

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025



St. John's Lutheran Church of Parkville

stjohnsparkville.org

(410) 665-1234

office@stjohnsparkville.org

Text SJPARKVILLE to 22828 to join our email list.

Welcome to St. John's—we are glad you're here! Whether you have worshiped with us many times, or this is your first time, there is a place for you here. Your presence among us is a gift.

Introduction to the Day

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

(Please take a moment to silence all electronics. Thank you!)

(Hymns are taken from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, the red book in the pew rack.)

WELCOME

PRELUDE

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

Robert Lau

(© 2016 Lorenz Publishing Co.)

(Please stand as you are able.)

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of one another.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

Long-expected God,
**we confess that we look to ourselves
for the peace and security only you can provide.
We reach for swords and spears,
reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.
We become impatient while waiting
and weary of keeping awake.
Free us from self-reliance,
and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.
Increase our trust in God's timing,
and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised.**
Amen.

God judges us not as we deserve,
but according to God's own righteousness.

STAFF

Rev. Mathew Berger, Pastor mathew.berger@stjohnsparkville.org	Rev. Amy Berger, Pastor amy.berger@stjohnsparkville.org
Martha Requard, Director of Music	Carol Erpenstein, Office Administrator
Scott Becker, Sexton	

For emergencies call 443-844-9314

****The Pastors are off on Fridays****



Notice of live streaming:

Today's worship service is being live streamed to YouTube with video coverage of leaders and worshippers.



St. John's Lutheran Church Parkville



stjohnsparkville

✝ You are freed and forgiven,
saved by grace,
and ready to welcome the Savior.
Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

ELW 254

(Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788; Music: W. Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835)

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE *He Came Down*

ELW 253

(Text and Music: Cameroon traditional; arr. John L. Bell, b. 1949; Arr. © 1986 Iona Community, admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love;
Hallelujah forevermore.

(Please stand as you are able.)

WORD

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL

Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

(The assembly is seated.)

CHOIR CANTATA

I Hear the Prophet Callin'

(Words and music: Pepper Choplin; © 2009 Lorenz Publishing Company)

Listen to the Story

Choir

READING

Isaiah 40:3-5

I Hear the Prophet Callin'

Choir

READING

Isaiah 9:2

The People Who Walk in Darkness

Choir

MEAL

OFFERING MUSIC

O Morning Star

Franklin Ritter

(© 2003 Lorenz Publishing Co.)

Thank you for your generous support of St. John's. During this time an offering is gathered for the mission and ministry of the Church as together we experience and share God's abundant grace and love.



Advent and Christmas 2025

Advent Services

December 21st 4th Sunday of Advent
Worship with Holy Communion at 10:00 am with a Cantata from St. John's Choir

December 21st The Longest Night Service
Worship at 6:30 pm - A service of remembering our losses, acknowledging the pain and celebrating the hope and light of Jesus

Celebration of the Birth of Christ – December 24th

10:00 am Christmas Eve Worship*

4:00 pm Family Christmas Eve Worship with Children Participation*

8:30 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship*

December 25th Christmas Day Service at 10:00 am*

December 28th 1st Sunday after Christmas
Worship at 10:00 am Service of Lessons & Carols

*Services include Holy Communion

St. John's Lutheran Church
 8808 Harford Road ~ Parkville, MD 21234
 410-665-1234 ~ www.stjohnsparkville.org

Join us as we dwell in the season of Advent and anticipate God's abundant love & grace born to us in Jesus Christ.

Have a Blessed Christmas!



Many in our congregation give online. You can set up one-time or recurring donations on our website stjohnsparkville.org. Checks and cash may be placed in the offering plate. You may also donate via venmo @stjohnsparkville

(Please stand as you are able.)

This week's schedule	
Today	9:00 am Handbell Choir 9:00 am Sunday School & Faith +Fellowship 10:00 am Live & Online Worship 11:30 am Altar Guild Meeting (Fellowship Hall) 6:30 pm The Longest Night Service
Mon.	
Tues.	
Wed.	10:00 am Christmas Eve Worship 4:00 pm Family Christmas Eve Worship 8:00 pm Adult Choir Rehearsal 8:30 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship
Thurs.	10:00 am Christmas Day Service (office closed)
Fri.	(office closed)
Sat.	

OFFERING HYMN

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

ELW 247



O - so - sŏ o - so - sŏ, pyong - hwa - ũi - im - gŭm

- 1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
- 2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
- 3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
- 4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.



u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sŏ.

- Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope
 Music: OSOSŎ. Geonyong Lee, b. 1947
 Text and music © Geonyong Lee

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Counting our Blessings

Sun.	Attendance:	2025	
12/14	Offering: \$	September Offering Income	\$ 21,087
	Homebound: 15	September Other Income	\$ 2,591
No		September Total Income	\$ 23,678
Worship		September Expenses	\$ 26,035
due to		YTD Offering Income	\$235,293
inclement		YTD Other Income	\$ 36,234
weather		YTD Total Income	\$271,527
		YTD Expenses	\$308,174
		YTD Tax Credit	*\$ 92,089

OFFERING PRAYER

Nourishing God,
 you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
 Through this meal, satisfy our parched places,
 that we may rejoice and be for the world
 signs of your kingdom come.

Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.
You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed...

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup
we remember your Word
dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.
Come, Lord Jesus. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.
Come among us.
Bless this meal.

A few notes from your Financial Secretary:

It's that time of the year already. Just sending along some friendly reminders to you about your 2025 giving:

- Please make sure that any final 2025 contributions you wish to make to St. John's are placed in the offering plate or received by the church office no later than Sunday, December 28th. Our final count and deposit, which will include any contributions received through December 28th, will be done the morning of Monday, December 29th. All contributions received in 2025 will be included on your 2025 Contribution Report. Reports will be generated and mailed to you in mid-January.
- Our Simply Giving program continues to be available to you in making contributions to St. John's. If you are interested in signing up, you may do so at any time. Please feel free to send me an email at haackefamily@comcast.net or give me a call at 410-661-8970 and I will send a form to you for you to complete. If you have any questions about filling out the form or the program, please let me know. I'm happy to help.
- In addition to regular envelope and Simply Giving offerings, you may give by way of credit card or Venmo through our website at www.stjohnsparkville.org. (For Venmo, you may also just enter @stjohnsparkville if you have the Venmo App.)

On behalf of our Church, thank you for your continued support and generosity!

Stay safe and enjoy the upcoming holiday season!

Debra Haacke



Prayer List

Please remember the following individuals in your prayers.

For health & healing: Bender Family, Nancy Ford, Gerry Steg, Barbara Conrad, Lou Carletti, Landon Ullmann, John McLaughlin, Barbara Mueller, Tony Jasinski, Danyiel Cleckley, Pat Denk, Joan Kraft, Olusegun Fowode, Marge Jasper, Julie Hastings, Kim Townsley, Bill Fliegel, Marion McDonough, Diane Carroll, Richard Souders, Oluseye Fowode, Robert Suznick, Lisa Duerling, Debbie Miller, Sandy Scott and Vickie Jasinski

For family & friends: Owen Hastings, Peggy Van Houten, Lou Ermer, Roxann Kelly, Joong In Rhee, Phyllis Gray, Bill Denk, Judy Miller, Hubie Tarbo, Abby Chamberlain, Bunny Russell, Jerry Earles, Lynette Earles, Bill Beck, Henry Davis, Donna Parrish, Brenda DeSouze, Carol Paulshock, Elaine Perzan, Debbie McWilliam, George Lotterer, Jenny Cavallero, Barb Distefano, Marilyn Baldwin, Fred Smith, Anna Meyer, Patricia Dunn, Jerre Keller, Scott Hendricks, Chuck Taylor, Jane Esterby, Patsy Smith, Marianne Widderich

For the military and their families: Christopher McCann, Mason Arnold, Kalib McCann, Leroy Keller, Seaman E-3 Carson Anthony Bowser, Corporal Justin Ferro, Staff Sgt. Brandan Hartmann, Michael Anthony Tucker, and all those in harm's way

For those grieving family & friends of: Charles Bender, Richard Brooks

For St. John's Caring Friends: Patricia Becker, Agatha Biensach-Daniels, Barbara Conrad, Margaret Eubert, June Franz, Betty Glassband, Richard Hoerner, Audrey Lentz, Carl Lotterer, Barbara Mueller, Paul Nolder, Janet Roth, Doris Rye, Mildred Schaffer, Kim Townsley, and Emma Volz

Note regarding the Prayer List

Those on the family & friends prayer list will remain for 6 weeks and then be removed—unless otherwise specified. If at any time you would like to add or remove someone from the list, please contact the church office.

May your Word take flesh in us.
Awaken your people.
Fill us with your light.
Bring the gift of peace on earth.
Come, Holy Spirit. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

We praise you, O God.
our hope, our joy, our peace.
Today, tomorrow, and forever. **Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass 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 and ever. Amen.**

(The assembly is seated.)

