Hope Mennonite Church
November 30, 2025
First Sunday of Advent
9:30 am Worship

Gathering to Worship

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Prelude

Advent Welcome

Lighting the candle of Hope
Tender Mercies arr. Treva Greaser Insert

Hearing God's Word

Time with children

Hope Is a Candle #211

Scripture reading & prayer Micah 5:2

O *Little Town* arr. Over the Rhine
Jesse Graber, Natalie Regehr, John Koontz

Message Ruth Harder
The precarious and hopeful place that is Bethlehem

Responding to God's Word

**Now the Heavens Start to Whisper* #237

The Giving of our Tithes and Offerings
Offertory
Prayer of Thanksgiving

Greeting our Guests (Please pass the welcome registers)

Seeing and Seeking God
Work of the Church
Sharing our Praises and Concerns

Sung prayer of God's People
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus #218

Sending

**Light Dawns on a Weary World* #205

*Benediction

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*Stand as you are able

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Song leader: Galen Fast
Scripture reader: Vicki Howard
Candlelighters: Anderson family
Worship tech: Grant Bellar
Zoom host: Renetta Gooden

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December 14	Third Sunday of Advent
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December 21	Fourth Sunday of Advent
	Christmas choir
	6:30 pm Longest Night service
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868 N. Maize Rd.
Wichita, KS 67212

phone 722-0903
fax 722-5173
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Office hours: Mon-Thurs 8:30-1:30pm
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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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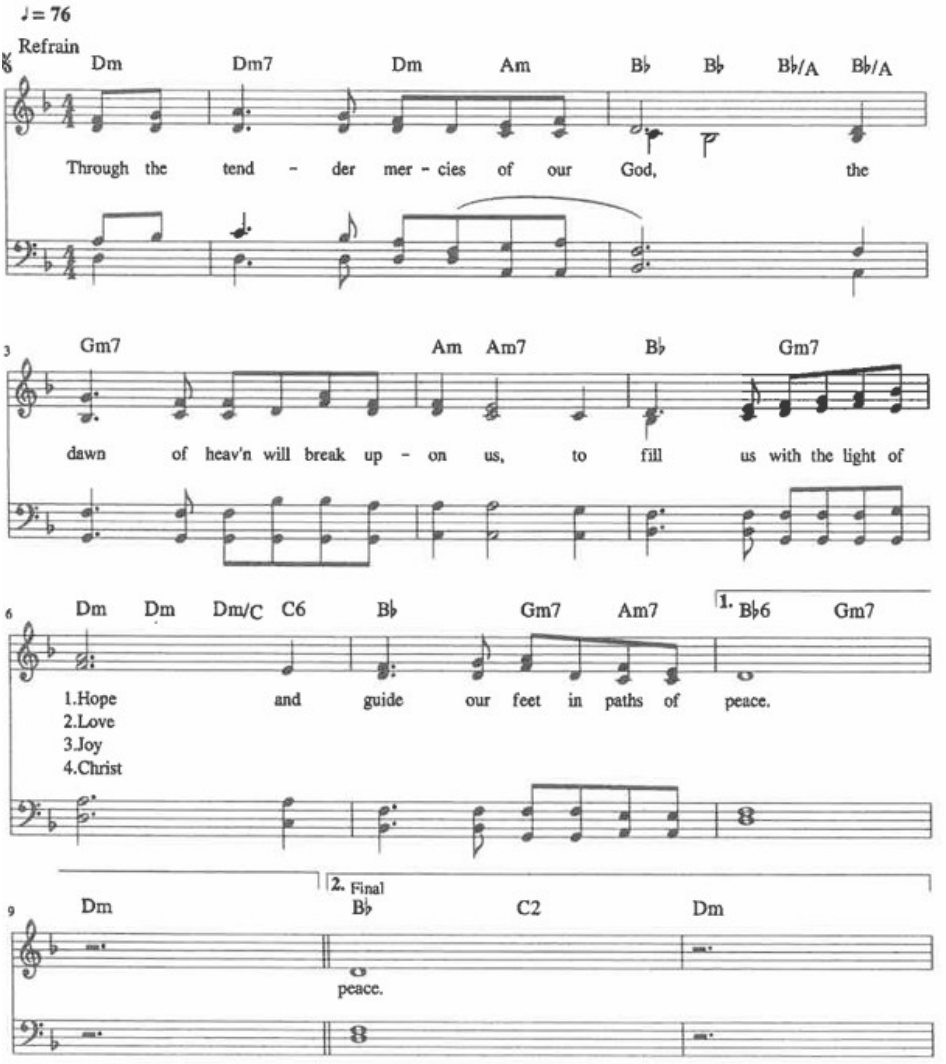
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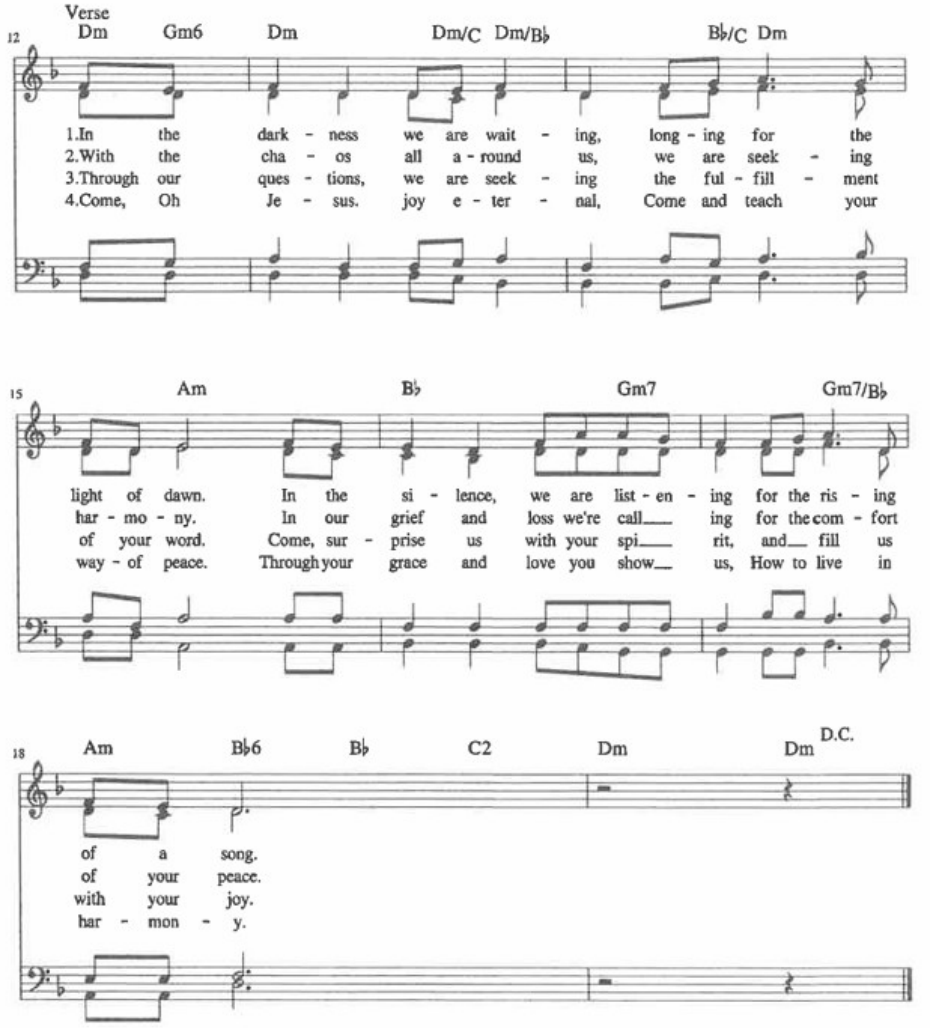
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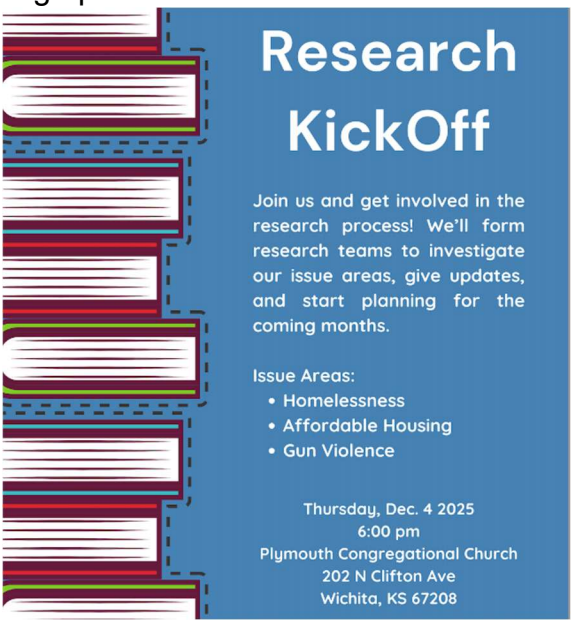

