K E E P I N G   V I G I L

Simple Songs for the
Vigil of Easter Responses

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April 2020

About These Songs

The Vigil of Easter is a night of new fire and old stories, the liturgy at which the ancient church welcomed new members through baptism. This is the night when "alleluia" awakens from its Lenten repose, when holy spaces are made to look, sound, and smell resplendent—all to affirm and celebrate the passover from death to life.

An important part of the service are the twelve appointed Vigil readings from the Old Testament, some of the most dramatic stories of salvation from the Hebrew Bible. They are:

1. **Genesis 1:1—2:4a*** (*Creation*)
2. **Genesis 7:1–5, 11–18; 8:6–18; 9:8–13** (*Flood*)
3. **Genesis 22:1–18** (*Testing of Abraham*)
4. **Exodus 14:10–31; 15:20–21*** (*Deliverance at the Red Sea*)
5. **Isaiah 55:1–11*** (*Salvation freely offered to all*)
6. **Proverbs 8:1–8, 19–21; 9:4b–6** *or* **Baruch 3:9–15, 32—4:4** (*The wisdom of God*)
7. **Ezekiel 36:24–28** (*A new heart and a new spirit*)
8. **Ezekiel 37:1–14** (*Valley of the dry bones*)
9. **Zephaniah 3:14–20** (*The gathering of God's people*)
10. **Jonah 1:1—2:1** (*The deliverance of Jonah*)
11. **Isaiah 61:1–4, 9–11** (*Clothed in the garments of salvation*)
12. **Daniel 3:1–29*** (*Deliverance from the fiery furnace*)

In most cases, each reading is followed by a sung response and a prayer. Some congregations use all twelve readings; some use only the four primary readings, those marked with an asterisk (*) in the above list.

Although Vigil observances in homes may not provide the same sensory immersion as those in churches and cathedrals, the new fire can still be lit—a bonfire outdoors or a candle indoors—and any of the twelve Old Testament lessons and their responses can be read or sung by individuals or groups.

The songs in this collection are intended for use in the home, and have been designed for an array of musical abilities and forces. The music that is printed on the following pages is only a guide: all parts may be truncated, adapted, or expanded to suit what is needed in any given context. Choose a few songs that will work in your setting, and, if it suits your context, ask family members or friends to prepare some of the parts in advance.

Copyright Information

This collection has attempted to avoid reprinting copyrighted material, though citations for scriptural translations and adaptations have been given where appropriate. Teaching materials may be fashioned from its contents, but the songs, preferably, *should not* be used to facilitate the production of pre-recorded or live-streamed liturgy broadcasts: they are meant to be learned and sung in the home, not merely observed through audio-visual means.

Preparing to Sing

Begin by gathering instruments from around the home that may help provide pitch and rhythm such as:

Pitch	Rhythm
❏ A bell	❏ Small rocks or sticks
❏ An empty bottle—blowing across the top produces a tone	❏ A large bucket and something with which to strike its lid or bottom (when upside down)
❏ If you have more than one empty bottle, see if you can make the other sound a different tone by adding water	❏ You can also download various hand drum or other percussion tools for phone or tablet
❏ You can also download an electronic shruti box, a drone instrument, for a phone or tablet	

Surely you can think of more: be creative, have fun, and improvise! Sing a few of the songs, or all of them. Write new ones. Sing holy songs around new fire as the Easter Proclamation (*Exsultet*) proclaims:
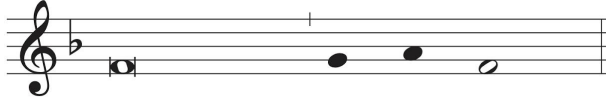
> Therefore, in this night of grace,
> receive, O God, our praise and thanksgiving
> for the light of the resurrection
> of our Lord Jesus Christ.

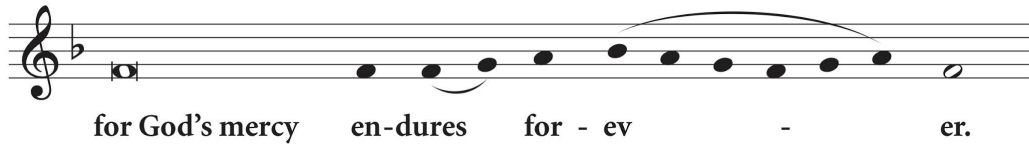May God bless your worship and your singing.