COMMUNION

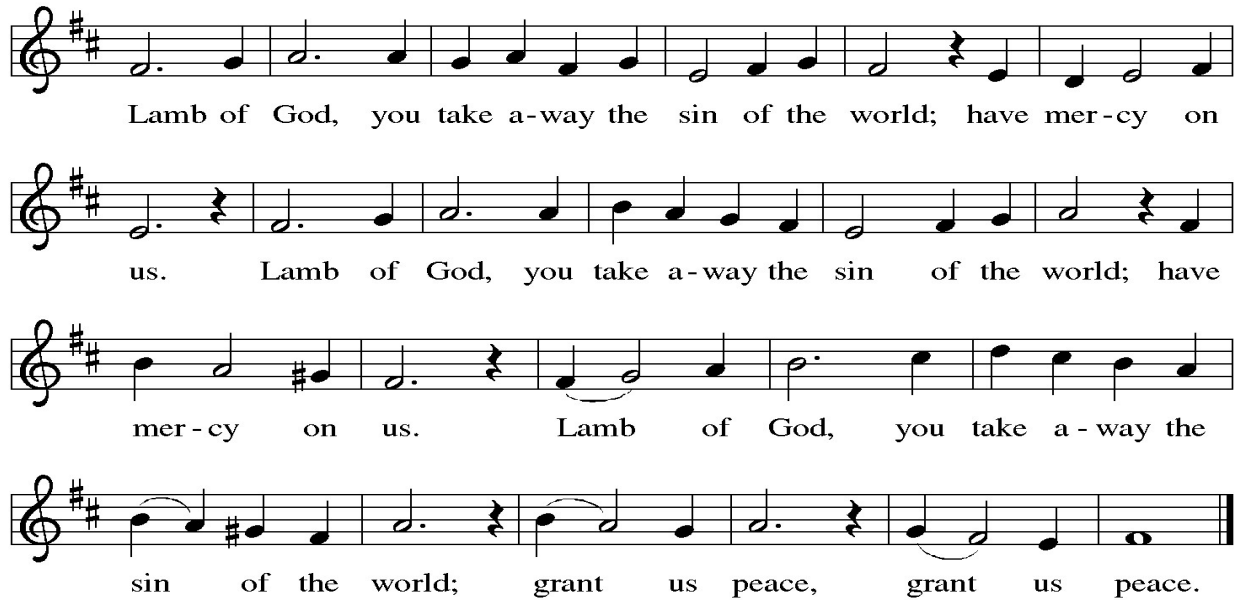
All are welcome at Christ's table. Bread is received in the hands. Gluten-free wafers are available—if you need one, please ask the pastor. To receive the wine, take an empty cup and the communion assistant will fill it with wine. The cups that are already filled contain grape juice. After drinking, place the used cup in the basket on your way back to your seat.

*If you are not communing you are welcome to come forward for a blessing,
crossing your arms over your chest.*

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life. God is with us.
Come, receive what God has promised.

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMNS

All Earth is Hopeful

ELW 266

(Text and music: Alberto Taule, 1932-2007; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946; Spanish text and tune © 1993 and tr. © 1995 Centro de Pastoral Liturgica, admin. OCP Publications)

No Wind at the Window (see page 11)

ACS 906

(Please remain seated.)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God our host,
at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.
Send us forth, eager to share the feast,
welcome the stranger,
and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

READING

Luke 2:1, 3-7

I Hear a Mother Singin'

Soloist

Rockin' Slow and Even

Choir

READING

Luke 2:17-18, 20


If you took a Snowman tag from the tree, your gifts are due today. Return your wrapped gift and attach the tag to the outside of the gift.



Lessons & Carols **Readers Needed.....**We are in need of readers for the Lessons and Carols service on Sunday, December 28th. Please contact Martha at mrequard1@gmail.com if you can help.

The 2026 Offering Envelopes are here. They are on the third floor, on the counter outside of the Sanctuary. Feel free to deliver envelopes to those who are not able to pick them up.



 **Join us for our next Community Meal on Wednesday, January 7th beginning at 5:30 pm.** Please come and invite your friends, family and neighbors! We will need donations and volunteers. Look for the sign up sheet on the third floor bulletin board.

St. John's 7th Annual Bull and Shrimp Roast is Friday, February 6th from 6:30 pm—10:30 pm at Columbus Gardens. Contact Tony Jasinski for tickets.



For your information...

- † There will be No Sunday School or Faith + Fellowship on December 28th and January 4th.
- † There will be No Friday Bible Study on December 26th and January 2nd.
- † The church office will be closed on December 25th and December 26th in observance of Christmas.
- † The church office will also be closed on January 1st in observance of New Years Day.
- † The Pastors will be away December 26th—January 8th. For emergencies call the church office during office hours. After hours, call the emergency number at 443-844—9314.