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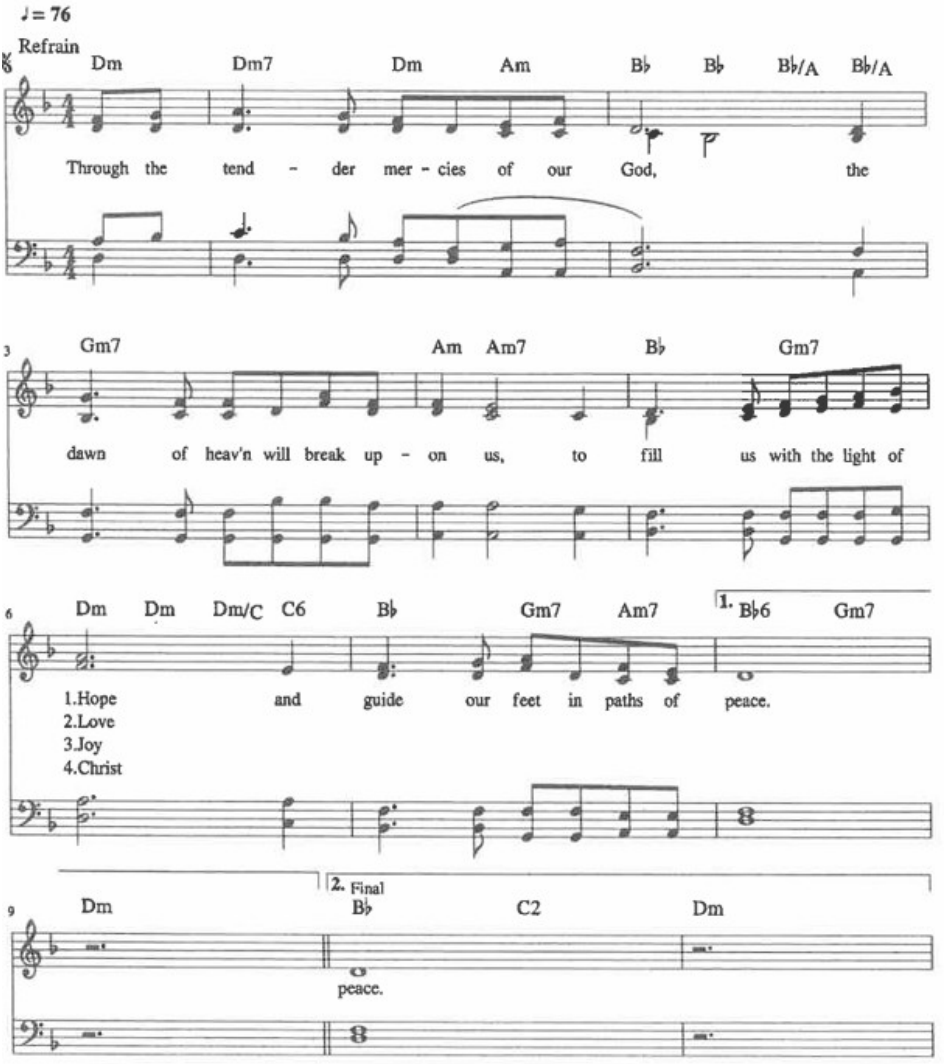
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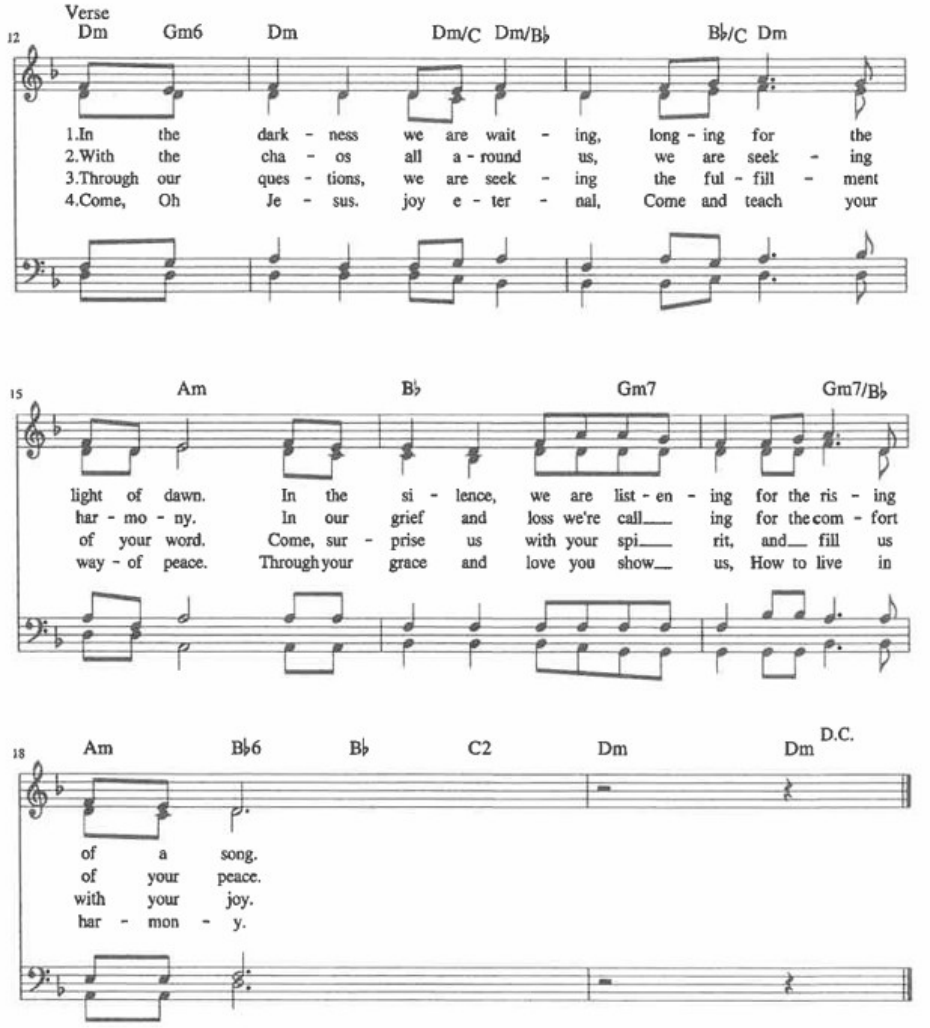
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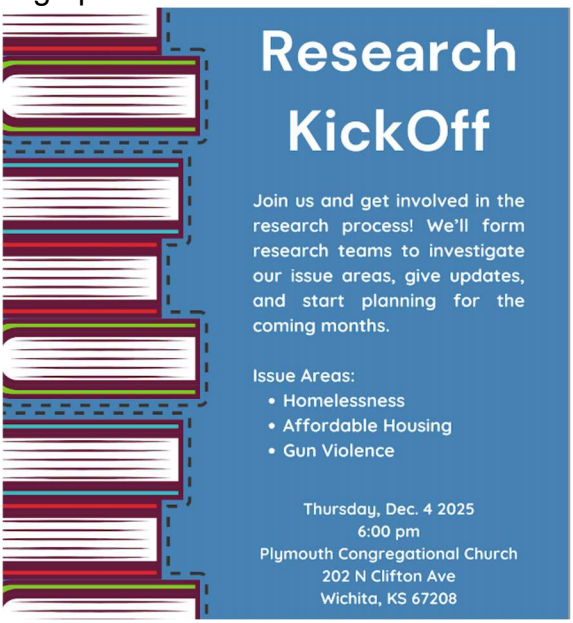