Birmingham, Alabama
Sunday of the Passion
5 April 2020
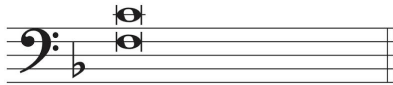
After reading Genesis 1:1—2:4a

The first half of each appointed psalm verse can spoken or chanted to the following tone:

Respond by singing the second half of each verse:

for God's mercy   en-dures   for - ev   -   er.

A drone can be used throughout:


A single bell or bell cluster can be rung between each verse.

After reading Genesis 7:1–5, 11–18; 8:6–18; 9:8–13

This song contains layers that can be added and subtracted depending on how many are singing and what instruments are available.

The first layer is a two-part segment that can be repeated many times:

God   is   our   shel - ter.   God   is   our   strong-hold.
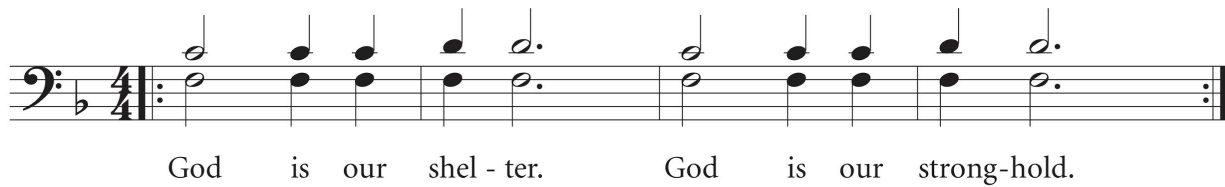
At the very end of the song, add this:
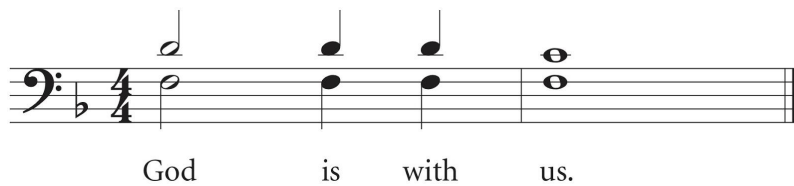
God   is   with   us.

An instrumental melody can also be added to the ostinato:

For higher C instruments such as flutes, violins, and oboes

Last time only

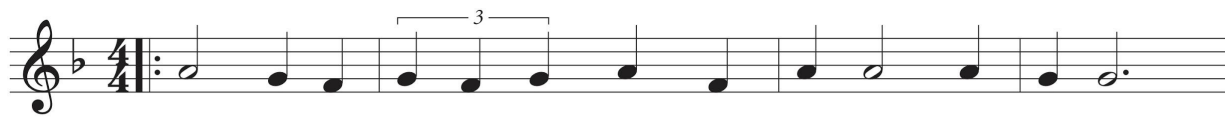*For treble B-flat instruments such as clarinets and trumpets*

Last time only

For treble E-flat instruments such as the alto saxophone

Last time only

For bass instruments such as trombones or cellos

Last time only

During the repeated portion, a soloist or group can sing:

God is our ref-uge and strength, a sure help in trou-ble.

There-fore we will not fear for God is al - ways with us.

Last time only

God is with us.

After reading Genesis 22:1–18

This song can be sung by a single person, or by groups in a call-and-response dialogue. Follow the directions of the leader—if they sing soft, loud, or include hand motions!

You   will   show   me
You   will   show   me

the   path   of   life;
the   path   of   life;

in   your   pres -   ence
in   your   pres -   ence

there is   full   -   ness   of   joy!
there is   full -   ness of   joy!

The song can also be used as a refrain after verses 4, 8, and 11 of the psalm. The verses can be spoken or chanted to a tone:

Make up a percussion rhythm for the refrain!

