Prelude & Bell – “My Savior’s Love” – arr. Lavawan Riley

Welcome & Announcements

Introduction of the 2020-21 Confirmation Class
Rebekah X. Aldrich

Call to Worship – Hebrews 11:8-10,13-16; 12:22-24; 13:12-14

Reader: By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance;

People: And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Reader: By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob,

People: Fellow heirs of the same promise;

Reader: For he was looking for the city which has foundations,

People: Whose architect and builder is God . . .

Reader: All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance,

People: And having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Reader: For those who say such things make it clear

People: That they are seeking a country of their own.

Reader: And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out,

People: They would have had opportunity to return.

Reader: But as it is, they desire a better country,

People: That is, a heavenly one.

Reader: Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God;

People: For He has prepared a city for them . . .

Reader: But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God,

People: The heavenly Jerusalem,

(continued on next page . . .)
Reader: And to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all,

People: And to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,

Reader: And to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood,

People: Which speaks better than the blood of Abel . . .

Reader: Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood,

People: Suffered outside the gate.

Reader: So, let us go out to Him outside the camp,

People: Bearing His reproach.

Reader: For here we do not have a lasting city,

People: But we are seeking the city which is to come.

*Hymn #267 (included in the bulletin) – “Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken”

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Text – Revelation 1:5b-6 (NASB)

“Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood – and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father – to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Ancient Creedal Reading – Apostles Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Anthem – "Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies" – by Charles Wesley

Melissa Lloyd

Prayers of the Church and Lord’s Prayer (sins)

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen
Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Reformation Creedal Reading – Belgic Confession, 34.

Reader: Therefore He has commanded all those who are His to be baptized with pure water,

People: Into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Reader: Thereby signifying to us, that as water washes away the filth of the body when poured upon it,

People: And is seen on the body of the baptized when sprinkled upon him,

Reader: So does the blood of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit internally sprinkle the soul, cleanse it from its sins,

People: And regenerate us from children of wrath unto children of God.

Reader: Not that this is effected by the external water,

People: But by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son of God;

Reader: Who is our Red Sea, through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, that is, the devil,

People: And to enter into the spiritual land of Canaan.

Prayer of Illumination

Sermon Text – Song of Songs 7:9-8:4 (NASB)

(The Man / The Bridegroom / Christ)

7:9a And your mouth like the best wine!

(The Woman / The Bride / the Church)

9b It goes down smoothly for my beloved, flowing gently through the lips of those who fall asleep.

10 I am my beloved’s, and his desire is for me.

11 Come, my beloved, let us go out into the country, let us spend the night in the villages.

12 Let us rise early and go to the vineyards; Let us see whether the vine has budded and its blossoms have opened, and whether the pomegranates have bloomed. There I will give you my love.

13 The mandrakes have given forth fragrance; And over our doors are all choice fruits, both new and old, which I have saved up for you, my beloved.

8:1 Oh that you were like a brother to me who nursed at my mother’s breasts. If I found you outdoors, I would kiss you; No one would despise me, either.

2 I would lead you and bring you into the house of my mother, who used to instruct me; I would give you spiced wine to drink from the juice of my pomegranates.
3 Let his left hand be under my head and his right hand embrace me.
(The Man / The Bridegroom / Christ)
4 I want you to swear, O daughters of Jerusalem, do not arouse or awaken
    my love until she pleases.

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.

Sermon – “A Better Country”
    A Sermon Series on the Song of Songs

*Hymn #269 (included in the bulletin) – “I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord”

*Benediction and Offering
    (When the service is over, please place your offering in the plate in the back.
    Thank you for your patience and generosity.)

*Music Response

*Postlude – “With Shouts of Praise” – Jason W. Krug

About the Service:
    Preaching: Rev. Douglas Aldrich
    Monthly Deacon: Greg Madison

Last Week: Attendance was 55.
    Offering was $4071.00 including funds mailed in during the week.
    ($4381 is needed each week to meet our budgeted expenses.)

Church Office Hours: 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM Tues. – Thurs.
    8:30 AM – 12:00 PM Fri.