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Announcements & Upcoming Events

Next Week—Sunday, December 28th— First Sunday of Christmas

† 10 am—Worship in-person/Lessons & Carols


and livestreamed on our YouTube Channel

Visit stjohnsparkville.org





The beautiful flowers gracing our worship service today are given by Bill and Shelley Arnold wishing all of St. John's Family a blessed Christmas.

We are taking altar flower dedications for 2026. The cost is \$50. Contact Rachel Hills at rm_hills@yahoo.com if you would like to sponsor the flowers. Dates available are January 25th, February 8th, 15th and 22nd, March 15th, 22nd and 29th, April 12th and 19th, May 3rd and 31st, June 28th, July 5th, 12th and 19th, August 2nd, 9th, 23rd and 30th, September 6th, 20th and 27th.


Nursery Care for infants through age 2 is available during the Sunday School hour while parents are attending Faith and Fellowship. During worship, care is available for infants through kindergarten. 


 **Faith and Fellowship meets in the Fellowship Hall on the first floor from 9 am—9:45 am each Sunday.** This is an opportunity for adults to gather for light refreshments and to grow in faith.


Sunday School takes place on Sunday mornings from 9 am-9:45 am. Children ages 3 through 5th grade meet on the third floor. Middle and High School students meet in the Youth Room on the second floor. 

 **St. John's Youth Group meets on the first Sunday of the month from about 11:15 am—12:30 pm.** This group is for middle and high school students. Join us as we have fun, get to know one another and grow in faith.

Thank You to everyone who has supported the Food for Thought Program this year. Due to your generosity, our stock is full! We will begin our collection again in the new year. 

 **Join us for our Friday morning Bible Study at 11:00 am in the Smith Building.** Our study is on Philippians. All are welcome! On January 9th we will begin our new study on the Parables of Jesus.

Job Opportunity-Child Care... We're looking for a new nursery attendant! Sundays 8:30 am-11:30 am. Pay is \$15/hr. Background check provided. Contact the church office for more information. 

 **Join us this evening for The Longest Night Service at 6:30 pm.** We will gather together to acknowledge our pain and to remember that the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, shines into our grief with hope, mercy and love.

There in the Same Country

Choir

I Hear the Shepherds Callin'

Soloist

READING

Luke 2:17-18, 20

Go Tell It

Choir and Congregation

After choir sings, "Now all God's people say," congregations sings:

**Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere,
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.**

I See the Star of Glory

Choir

READING

Matthew 2:1, 9-11

A Star Rising in the East

Choir

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING

BLESSING

May God who comes among us,
Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.
Amen.

I Hear the People Singin'

Choir and Congregation

The congregation is invited to join in "Joy to the World."

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her king,
Let every heart prepare him room
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Postlude on "Antioch"

Gerald Peterson

(© 1989 Lorenz Publishing Co.)

Commemorations

When we are baptized, we are baptized into the body of Christ. We understand this body to be the communion of saints, a diverse witness of people across time and space.

Throughout its history, the church has sought to lift up Christians who have been unique, exemplary people of faith. It is not that these people are perfect, as we are all both saint and sinner. Our faith in God working in them can be a reminder of God's grace working in all of our lives. "The saints are to be remembered so that we may strengthen our faith when we see how they experienced grace and how they were helped by faith."

(Augsburg Confession)

Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Friday, December 26, 2025

Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

John, Apostle and Evangelist

Saturday, December 27, 2025

The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

Those Serving Today	
Assisting Minister	Vickie Jasinski
Crucifer	Gabby G.
Acolyte (s)	Roman G., Alec B.
Lector	Andi Fuhrman
Communion Assistant	Andi Fuhrman
Dismissal Assistant	Madilyn A.

No Wind at the Window



1 No wind at the win - dow, no knock on the door;
2 "O Mar - y, O Mar - y, don't hide from my face.
3 This child must be born that the king - dom might come:
4 No pay - ment was prom - ised, no prom - is - es made;



no light from the lamp - stand, no foot on the floor;
Be glad that you're fa - vored and filled with God's grace.
sal - va - tion for man - y, de - struc - tion for some;
no wed - ding was dat - ed, no blue - print dis - played.



no dream born of tired - ness, no ghost raised by fear:
The time for re - deem - ing the world has be - gun,
both end and be - gin - ning, both mes - sage and sign;
Yet Mar - y, con - sent - ing to what none could guess,



just an an - gel and a wom - an and a voice in her ear.
and . . . you are re - quest - ed to . . . moth - er God's Son."
both . . . vic - tor and . . . vic - tim, both . . . yours and di - vine."
re - plied with con - vic - tion, "Tell . . . God I say yes."

Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949

Music: COLUMCILLE, Irish melody

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