



Moving with Mary's Song



**UNION CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

*We welcome all people to experience God's love,
grow spiritually and engage in meaningful service.*

SERVICE OF THE WORD

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 22, 2024

*Please stand as you are able.

This service is livestreaming. Thank you. ♥

ENTER TO WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

*When you hear the music, please gather. Be seated and prepare for worship.
Lighting the Candle, we remember God's presence with us.*

PRELUDE

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Words of Welcome & Announcements

INTROIT

"There's A Spirit of Love in this Place"

There's a spirit of love in this place, there's a spirit of love in this place. You can't see it, but it's there, just as precious as the air. There's a spirit of love in this place.

Refrain: **O alleluia, sing alleluia! We bless your holy name.**

O alleluia, sing alleluia! There's a spirit of love in this place.

There's a presence of peace in this room, there's the presence of peace in this room. In God's tenderness is found peace that passes human bounds. There's the presence of peace in this room. Refrain

Greeting One Another

***No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.***

*Chorus:

We are one in the bond of love; we are one in the bond of love, we have joined our spirits with the Spirit of God, we are one in the bond of love.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: God is making great changes to our world. Are you ready to take part?

All: **We have come to do God's will: to work for justice, to bring balance back to our living.**

One: God is making great changes to our world. Are you ready to take part?

All: We have come to do God's will: to seek and celebrate God's surprising love, to establish God's Realm here on earth.

One: Come, let us worship God, who comes into our world to reconcile and make things new.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE - LOVE

Steve, Niki & Evie

Advent candle-lighting for the sight of a promise kept. As we enter the Season of Advent, we think about new life and promises kept. As we light the candle of love, think of the sight of promises kept. Watch the flame ignite and consider the way our hearts are drawn to the light.

***INVOCATION**

Christ is with us!

Christ is in our midst!

Loving God, as the prophet Mary tells us, you sent Jesus into the world to turn things upside down and right side up. As we get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus help us to remember the message of Jesus: to work for justice and fairness, to bring balance to our living, to share your love with all people, and to make your reign become real here on earth. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

PASTORAL PRAYER

Sharing Joys and Concerns

A Christmas Prayer

Dear God, Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing of peace which Christ brings, and teach us to be hopeful so that joy will fill our hearts. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE

"Come, O Long Expected Jesus"

OFFERTORY MOMENT

A TWO-PART PAGEANT

PART TWO

Song: "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Sing-Along Singers

(Lights out. In silence, Sunday School students enter holding up lights.)

Song: "Silent Night"

Sunday School Chorus

Narrator: The promised King did arrive - on a starlit night in a stable near Bethlehem.

Song: "Away in a Manger"

Sing-Along Singers

Narrator: An Angel appeared to a group of shepherds and told them they would find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.

Song: "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing!"

Narrator: The shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem to see the thing that has happened."

Song: "O Come All Ye Faithful"

Handbell Players,

(All are invited to join us in singing "O Come All Ye Faithful" and with a heart gratitude present your offerings as you are able.)

Congregation: **O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem! Come, and behold Him, Born the King of angels!**

Refrain: O Come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

Narrator: The shepherds found Mary, Joseph and the baby, who was lying in a manger.

Song: "Joyful, Joyful We Adore You" Sunday School Handbells

*(Please offer a round of applause for our amazing Cast!
All are invited to join us in singing "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee.")*

"Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

Congregation

**Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee, Op'ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!**

**All Thy works with joy surrounds Thee, Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee, Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Singing bird and flowing fountain call us to rejoice in Thee.**

***DOXOLOGY** (*Deacons Vanessa & George to bring offerings forward.*)

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that Love has done:
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.***

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT**

(All children and youth are welcome to attend the Sunday School Class.)

READING OF SCRIPTURES

Micah 5:2-5

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers.

Psalms 80:1-7

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

You who are enthroned upon the cherubim,
shine forth before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.

Stir up your might, and come to save us!
Restore us, O God;

let your face shine, that we may be saved.
O Sovereign God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
You have fed them with the bread of tears, and given them tears to drink in full measure.

You make us the scorn of our neighbors;
our enemies laugh among themselves.

Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

Luke 1:39-55

Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled to a town in Judah in the hill country, straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. She was filled with the Holy Spirit, and sang out exuberantly, You're so blessed among women, and the babe in your womb, also blessed! And why am I so blessed that the mother of my Lord visits me? The moment the sound of your greeting entered my ears, The babe in my womb skipped

like a lamb for sheer joy. Blessed woman, who believed what God said, believed every word would come true! And Mary said, I'm bursting with God-news; I'm dancing the song of my Savior God. God took one good look at me, and look what happened—I'm the most fortunate woman on earth! What God has done for me will never be forgotten, the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others. His mercy flows in wave after wave on those who are in awe before him. He bared his arm and showed his strength, scattered the bluffing braggarts. He knocked tyrants off their high horses, pulled victims out of the mud. The starving poor sat down to a banquet; the callous rich were left out in the cold. He embraced his chosen child, Israel; he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high. It's exactly what he promised, beginning with Abraham and right up to now.

Thanks be to God!

SONG OF PREPARATION

“What Child Is This?”

Soloist, Tom Richards

SERMON

“Saved by God's Love”

Rev. Dr. Sheila Harvey

***CLOSING HYMN**

“Hush, Hush, Somebody's Calling My Name”

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

THE POSTLUDE

“Angels We Have Heard On High”

DEPART TO SERVE

CHRISTMAS OFFERING



Thank you for your support of Union's Christmas Fund Offering. Half of the offering will be for the UCC Christmas Fund (retired pastors) and half for the church's General Fund.



We **WELCOME** each of you to this celebration of worship. If you are visiting, we invite you to sign our Guest register in the Narthex. Offering envelopes are found in the pocket on the back of the chairs in the sanctuary for your convenience.

Participating in Today's Service:

Readers Brandon Guillaume, Steve Spencer, Louise Dempster
Assisting Judith Mooers

Union's Joys & Prayer Concerns

Joys: All Birthdays in December! Fourth Sunday of Advent! Part Two of the Pageant!

Concerns:

Ada Harvey and family; Eloise and her grandbaby, Carlos; Charlie Rodriguez's family and friends; Ada Harvey's grandson, Grant; Doug Cornwell; Tom Richards; Melanie Shepherd; Marjorie Hanson's family and friends; Rosemarie Lightfoot's father, Tom; Richard Lightfoot; Beth White; Louise's friend, Martha; Susan Harrell's husband, George; Vanessa's grandfather & cousin, Elsa Velez; John Webster family and friends; David's family members, Evelyn Soza, Jerman Rodrigues, Carmen, Margarita; Donna's brother, Clevert; Adelaida Hernandez; Linda DiPaola's family & friends; George Gerson's Brother, Michael; Gail Fei's friend, Helga's daughter, Katya; Melanie's Friend, Donna; Alice Payne; Borjana's son, Petar; Ruth Deischer's sister-in-law, Susan Deischer; Renna McGinnis; George Gerson's friends, Diane & Timothy Scott; Karen's friend, Kris; George Gerson's nephew, Glenn; Ruth Cassidy's husband, Bill; Doug Cornwell's family; Billie Wilson; Rose's daughter, Tyshawna for healing & recovery; Jan Mark; Rod Jennings; Jan Mark's son, Gary; Justice & Peace efforts; grieving, depression and anxiety; all refugees; Ukraine War; Puerto Rico; Haiti; Gun violence everywhere; Environmental concerns; Maui, HI, Florida; Israel conflict; Hurricane victims



Happy Birthday to Brandon!
 From your Mom with love, Pastor Sheila.



Happy Birthday Grandma, Peg Lafferty
 With love, The Oza Granddaughters.

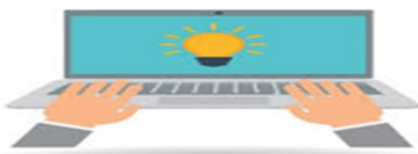
Sunday School Highlight

The fourth Sunday of Advent is Love! Love will abound in the pageant, the music, the sharing and the work of Christmas. Come join us in Sunday School following the pageant for a time of mission, crafts, stories and fun. Jane Grandusky will be your teacher, many thanks to her and a soon to be Merry Christmas to all!