Church Staff:
    Pastor: The Rev. Douglas Aldrich
    Office Phone: 860-379-4766 Home Phone: 860-379-1147
    (Monday is Pastor Doug’s day off and on Thursday afternoon he works at home.)
    Associate Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Daniel Cote
    Cell Phone: 203-217-7498 Home Phone: 203-729-5257
    Office Hours: Tues. 6:00-9:00 PM Sun. 8:00-12:00PM
    Email: danielcote@gmail.com
    Administrative Assistant: Carol Tomassetti
    Email: info@sccwinsted.org
    Phone: 860-379-4766

Organist: Christopher King
Sexton: Tom Doney
Announcements

- Starting next Sunday (Sept 6th), the worship service will return to its 10:00 AM starting time.

- Sunday School Information—Please see the letter from Pastor Dan that is included in the bulletin (pg 6) for complete information about the reopening of Sunday School for the children on September 13th.

- We will continue with our current partial opening policy through September.
  - Social distancing is required and masks when not.
  - 3/4 of the church is reserved for those who will wear masks throughout the service, with the 1/4 section near the choir loft for those who wish to take off their masks during the service.
  - Children should stay with their families.
  - The service will continue to be live-streamed.
  - The church will be closed for studies, meetings and coffee hour.
  - See below for the complete policy.

- We will not be passing the collection plate; instead there is a plate in the back of the sanctuary for your offering at the end of the service. For those at home you can mail in your offering check (SCC; 800 Main St., Winsted, CT 06098), or if you use online banking you can have your bank send a check from your account. Finally, to reduce the number of checks Carol needs to handle you could combine a few weeks giving into one check. Thank you!

- We will be live-streaming the service throughout the summer. The worship services can be found on our YouTube channel "Second Congregational Church of Winsted, CT" at: www.youtube.com/channel/UCCW4dPY3yqt-GsjPZG-CHuQ

- Pastor Doug needs questions for his YouTube channel "Simply Reformed." If you have any questions or suggestions please write them down and drop them in the box in the back of the sanctuary. The channel can be found at: www.youtube.com/simplyreformed

- Sunday Sexton needed: The position is from 8:00 AM to noon on Sundays with an occasional weekday or Saturday for a special event. Candidates must be experienced handyman and able to work independently. If interested, please see Sharon Okraska or any member of the Building & Grounds Committee.

- Worship service music—During this time it is not possible for our choir to provide music for our worship service. If you would like to serve as the cantor to lead our hymns and/or provide an anthem please see Pastor Doug.

Sermon Schedule
(Subject change)

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<td>The Flame of the Lord</td>
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<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>Song of Songs 5:6-8</td>
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<td>Sept 20</td>
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<td>A Series on the Parable of Sower and</td>
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<td>Sept 27</td>
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Dear Sunday School Families and Teachers,

I pray you and your family are well and doing well as we work through these difficult and unprecedented times. As Christians, we take comfort that our God and Savior, Jesus Christ is sovereign over all things and abounding in love. Furthermore, we are comforted that He is the source of true hope and that He works all things for our good.

Our plan is to return to the classroom for Sunday School on Sunday, September 13th at 9:00 am. In order to protect our students and staff to the greatest degree as possible, we will be following the State of Connecticut and CDC guidelines for schools. The following measures will be enacted for the coming school year:

1. Students having a temperature of 100.4 F or above must remain home.
2. Parents of participating children will need to contact me by text or email by 8:45 am on Sunday if students will not be attending on any given Sunday.
3. Students will be socially distanced in the classroom.
4. Students and teachers will need to wear masks when entering and leaving the Sunday School area and during class.
5. Sunday School rooms will be sanitized and disinfected after each use.

In light of the measures we will be taking, please respond to this email to let me know your plans for participation and how the CE Board can best help your children develop in their walk with Christ. Please select from the following options in response to this email by Sunday, August 30th.

A. My child (children) will be attending Sunday School this year.
B. My child (children) will not be attending Sunday School this year, but please mail the curriculum to me.
C. My child (children) will not be attending Sunday School this year.

Please feel free to email me with any questions, concerns, or comments. My prayer is that we will soon see the return to our usual fellowship as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

In Christ,

Pastor Dan

203-217-7498
Up Coming Events

Tuesday, Sept. 1 at 7:00 PM—Our own Leigh Cappabianca will be giving a presentation and update of her current missionary labors in the Middle East. We will meet via Zoom. If you are interested, please email Carol (info@sccwinsted.org) no later than 10 am on Tuesday that you plan to attend. We strongly urge everyone to attend and support Leigh.