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Wichita, KS 67212

phone 722-0903
fax 722-5173
www.hopemennonite.org

Pastor
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Office hours: Mon-Thurs 8:30-1:30pm
Afternoons by appointment

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It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
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"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
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We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
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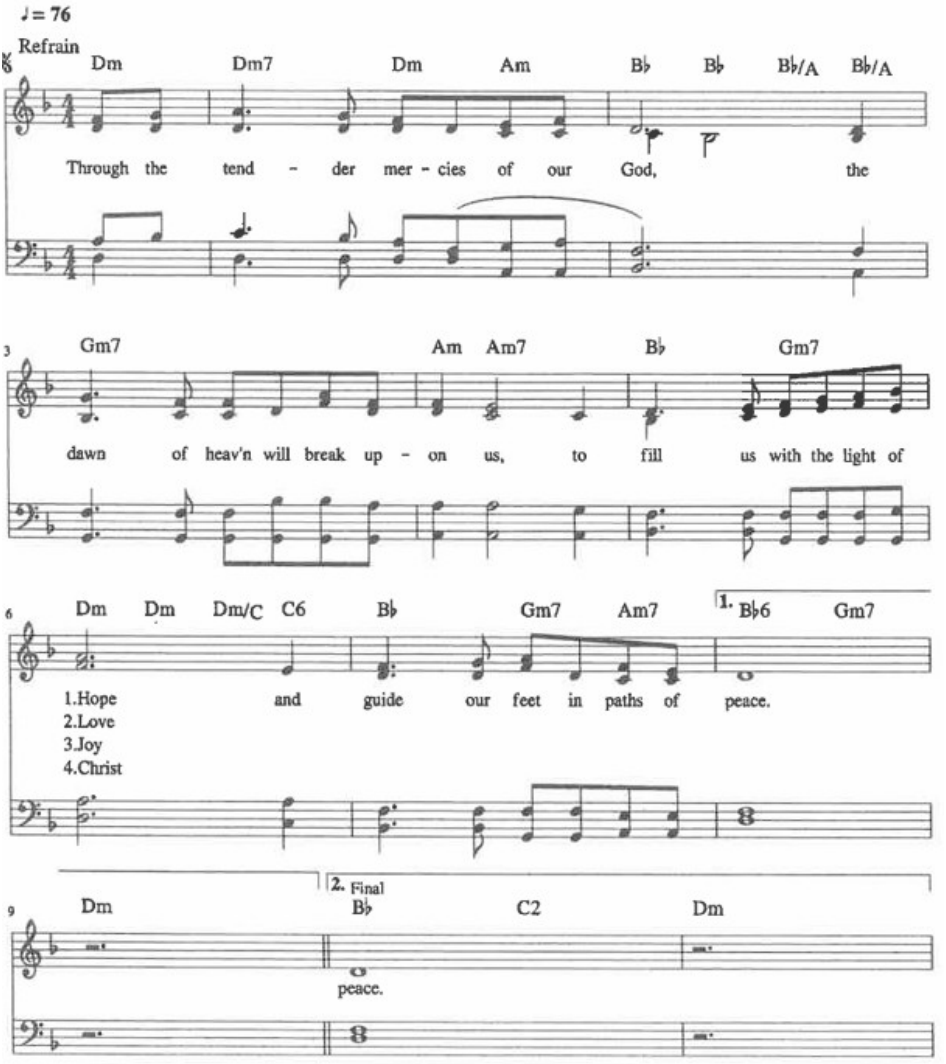
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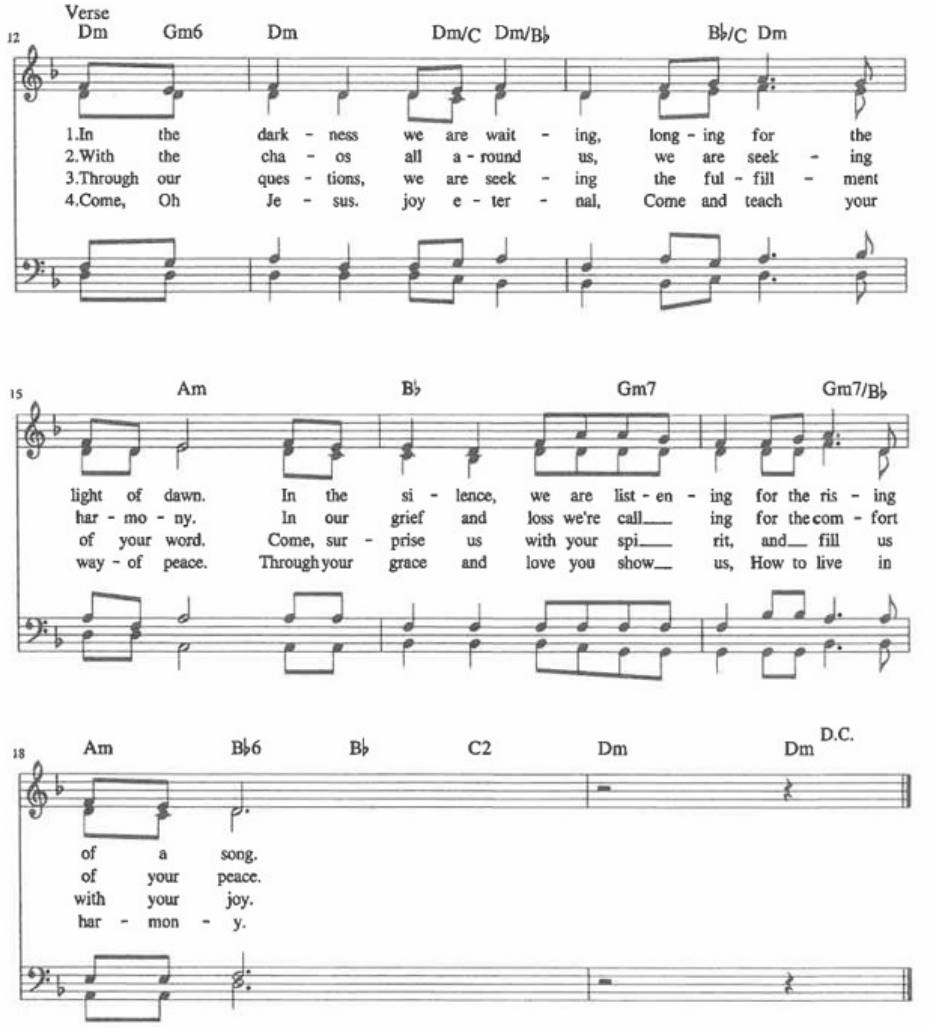
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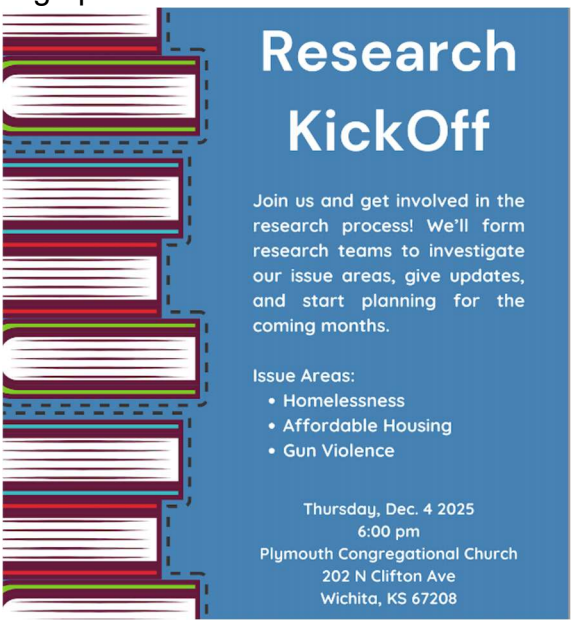