FOURTH RESPONSE | *Deliverance at the Red Sea* **Exodus 15:1b–13, 17–18**

After reading Exodus 14:10–31; 15:20–21

This is another song for many layers, and can be made as simple or as complex as desired. First, try some basic percussion rhythms such as:
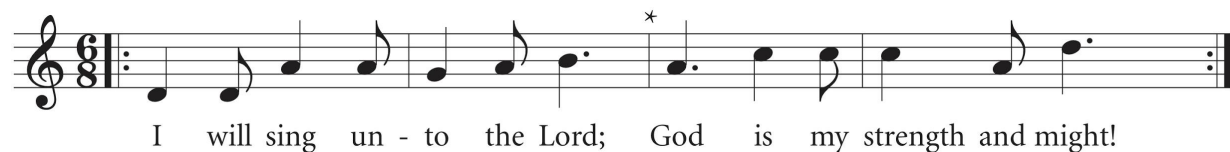
For a drum

For a tambourine

Shake the tambourine anytime someone sings the words "strength" or "might"!

A guitar or piano can also be used for rhythm and harmony, perhaps in this pattern and with these chords:

Once the rhythmic and harmonic pattern is established, sing:

The melody can also be sung in a two-measure round beginning at the asterisk (*)

I will sing un - to the Lord; God is my strength and might!

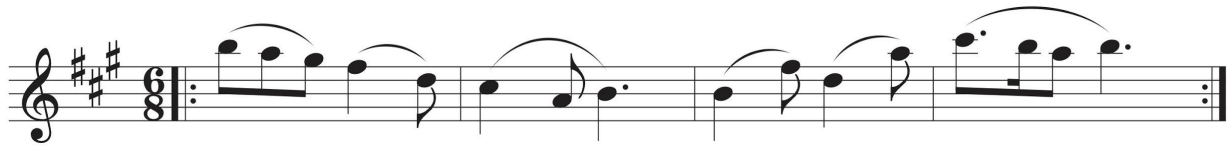An instrumental melody can also be added to the ostinato:

For higher C instruments such as flutes, violins, and oboes

For treble B-flat instruments such as clarinets and trumpets

For treble E-flat instruments such as the alto saxophone

For bass instruments such as trombones or cellos

FIFTH RESPONSE | *Salvation freely offered to all*   **Isaiah 12:2–6**

After reading Isaiah 55:1–11

This layered song can also function as a refrain to be sung after verses 3 and 6 (see below).

First, an optional repeating segment for up to three voices:

An instrumental countermelody can also be added, though note that it is twice as long as the segment above:

For higher C instruments such as flutes, violins, and oboes

For treble B-flat instruments such as clarinets and trumpets

For treble E-flat instruments such as the alto saxophone

For bass instruments such as trombones or cellos

Like the instrumental parts, the main idea of the refrain fits over the repeated segment:

With joy shall you draw wa - ter from the wells of sal - va - tion. (With)

In the resources for *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, the verses for this response are "pointed" like psalm texts so that the text can be sung to a tone:

[2]Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not | be afraid,

　　for the Lord God is my strength and my might, and has become | my salvation.

[3]With joy you | will draw water

　　from the wells | of salvation. *Refrain*

[4]And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call | on God's name;

　　make known the deeds of the Lord among the nations; proclaim that this name | is exalted.

[5]Sing praises to the Lord, for [the Lord] has done | gloriously;

　　let this be known in | all the earth.

[6]Shout aloud and sing for joy, O | royal Zion,

　　for great in your midst is the Holy | One of Israel. *Refrain*

After reading Proverbs 8:1–8, 19–21; 9:4b–6

or

Baruch 3:9–15, 32—4:4

This short dialogue is adapted from the "instructional" half (vv. 7–14) of Psalm 19. A bell, bell cluster, or other sound can be played between each line of the dialogue, and the singing can be supported by a drone:

The first half of the dialogue can be chanted freely, and the second half in a faster rhythm:

The teaching of the	Lord is right,	and re - vives	the soul.
The decrees of the	Lord are true,	and in - struct	the mind.
The precepts of the	Lord are just,	and re - joice	the heart.
The commands of the	Lord are clear,	and give light	to the eyes.