Listed below are various discipleship opportunities. If you are interested please email me: douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net

• **Time for Prayer:** Pastor Doug & Pastor Dan will be gathering together via Zoom for a brief time of prayer on the 1st & 3rd Tuesday at 6:00 PM. We will start on September 15th.

• **Wednesday Study & Discussion Group About Our Heritage & Future:** With 2020 being the 400th anniversary of the founding of the Plymouth Colony, Pastor Doug will be leading a 10 week study about the history and future of Congregationalism, especially how it relates to the future of this church. The classes will be a mixture of lecture and discussion and will meet from September 16th through November 18th, every Wednesday night, from 7:00-8:30 PM, via Zoom.

• **Weekly Bible Study:** Pastor Doug would like to have some sort of weekly Bible on Zoom. It could be a full class (1.5 hours) or maybe a shorter time, say during the lunch hour. If you have any suggestions or requests, please contact Pastor Doug.

• **Hebrew Study:** Are you interested in learning the basics of Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament? Pastor Doug is open to facilitating (he is not a Hebrew teacher!) a self-study course going through the basics of the language. If you are interested please contact Pastor Doug.

• There is still time to join in with the 2020-21 **Confirmation Class.** If any youth from 10th grade or up is interested please contact Pastor Doug.
Guidelines for Sunday Worship

- We have switched the attention of the worship away from a camera-focused service to a congregation-focused service.
- Social distancing must be practiced, and children should stay with their families.
- Some pews are roped off to best encourage social distancing.
- We strongly encourage everyone to wear masks throughout the service.
- For those who do not wear masks throughout the service, please sit in the quarter section of the church next to the choir loft.
- The bulletin includes all biblical texts and hymns, so pew Bibles and hymnals will not be necessary.
- There will be no Offering during the service, the plates are available on tables in the back.
- The Lord’s Supper will be with individually self-sealed cups, which will be placed on the back tables, with the bulletins, by someone wearing gloves and a mask.
- The congregation will be singing hymns as part of the service. (Again, we strongly encourage everyone to wear masks.)
- There will be no children’s messages, greetings, choir, coffee hour, Sunday school, Bible studies, or summer church, at least through the summer.
- We ask there be no socializing in the building after church, especially in the narthex and the walkways. Please socialize outside.
- Pastor Doug and Pastor Dan will be outside after the service, with a mask on, to chat with anyone in need.
- The balcony is closed.
- The sanctuary is cleaned after every service and studies have shown the virus cannot survive beyond 5 days, which is encouraging.
- Besides Sunday worship, only the Diaper Bank will meet at the church throughout the summer.
- If you have any concerns, especially those in a vulnerable demographic, please be safe and stay home.
- The service is being live-streamed, at least through the summer.

If you have any questions, comments, concerns, or need assistance with anything, please contact Pastor Doug. Your prayers and patience during these troubling times are greatly appreciated.
Introduction

1) Question: Are you living in the Promised Land? Let’s ponder that today while reading through Song of Songs (SoS) 7:9-8:4.

2) We are reading through the Song of Songs interpreting it as an allegory between Christ (the Man/Bridegroom) and His church (the woman/Bride).

3) It is the only book in the Bible that should be read as an allegory.
   a) The allegorical approach is the original and ancient way of reading the book.
   b) It is the only way to make sense of such an earthy and sensual book.
   c) As taught by the title, it is the greatest song every written, so it has to be about Christ! Matt 9:15; 25:1ff; Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39; Acts 13:27; Eph 5:31-32; Rev 19:7-10

4) Pastor Doug thinks the way to read the SoS is meditative and not analytically trying to create a systematic theology.
   a) Meditative not in the Eastern Philosophical sense of mysticism, but to ponder biblical themes from other parts of Scripture that one might hear in the SoS.
   b) This is why the SoS requires maturity.
      i) A juvenile mind will not profit from its sensual, literal language.
      ii) It requires a good grasp of biblical theology to ponder the various images.

5) For SoS 7:9-8:4 I want to meditate on the locations mentioned.
   a) Have mediated about locations before:
      i) The imagery of the Bridegroom being a King and a Shepherd who is tending His flock clearly has allusions to Christ and His church.
      ii) The imagery of the lovers going to a garden invokes thoughts about how the Bible goes from the people of God living in a garden (Eden) to the City of God in heaven.

   b) Today, let us ponder the imagery of the land.