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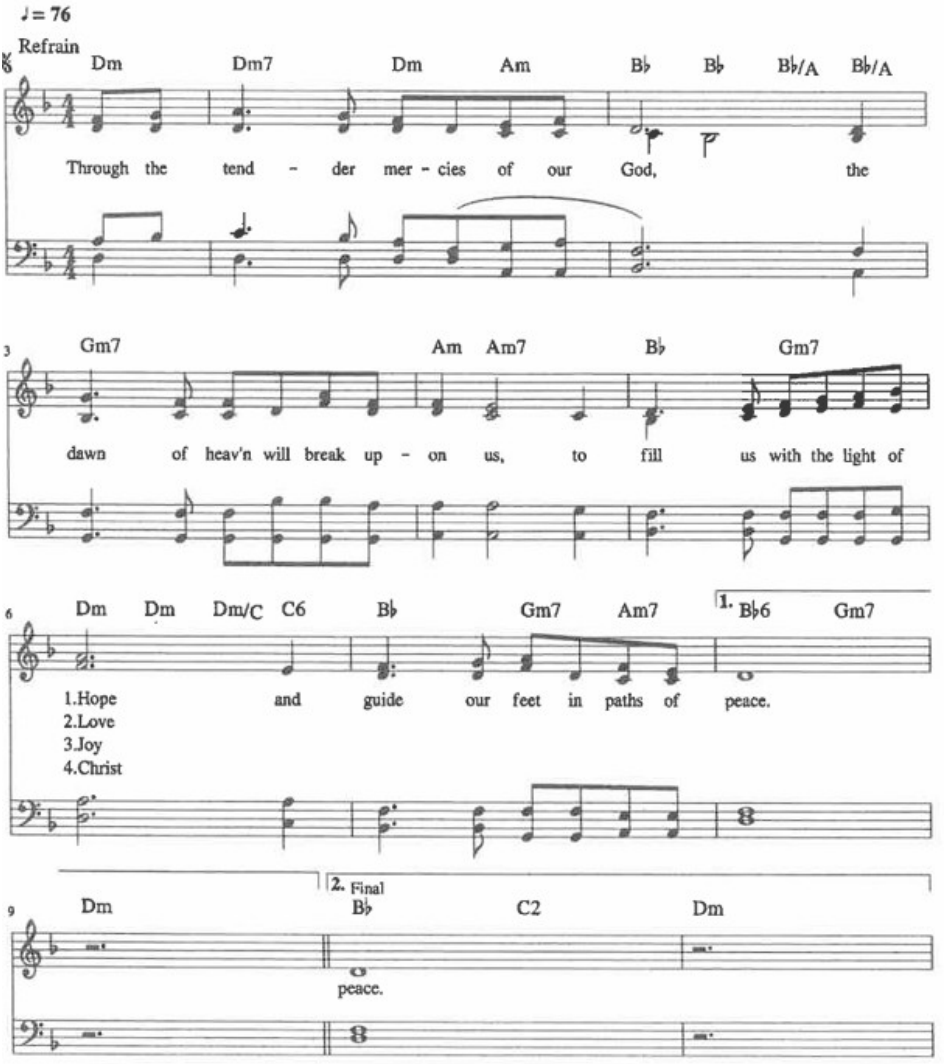
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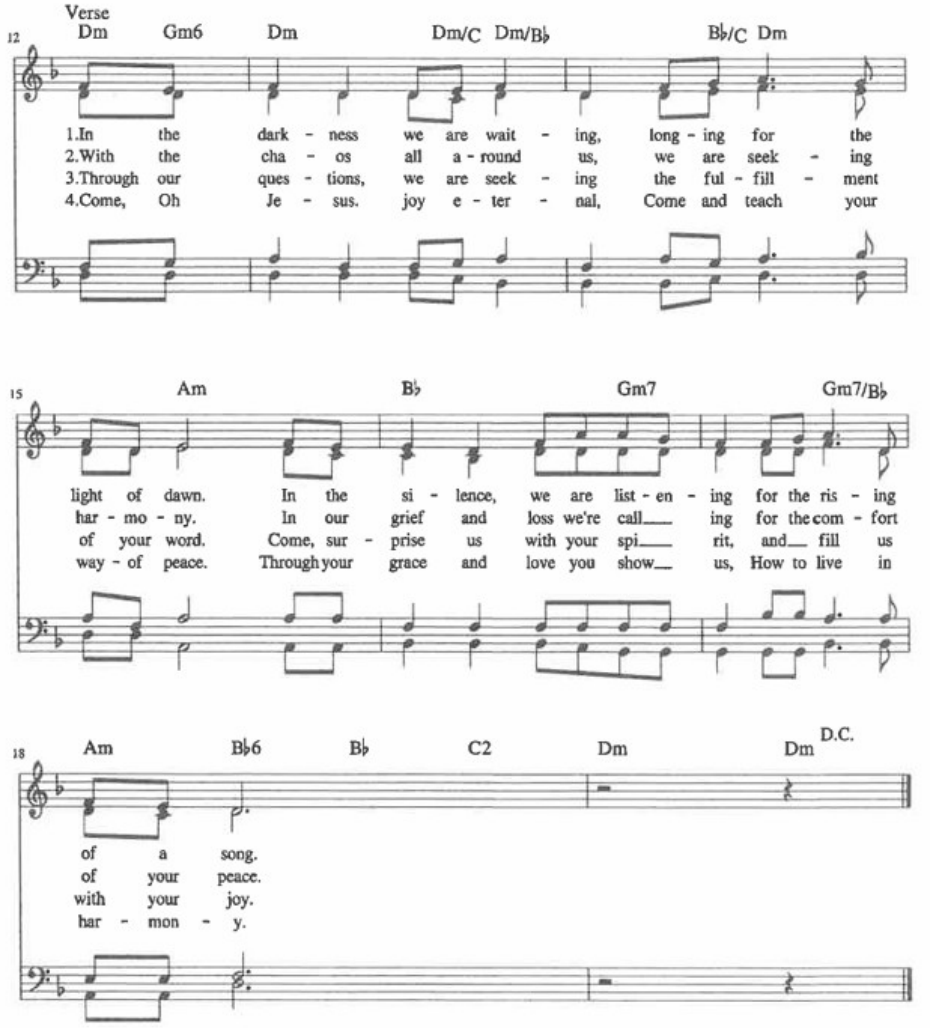
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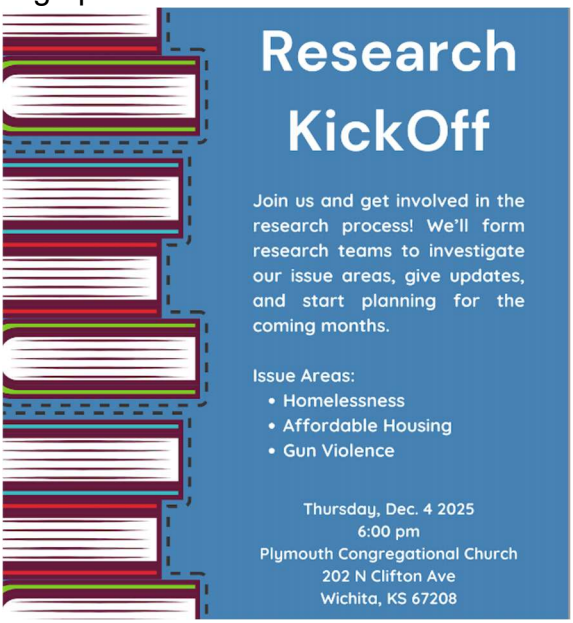