SEVENTH RESPONSE | *A new heart and a new spirit*   **Psalm 42–43**

After reading Ezekiel 36:24–28

Here is another modular piece with several building blocks that can be used as a refrain for the two psalms, or as a standalone song.

First, a cello, piano, or other low instrument can begin with a repeated segment:

pizz.

To this, a repeated segment for voices can be added:

I   thirst   for   God.
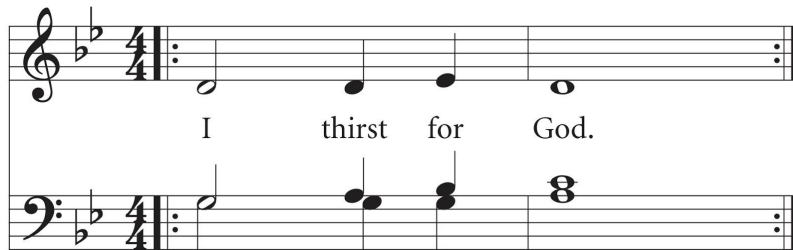
Above this can be sung a refrain:

I   thirst for   God,   for   the   liv - ing God;

when shall   I   come   to   ap - pear   be - fore   God?

And a countermelody for treble instruments can be added, too:

For higher C instruments such as flutes, violins, and oboes (adjust the octave as needed)
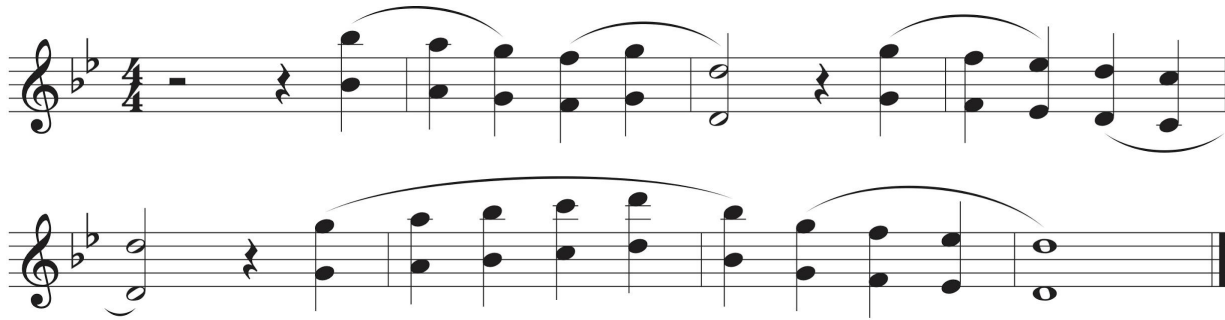
For treble B-flat instruments such as clarinets and trumpets (adjust the octave as needed)
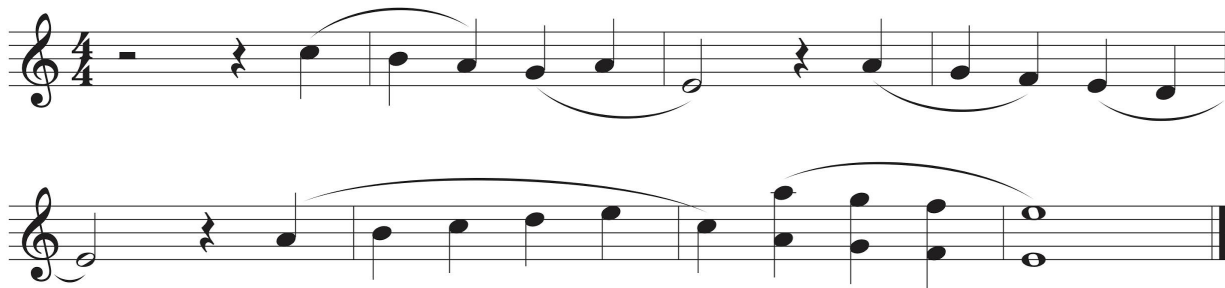
For treble E-flat instruments such as the alto saxophone
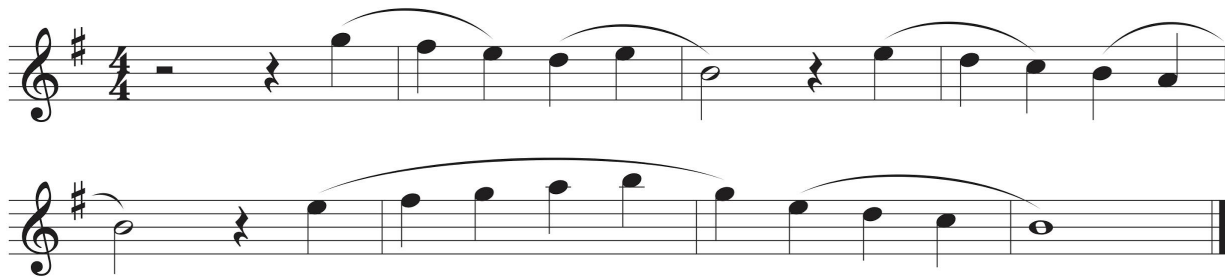
The verses of both psalms can be spoken or chanted using the following tone:
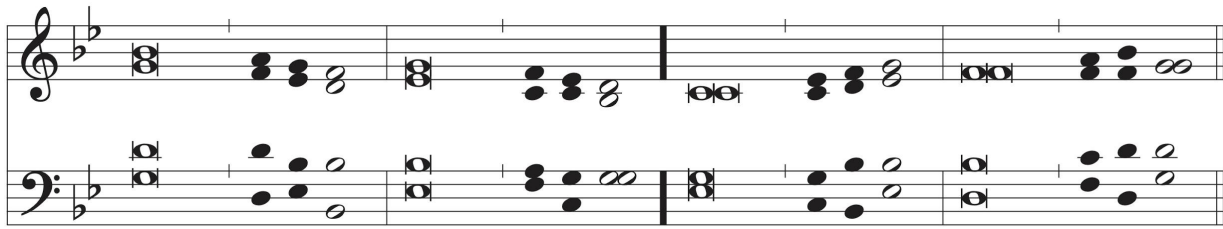
Note that this is a double tone, meaning that it can be used for pairs of verses (vv. 1–2, vv. 3–4, and so forth). Because Psalm 42 has eleven verses, the final verse can be paired with the first verse of Psalm 43. Then, Psalm 43 continues with pairings of remaining verses (vv. 2–3 and, finally, vv. 4–5). If the song is used as a refrain, sing it four times:

1. After verse 4 of Psalm 42
2. After verse 8 of Psalm 42
3. After verse 1 of Psalm 43
4. After verse 5 of Psalm 43

If desired, the treble instruments can also help lead the psalm tone's melody:

For higher C instruments such as flutes, violins, and oboes

For treble B-flat instruments such as clarinets and trumpets

For treble E-flat instruments such as the alto saxophone

After reading Ezekiel 37:1–14

This response is a study in rhythmic contrast, and can be repeated several times at gradually increasing dynamics. The underlying rhythm—which should propel the song with vigor—alternates between triple and duple divisions of the measure:
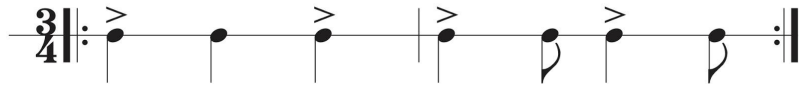
Once this pattern is established, the voice parts can begin to stack, ideally building from the lowest to the highest:

Re - vive me, O Lord.   Re - vive me, O

Lord.   Re - vive me for your name's sake.   (Re)

If desired, the treble instruments can add (and improvise around) a countermelody:

For higher C instruments such as flutes, violins, and oboes

For treble B-flat instruments such as clarinets and trumpets

For treble E-flat instruments such as the alto saxophone

After reading Zephaniah 3:14–20

This refrain (written in the style of the Lutheran composer Heinrich Schütz) can be sung as a melody or in parts after verses 2, 6, and 9 of the psalm:

Instruments can double the voice parts in their respective transpositions:

For higher C instruments such as flutes, violins, and oboes (reading the upper or lower lines)

For treble B-flat instruments such as clarinets and trumpets (reading the upper or lower lines)

For treble E-flat instruments such as the alto saxophone (reading the upper or lower lines)

For bass instruments such as trombones or cellos

Consider adding light percussion (such as a triangle) on beats 1 and 3. The verses of the psalm can be spoken or chanted with this tone:

TENTH RESPONSE | *The deliverance of Jonah*   **Jonah 2:2–3 [4–6] 7–9**

After reading Jonah 1:1—2:1

A drone may be used to begin:
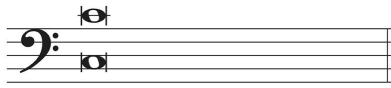
Then, add this repeated segment for voices:

I   called.   I   called.
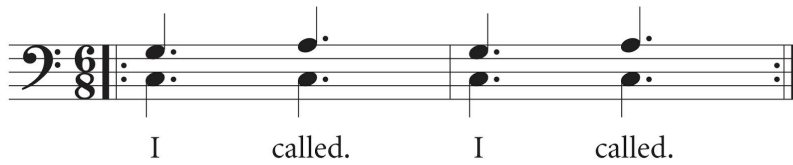
And, finally, a repeated melody:

De - liv - 'rance be - longs to the Lord.   (De)
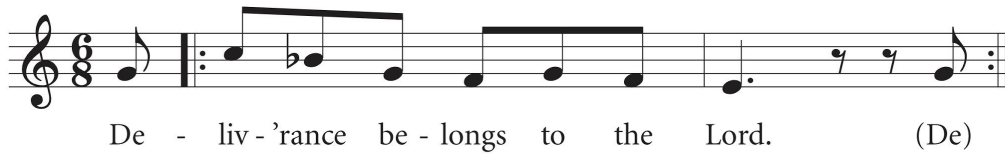
Or, instead of singing, listen to this movement of the oratorio *Jonah* by Giacomo Carissimi, 1605–1674: https://youtu.be/c0IrjSugufg. In this movement, the character of Jonah sings:

| Latin	English
Iustus es Domine et rectum iudicium tuum; potens es, et voluntati tuae non est qui possit resistere.	You are righteous, O Lord, and just is your wisdom; you are almighty and no one can resist your divine will.
Proiecisti me in profundum maris, et fluctus tui super me transierunt.	You hurled me into the deep, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.
Iustus es, Domine, et rectum iudicium tuum; sed cum iratus fueris, misericordiae recordaberis.	You are righteous O Lord, and just is your wisdom; but after the fury, you remembered your mercifulness.
Placare Domine, ignosce Domine, et miserere.	Subside your anger, Lord, forgive and have mercy.
Abiectus sum a conspectu oculorum tuorum, accensus est furor tuus et contra me tempestas orta est, et in fremuerunt venti, et fluctus intumuerunt, vallavit abyssus, et cetus deglutivit me.	I have been banished from your sight; your fury has been lit, a wild storm came against me and the winds shook all and the engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me and a whale swallowed me.
Numquid in aeternum proiecisti servum tuum?	Why have you abandoned your servant forever?
Placare Domine, ignosce Domine, et miserere.	Subside your anger, Lord, forgive and have mercy.
Angustiata est in me anima mea, in afflictione multa recordatus sum Domine, Deus meus.	My soul in me is anguished and as my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord my God.
Bonum est obedire mandatis tuis a facie tua non declinare. Ecce ego, mitte me, et obediam tibi:	It is good to obey your commandments and not hide from your sight. Here am I, send me and I shall obey you:
audi verba mea, et exaudi me in angustiis confitentem nomini tuo.	listen to my prayer and grant my request, in my distress, I trust in your name.
Placare Domine, ignosce Domine, et miserere.	Subside your anger, Lord, forgive and have mercy.