A Literal Reading of the Song of Songs 7:9-8:4

1) Back in SoS 5:6-8 the woman is abused by the town’s guardsmen while looking for her beloved who is among His flock.

2) When they meet they describe how beautiful each other is.
3) The Man says that His beloved’s mouth is like the best wine.
   a) The woman then describes her love for the Bridegroom.
   b) His kisses are like the best wine, which in the end, end in sleep.
   c) She desires to go with Him to the country (literally “field),
      to spend the night in the villages.
      i) For the ancients, usually the city is the best place.
         The country is where peasants are found, not royalty.
         The wilderness is where bandits and monsters dwell.
      ii) However, for the young couple, the land of the country, vineyards
          and gardens, is the best place for lovers.
   d) She wants them to get up early and go to the vineyards, to see
      if the life of spring, the time of fertility has begun, where she
      will give Him her love.
   e) She loves Him like a brother.
      i) This is a common ancient romantic reference.
      ii) It does not imply anything immoral but simply close affection.
   f) She wants to bring Him into “the house of my mother.”
      i) This is a place of love, life and fertility.
      ii) It is a place of safety and security.
      iii) It is where she was most likely conceived and learned how to be a woman.
      iv) In the ancient world, it was the duty of the mother to arrange the marriage of
          her daughter.
   g) She wants His embrace.

3) He speaks, and warns the Chorus of Maidens about the danger of such love.

Allegorical Reading of the Song of Songs 7:9-8:4

1) The imagery of returning to the land is a powerful biblical image.
   a) Of course, God created the land, and the whole earth.
   b) One of the major themes of the Old Testament (OT) is the call for the
      ancient Israelites to take possession of the Promised Land of Canaan.
   c) In both Hebrew (the language of the OT) and Greek (the language of the NT)
      there is a generic word that means either “land”, “ground” or “earth”
      depending on the context.¹

2) It is very interesting to note how the Old and New Testament view the “land” or “earth.”
   a) For example, the 5th Commandment, the first of the love your neighbor commands.

¹ In Hebrew it is “גֵּן, ‘erets / eh-rets”. In Greek it is “γῆ, gē / ghay”
For example, in the NT, ghay is translated as “land” in (for the NASB): Matt 2:6,20-21; 4:15; Acts 7:11; 13:19.
i) In the OT (Deut 5:16) – “Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land (ghay) which the Lord your God gives you.”

ii) In the NT (Eph 6:2-3) – “Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth (ghay).”

b) Note the change: In the Greek the OT is translated as “land” but in the NT it is “earth.”

i) Why the difference?

ii) In the Hebrew OT a different, more specific word for “land” is used. Though in the Greek OT it is the more generic word for “land” or “earth.”

iii) The theology of the two Testaments compels the change of translation. The OT is focused on the Promised Land of Canaan for the people of God. The NT is focused on the whole earth, and the cosmos itself, for God’s people.

3) The promises of the OT are “copies”, “shadows” and figures of the reality and fulfillment found in Christ’s superior new covenant of the grace of the cross.

4) Yes, there is still a future hope for the Jewish people, but the NT expands the promise of God’s people from the Land of Canaan to the whole earth/cosmos.

a) The OT view of the “land” is but a shadow and figure of the reality that the church will inherit all the earth, and even the cosmos.

b) The church is commanded to “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” - Matt 28:19b

c) We have received the power of the Holy Spirit, so that church “shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth (ghay).” - Acts 1:8b

d) The promises given to father Abraham (the first OT Jewish patriarch) was not just for the land but the earth/cosmos through Christ’s Gospel.

i) As Paul writes in Romans 4:13 – “For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world (kosmos, kosmos) was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.”

ii) As per OT prophecy that the New Covenant will be for all nations.

5) This imagery of the land/earth/cosmos for the church is probably best seen in the end of Hebrews, as found in today’s call to worship (Heb 11:8-10,13-16; 12:22-24; 13:12-14).

a) In chapter 11 of Hebrews, the writer gives the “Hall of Fame” of faithful OT believers.

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2 “Ghay” here is from the Greek OT called the Septuagint (or the LXX), the OT used by the NT Apostles. In the Hebrew OT it is not “eh-rets” but the specific “ad-aw-maw”, which means “ground” or “land.”