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Thank you that your light shines
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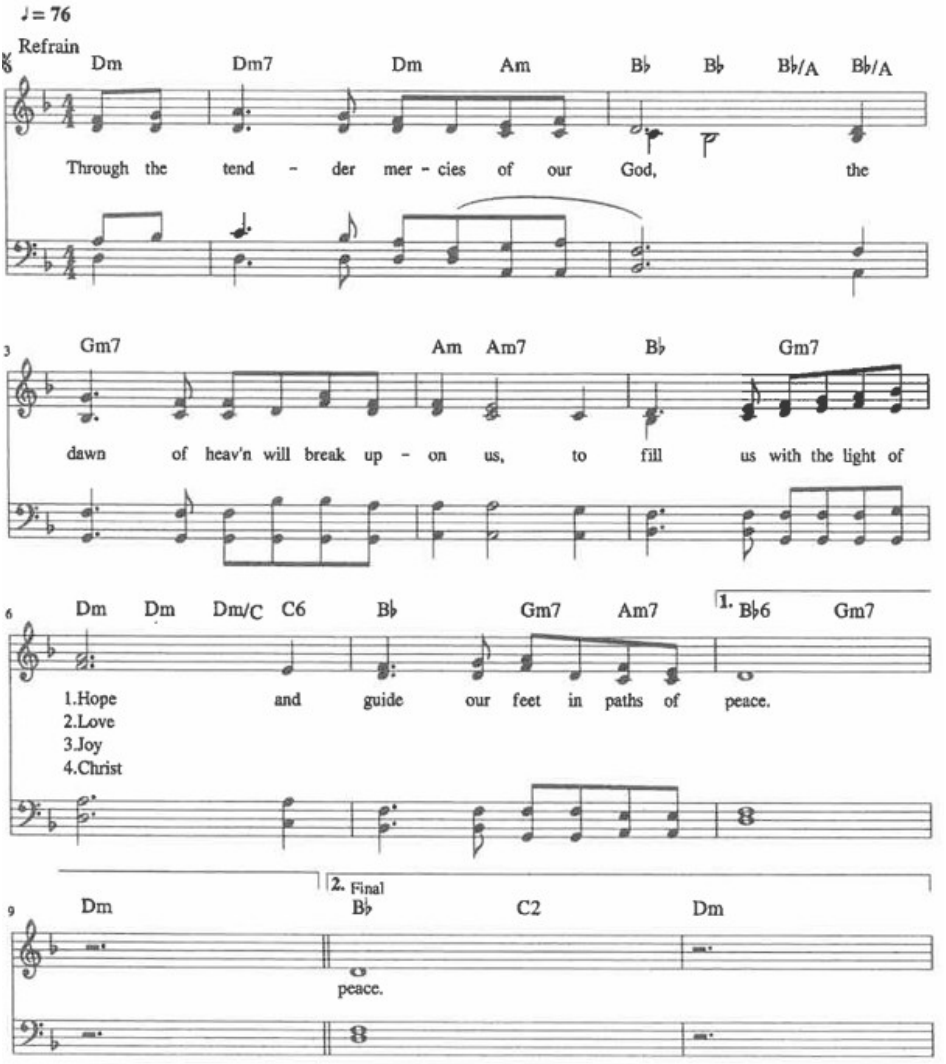
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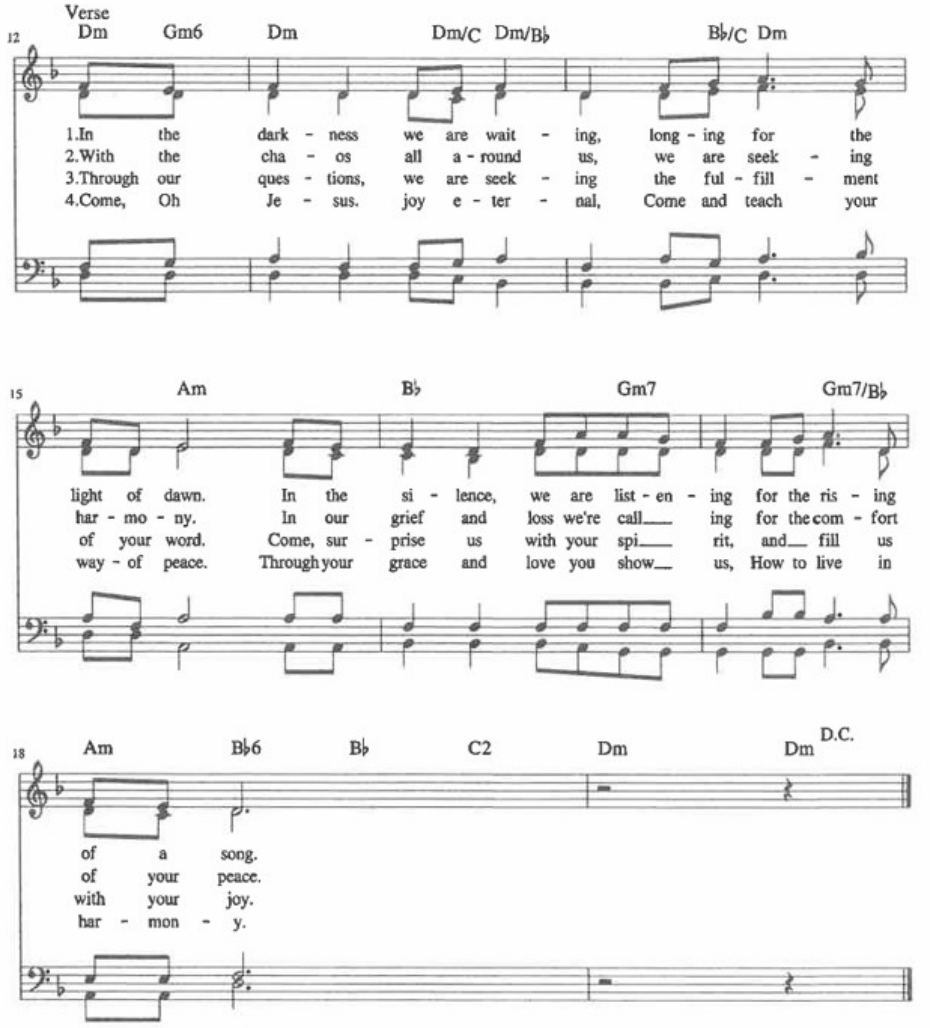
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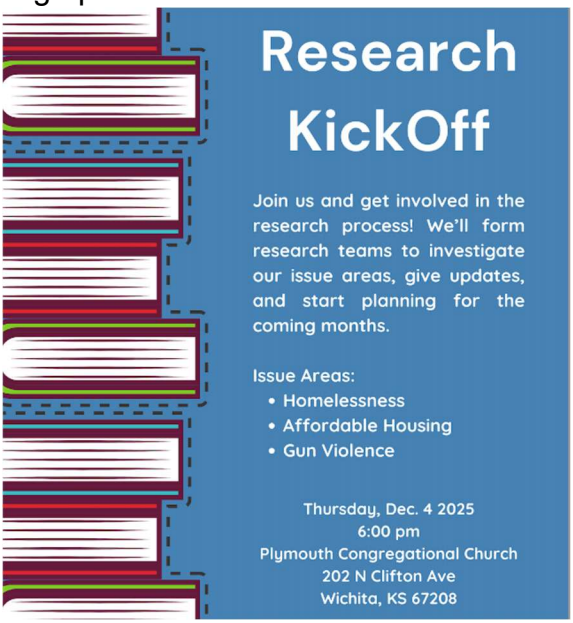