Eleventh Response | *Clothed in garments of salvation*   Deuteronomy 32:1–4, 7, 36a, 43a

After reading Isaiah 61:1–4, 9–11

This call and response also alternates between free, chant-like sections and a more rhythmic response that can be supported by a drum. Add a drumroll, or shake the bells and tambourines anytime there is a fermata symbol!
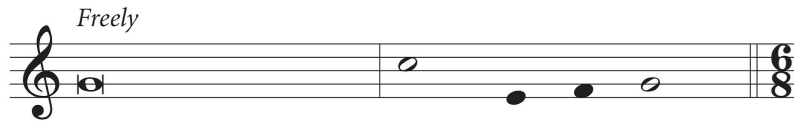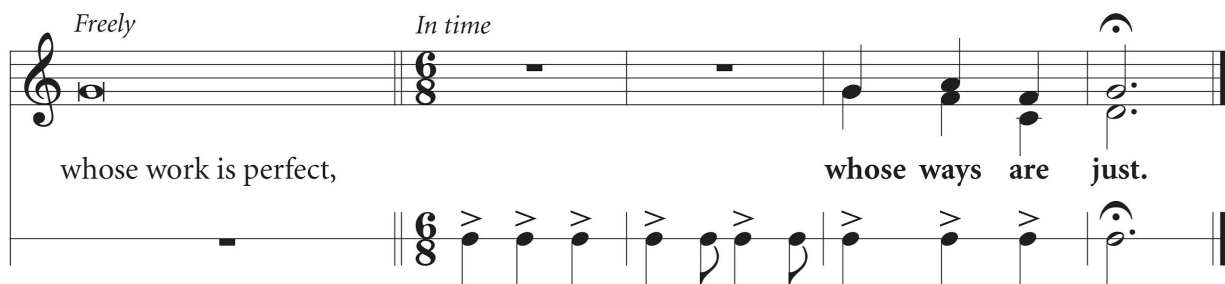
Freely

I will proclaim the   name   of   the Lord:

In time

Great   is   our   God,   the Rock,

Freely   *In time*

whose work is perfect,   whose ways   are   just.

In the resources for *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, the verses for this response are "pointed" like psalm texts so that the text can be sung to a tone, with the refrain after verses 4 and 43a:

¹Give ear, O heavens, and | I will speak;
    let the earth hear the words | of my mouth.
²May my teaching drop like the rain, my speech condense | like the dew;
    like gentle rain on grass, like showers | on new growth.
³For I will proclaim the name | of the Lord;
    ascribe greatness | to our God!
⁴"Great is our God, the Rock, whose work is perfect, whose | ways are just:
    a faithful God, without deceit, | just and upright." *Refrain*

⁷Remember the | days of old,
    consider the | years long past;
ask your [parents], and [they] | will inform you;
    your elders, and | they will tell you.
³⁶ᵃSurely, you will vindi- | cate your people,
    and have compassion | on your servants.
⁴³ᵃRejoice with the | Lord, you heavens;
    bow down in worship, | all you gods! *Refrain*

During the reading of Daniel 3:1–29

When the reader refers to the "sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble" (vv. 5, 7, 10, 15), play your instrument(s)!

After reading Daniel 3:1–29

Finally, a many-layered song to conclude the set of Vigil stories. Begin with one or two percussion rhythms:
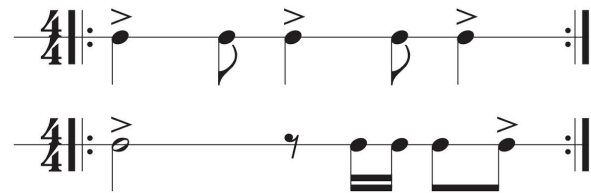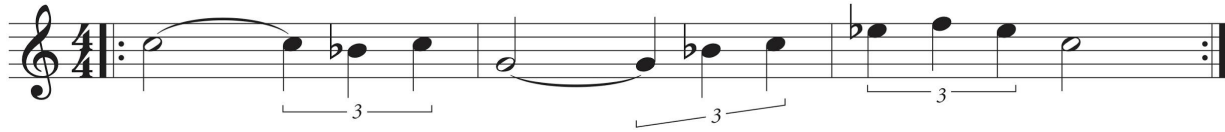