3 To give another example:
Ps 37:11 – “But the humble will inherit the land (eh-rets, ghay) and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.”
Matt 5:5 – “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth (ghay).”
b) He notes that Abraham first moved to the Promised Land of Canaan but had to dwell there as if it was a foreign land because of the evil Canaanites.

i) The offspring of Abraham (children, grandchildren / Isaac, Jacob, etc.) are heirs of the same Promised Land.

ii) However, they were looking for not just land, but a "city" "whose architect and builder is God."

c) Yet the patriarchs did not receive the Promised Land, but instead lived as "strangers and exiles on the earth (ghay)."

i) Again, they were desiring more than land, but a "country" a "homeland", literally a "fatherland."

ii) Which means they were really desiring a heavenly land.

• "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God".

• Because God "has prepared a city for them."

d) We Christians, because of Christ's love for us, have come to this City, which is right now here (in the church), and is yet to come (the heavenly city).

i) We "have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel." – Heb 12:22b-24

ii) His Kingdom will be made perfect at Christ's return at the end of the age.

• Just as the Lord Jesus didn't create His perfect earthly Kingdom during His first advent, but suffered and died outside the gate of the city of Jerusalem, "let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach."

• Going "outside" the camp is to turn away from the fallen world, the hope in mere geographic locations (even earthly Jerusalem such as during the crusades), and the desire to earn our righteousness by our own works (even by the works of the Old Covenant).

• Instead we go outside to Christ, even if the world hates us, bearing His reproach.

• For in this world "we do not have a lasting city." (Whether your home, town, Connecticut, USA, or the earthly Jerusalem.)

• Because "we are seeking the city which is to come", the future sinless new heavens and new earth which will be ruled directly by Christ.

Conclusion

1) God greatly loves His people (the church) in Christ.

2) His wine (communion with Him) is very sweet.

   a) Let us go to Him, for He desires us.

   b) We find Him not in this fallen world, of earthly politics and human power.
c) But we find Him in His church, the Bride of Christ.
   i) A place of love, life and new life.
   ii) A place of safety and security, because His Word is proclaimed here, where we can sing to His glory.
   iii) It is where we are conceived: given faith and baptized, and learn how to love.
   iv) It is where we are arranged to be married with our Bridegroom.

3) Our union with Christ is in one sense perfect: because we have been perfectly justified.
   a) In others we still wait for the final perfect union with Christ in the glories of heaven.
   b) We therefore should have no fear of this fallen world which is passing away.
      i) We have been given it, to proclaim Christ’s Gospel to the ends of this world.
      ii) While waiting for the day when our Lord returns to completely remake it.

4) This love is a dangerous thing, because it changes everything.
Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken

John Newton, 1725-1807

1. Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God;
   He whose word cannot be broken Formed thee for his own abode.
   On the Rock of Ages founded, What can shake thy sure repose?
   With salvation's walls surrounded, Thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

2. See, the streams of living waters, Springing from eternal love,
   Well supply thy sons and daughters, And all fear of want remove.
   Who can faint, while such a river Everflows their thirst to assuage?
   Grace, which like the Lord, the Giver, Never fails from age to age.

3. Round each habitation hovering, See the cloud and fire appear
   For a glory and a covering, Showing that the Lord is near!
   Thus deriving from their banner Light by night and shade by day,
   Safe they feed upon the manna Which he gives them when they pray. Amen.

AUSTRIAN HYMN 8.7.8.7.D.
Franz J. Haydn, 1732-1809

NATURE AND UNITY
I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord

1 I love thy king-dom, Lord; The house of thine a-bode,
2 I love thy Church, O God; Her walls be-fore thee stand,
3 For her my tears shall fall, For her my prayers as-cend,
4 Be-yond my high-est joy I prize her heaven-ly ways,
5 Sure as thy truth shall last, To Zi-on shall be given

The Church our blest Re-deem-er saved With his own pre-cious blood.
Dear as the ap-ple of thine eye, And grav-en on thy hand.
To her my cares and toils be given Till toils and cares shall end.
Her sweet com-mun-ion, sol-emn vows, Her hymns of love and praise.
The bright-est glo ries earth can yield, And bright-er bliss of heaven. A-men.