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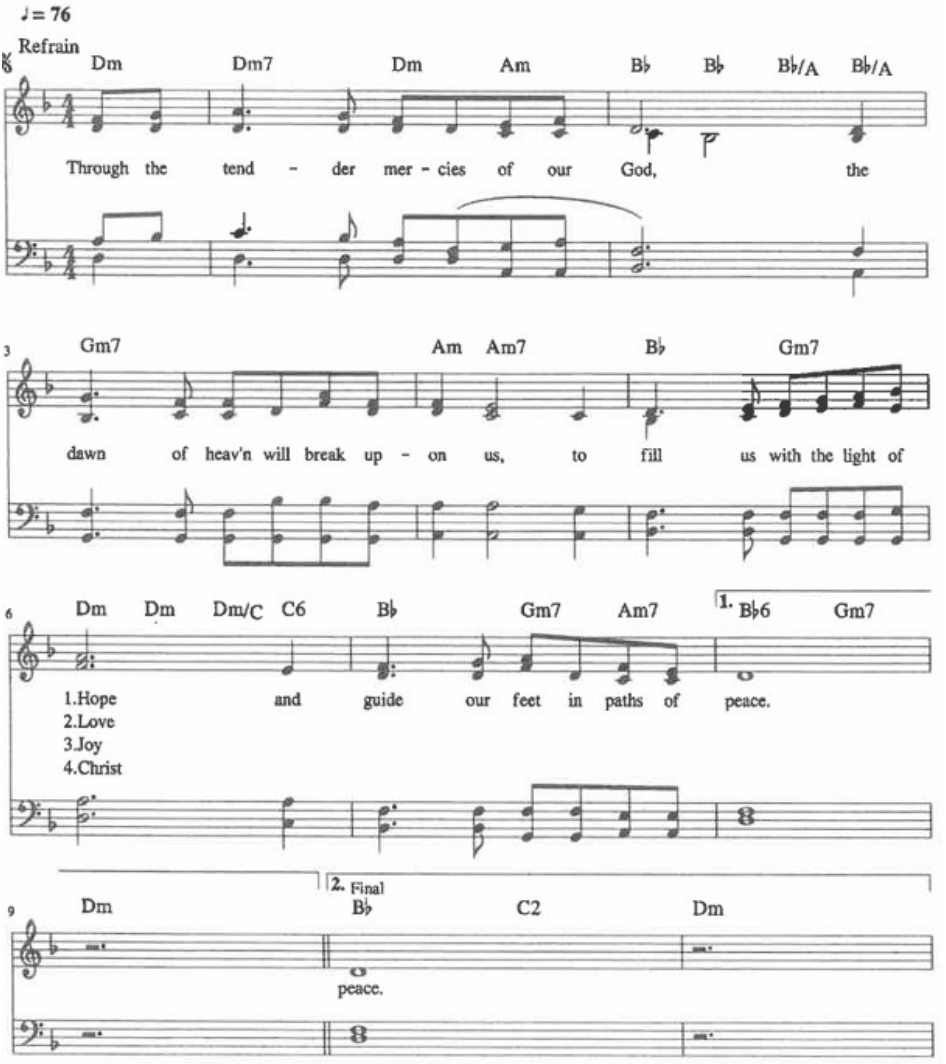
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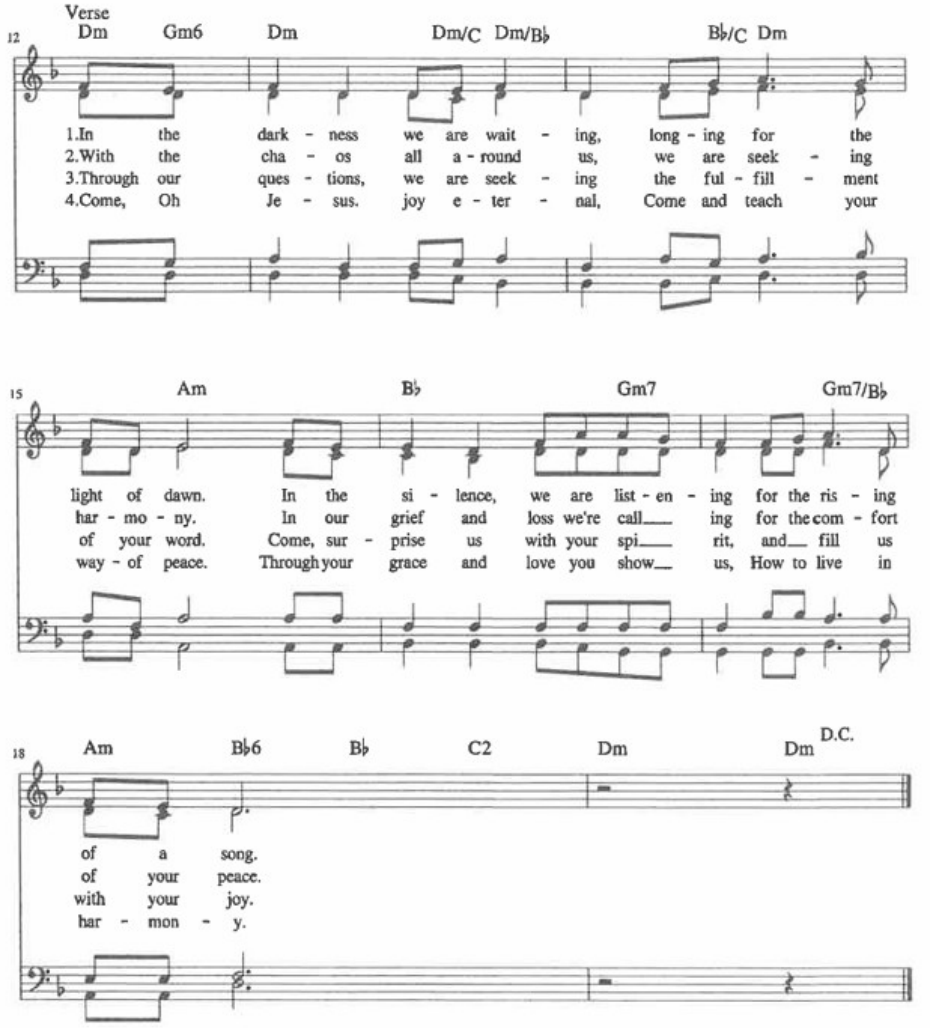
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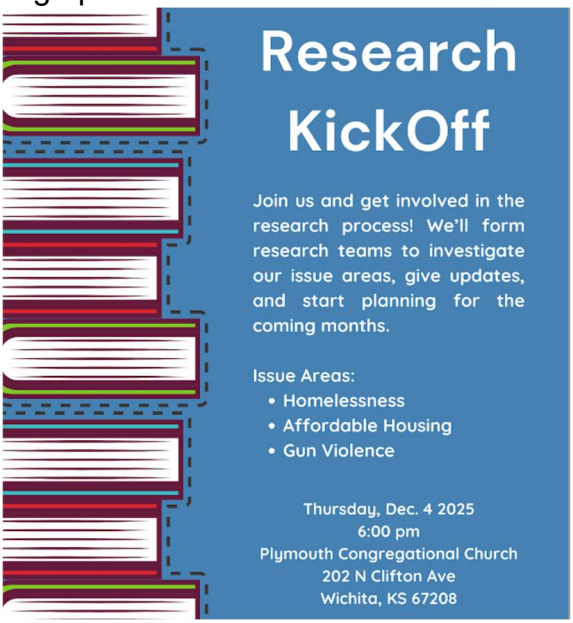