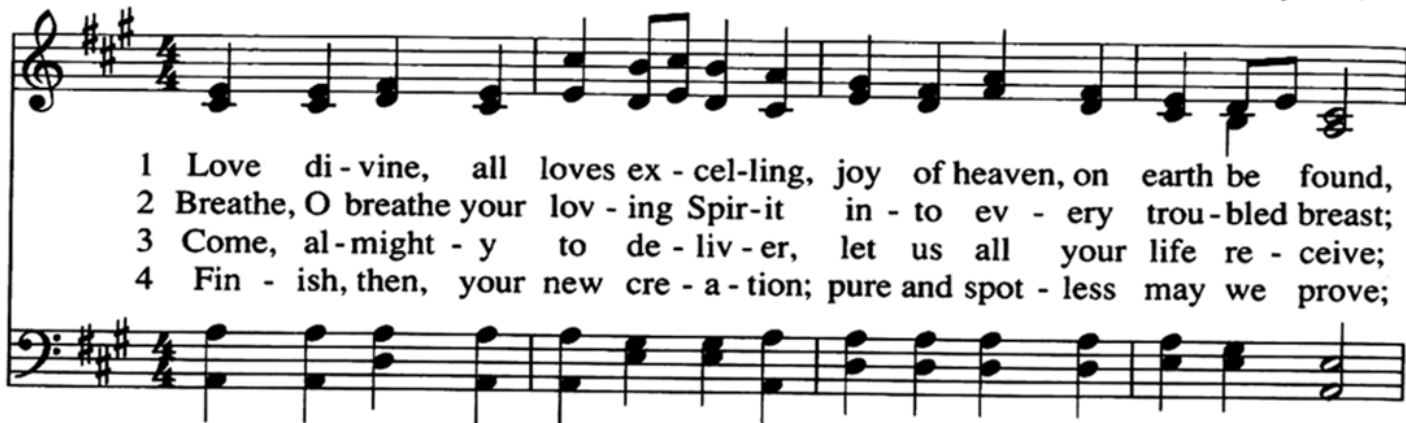


A NOTE FROM WAMM

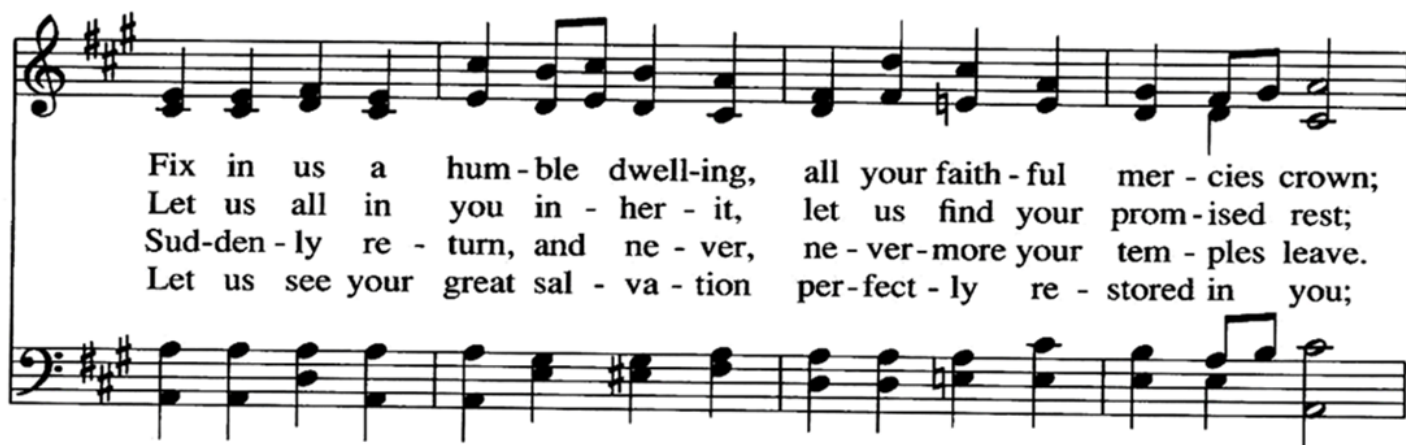
Union is seeking a Live-Streaming Technician for Sunday Worship. Please contact the office via email at: zaida@union.com.



