias may be repeated as long as you deem appropriate.*

### **Svoboda Alleluia**



Music: ISAAC'S RAM, Helen Svoboda-Barker. Copying for local use is permitted and encouraged.

### **Kenyan Alleluia**



Music: Philip Roderick. Copying for local use is permitted and encouraged.

### **Zimbabwe Alleluia**



Music: Zimbabwe chant. Copying for local use is permitted and encouraged.