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where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
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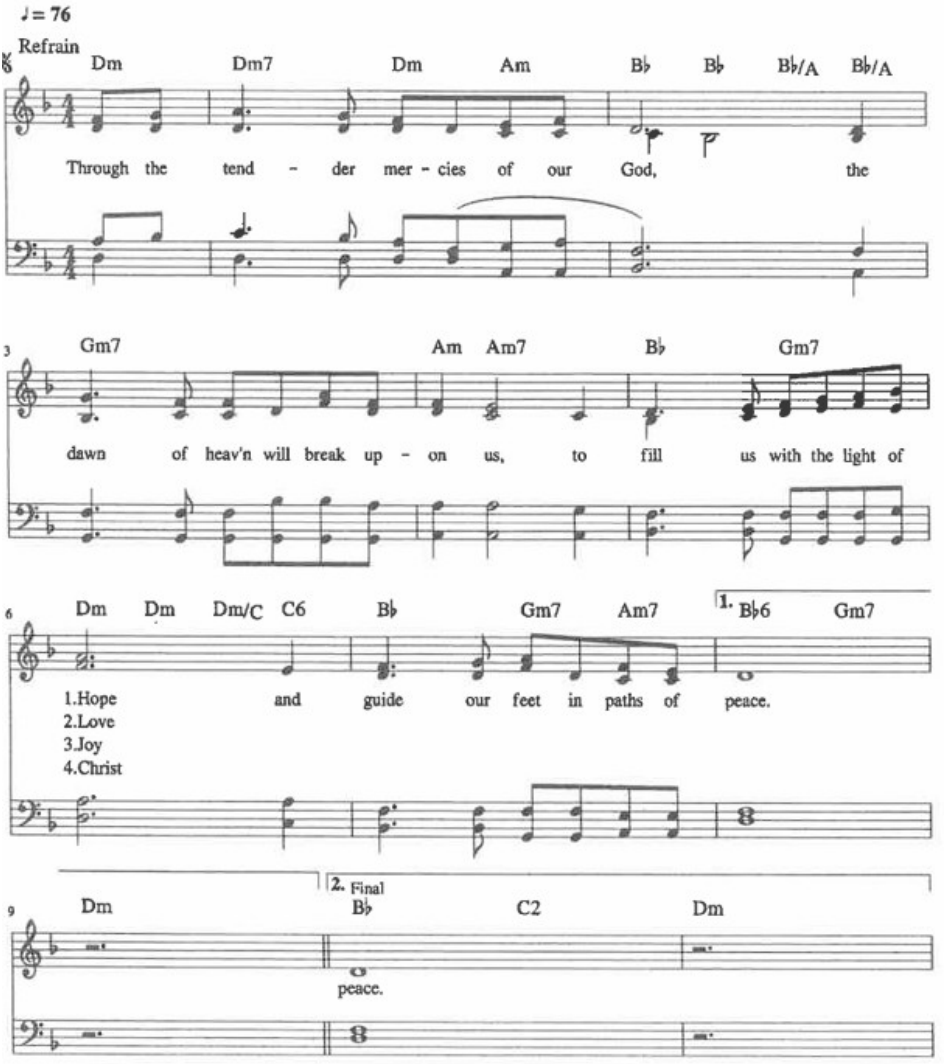
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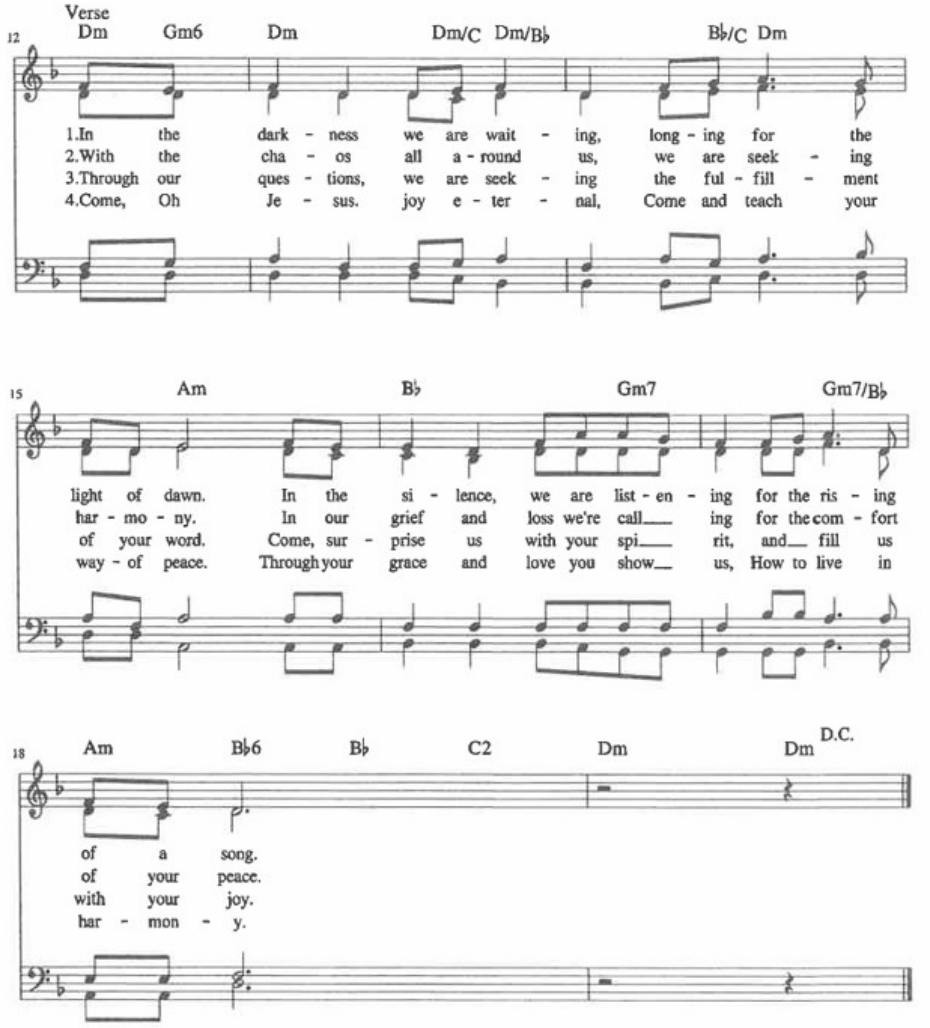
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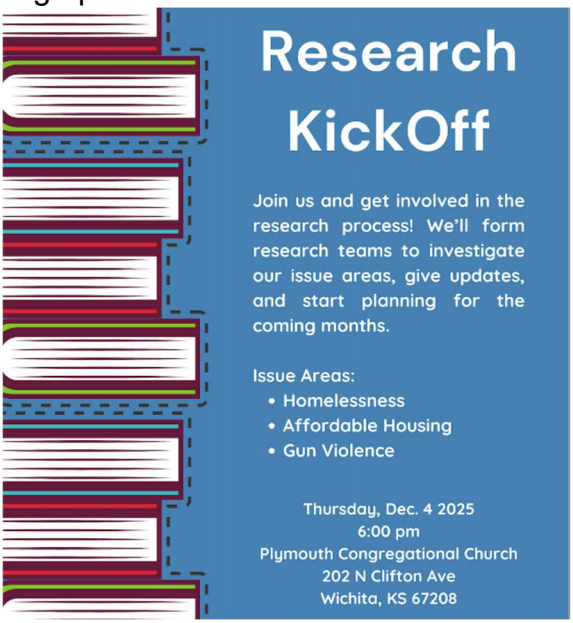