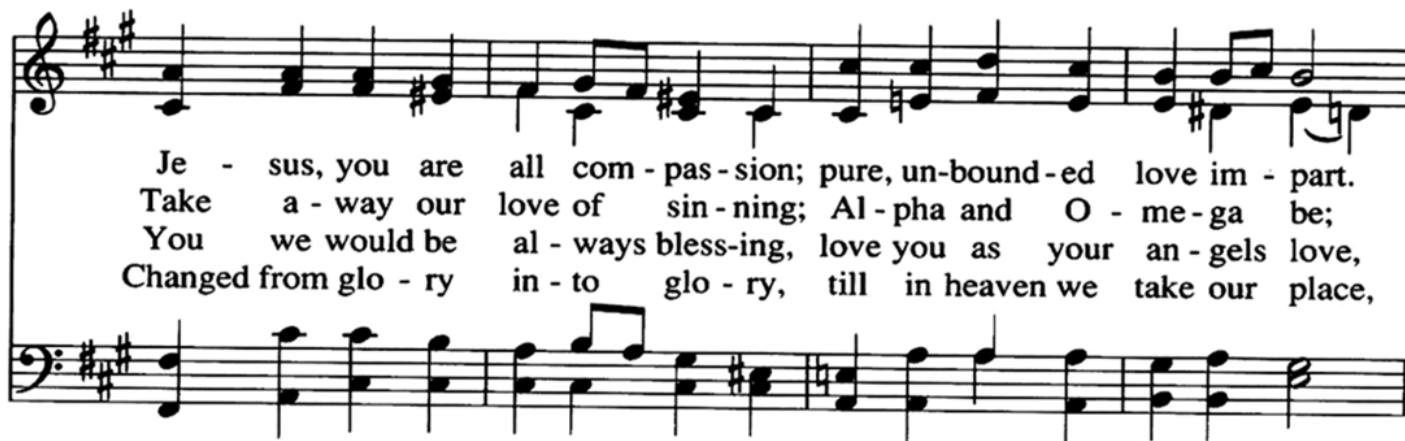
Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

*Mal. 3:1; 2 Cor. 3:18; 5:17; Eph. 5:27**Charles Wesley, 1747; alt.*


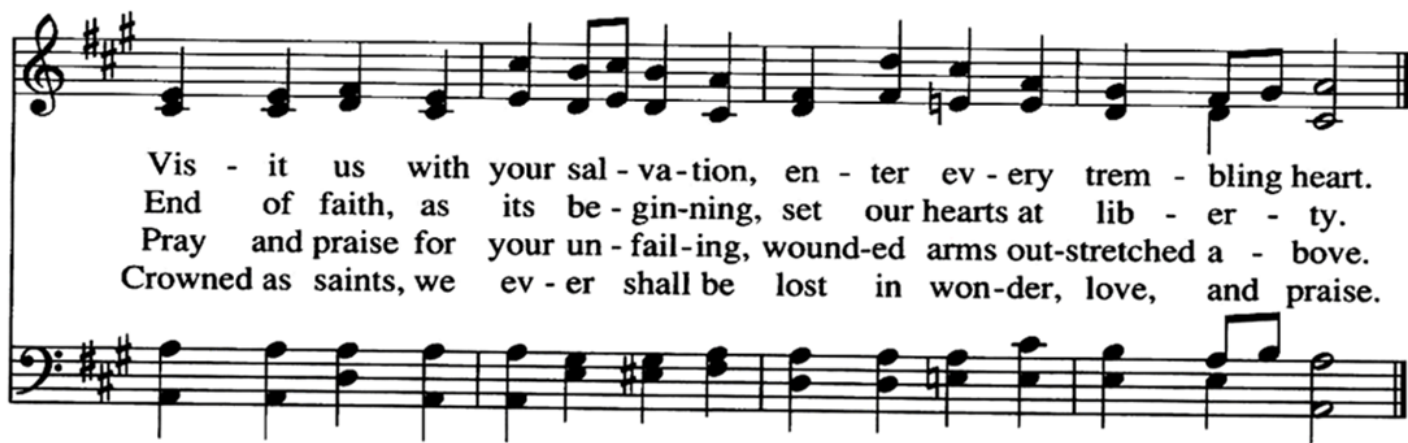
1 Love di-vine, all loves ex-cel-ling, joy of heaven, on earth be found,
 2 Breathe, O breathe your lov-ing Spir-it in-to ev-ery trou-bled breast;
 3 Come, al-might-y to de-liv-er, let us all your life re-ceive;
 4 Fin-ish, then, your new cre-a-tion; pure and spot-less may we prove;



Fix in us a hum-ble dwell-ing, all your faith-ful mer-cies crown;
 Let us all in you in-her-it, let us find your prom-ised rest;
 Sud-den-ly re-turn, and ne-ver, ne-ver-more your tem-ples leave.
 Let us see your great sal-va-tion per-fect-ly re-stored in you;



Je-sus, you are all com-pas-sion; pure, un-bound-ed love im-part.
 Take a-way our love of sin-ning; Al-pha and O-me-ga be;
 You we would be al-ways bless-ing, love you as your an-gels love,
 Changed from glo-ry in-to glo-ry, till in heaven we take our place,



Vis-it us with your sal-va-tion, en-ter ev-ery trem-bling heart.
 End of faith, as its be-gin-ning, set our hearts at lib-er-ty.
 Pray and praise for your un-fail-ing, wound-ed arms out-stretched a-bove.
 Crowned as saints, we ev-er shall be lost in won-der, love, and praise.