Next, add a repeated segment for voice(s):

Bless   the   Lord!   Bless   the   Lord!   Bless   the   Lord!
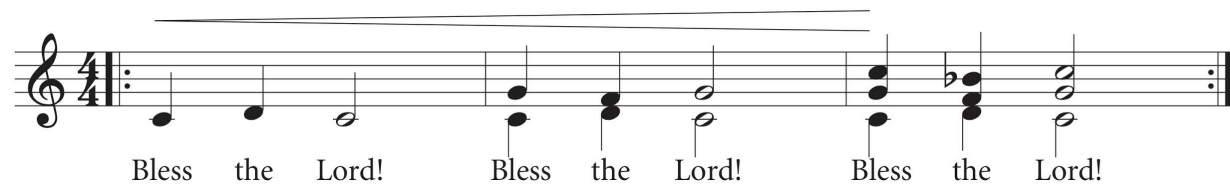
Higher voices can also add another repeated segment:

Praise   and   mag - ni - fy   the   Lord!
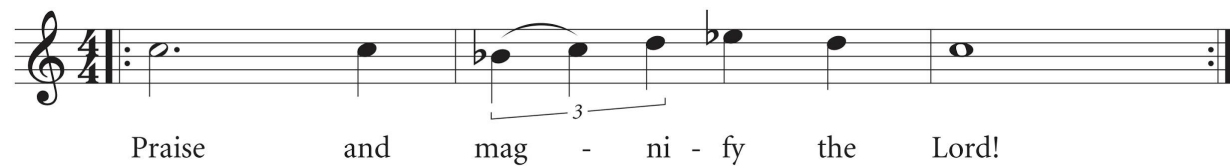
If desired, instruments can add (and improvise around) a countermelody:

For higher C instruments such as flutes, violins, and oboes (reading the upper or lower lines)

For treble B-flat instruments such as clarinets and trumpets (reading the upper or lower lines)
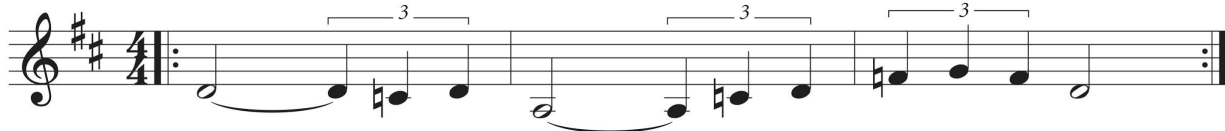
For treble E-flat instruments such as the alto saxophone (reading the upper or lower lines)
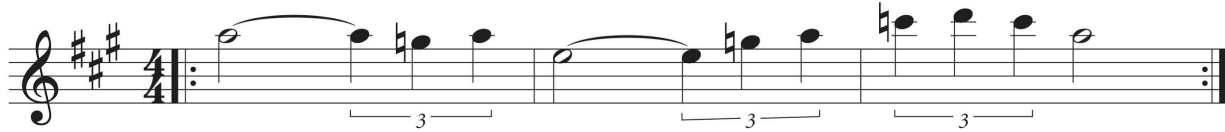
For bass instruments such as trombones or cellos
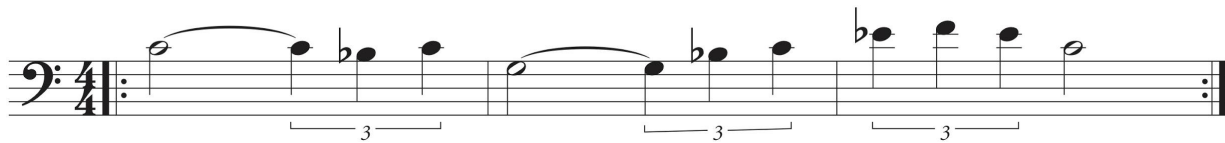
When you are ready to end the song, all can find a part to play for the ending:

The drums, bells, shaking and rattling things, and anything that makes a joyful noise can be added at the end!

Bless the Lord for - ev - er!

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Acknowledgments