Hush, Hush, Somebody's Calling My Name

*African-American spiritual**Slowly, with feeling*

1 Hush, Hush, Some-bod - y's call-ing my
 2 Sounds like Je - sus. Some-bod - y's call-ing my
 3 I'm so glad. Trou-ble won't last al -

name. Hush, Hush,
 name. Sounds like Je - sus.
 ways. I'm so glad.

Hal - le-lu - jah

Some-bod - y's call-ing my name. Oh, Hush,
 Some-bod - y's call-ing my name. Oh, Sounds like
 Trou-ble won't last al - ways. Oh, I'm so

Hush, Some-bod - y's call-ing my name. O my God,
 Je - sus. Some-bod - y's call-ing my name. O my God,
 glad. Trou-ble won't last al - ways. O my God,

O my God, what shall I do? What shall I do?
 O my God, what shall I do? What shall I do?
 O my God, what shall I do? What shall I do?

★ ★ ★ Thank you to all who ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ participated in today's ★ ★ ★
★ ★ ★ "Two-Part Pageant". ★ ★ ★



Thank you to all who attended the
2024 National Homeless
Persons' **Remembrance Day!**



TRIP TO ST. AUGUSTINE!

Christian Education / Youth and Justice & Peace are planning a trip to St. Augustine Trip Jan 19-20. All are welcome. Sign-up sheet on the soundboard.

JANUARY NEWSLETTER ARTICLES ANNOUNCEMENTS REMINDER



Please submit any articles for the January Newsletter by
Thursday, January 2nd. Send via email to Zaida at
zaida@unionucc.net.
Thank you!

**UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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www.ucc.org

Office Phone: 561-686-0330 - please leave a message.

Go to www.unionucc.net to see more of our news.

THIS WEEK AT UNION UCC

Sunday, December 22, 2024 Part Two of the Pageant!

10:30 AM Worship – Facebook Live Streaming

11:15 AM Christmas Party Fellowship - All are welcome!

12:30 PM Depart the Church for Christmas Caroling



Tuesday, Thursday & Friday Prayer Room is Available

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM Open during office hours!

Tuesday, December 24, 2024 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

7:00 PM Worship – Facebook Live Streaming

Wednesday, December 25, 2024 – Merry Christmas (Office Closed)

Sunday, December 29, 2024

10:30 AM Worship – Facebook Live Streaming

11:15 AM Fellowship - All are welcome!



Moving with Mary's Song

A bit of trivia on this the fourth Sunday of Advent. What's one of the earliest Advent hymns ever to be recorded? (Hint: It's found in today's reading from Luke.)

It's Mary's song of praise, also known as The Magnificat, which is Latin for "my soul magnifies the Lord."

Mary, the teen betrothed to Joseph, whose life has been turned upside down when an angel tells her she has found favor with God and will bear a son, goes to visit her cousin, Elizabeth. Elizabeth is also with child, carrying the wilderness wandering baptizer, John.

When the two women meet, the child in Elizabeth's womb leaps with joy and she says to Mary, "Blessed are you among women!"

Such a greeting would lead any person to break out in song — as Mary does. But her words are not the maternal sentiments one might expect. Rather, 20th-century German theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was executed by the Nazis for his role in speaking out against Hitler, described Mary's song as, "the most passionate, the wildest, most revolutionary Advent hymn ever sung."

This is no meek and mild Mary cast in the glow of heavenly light that we see on Christmas cards. This, says Bonhoeffer, is "the passionate and enthusiastic Mary who speaks out there."

Mary's song reminds us just what Christmas — this Christ moment — is all about. She sings of God who fills the hungry with good things. She sings of God who sends the rich away empty. She sings to the One who lifts the lowly — to the One who does great things through people like her who are often deemed unworthy.

Sadly, we live in a world where the lowly still get pushed to the side, silenced and ignored. But as Advent comes to an end — and soon we will be singing about holy and silent nights — can we take a moment once again to listen to Mary's song, believing how God is still doing great things for many Marys — and Toms, Rauls, Juans, Anitas, and you.

Yes, YOU. For God is wanting to use your life as well in making this world a better place for all.

The Magnificat is not filled with *fa la las*. It is a "hard, strong song," says Bonhoeffer, one which "tells of the power of God and the powerlessness of humankind."

And that is exactly why Mary sings it for us this day.

Amazing God, who works through us all, may this day we move with Mary's song, tapping our feet, snapping our fingers, and singing praises of how You are indeed doing great things among us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.