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
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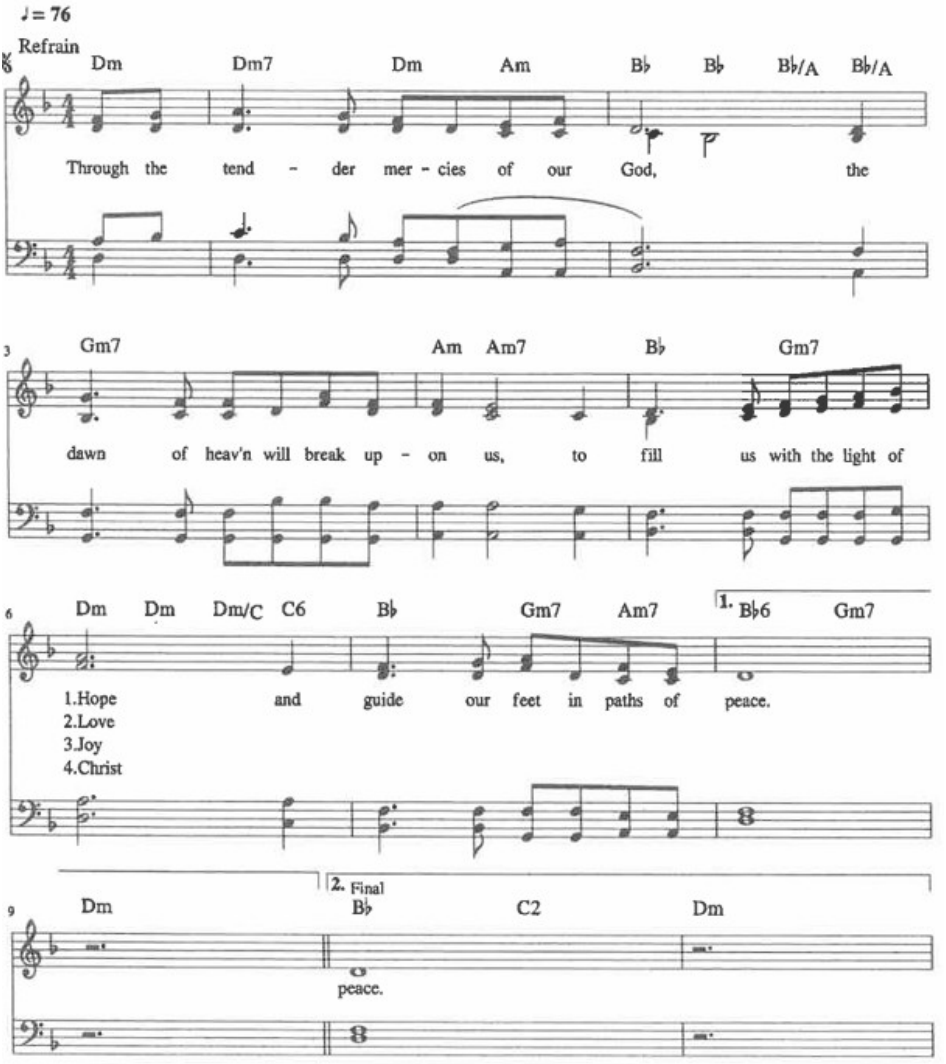
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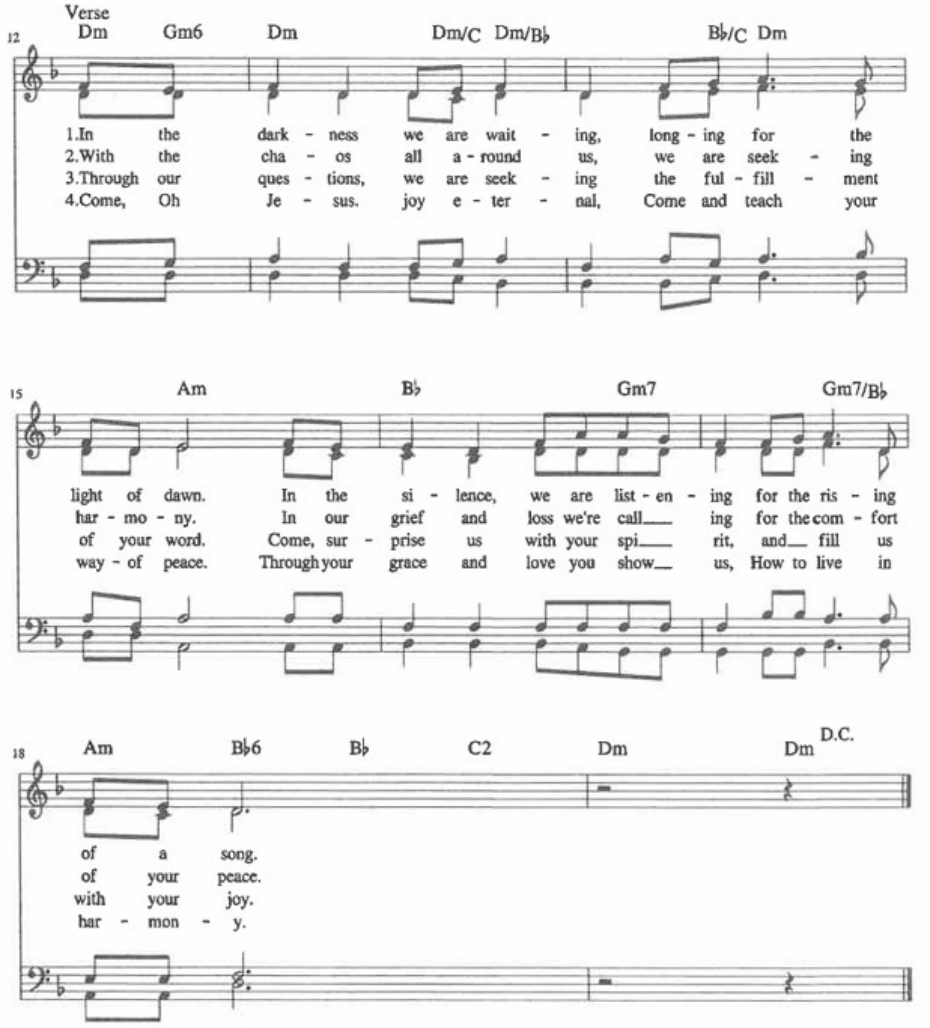
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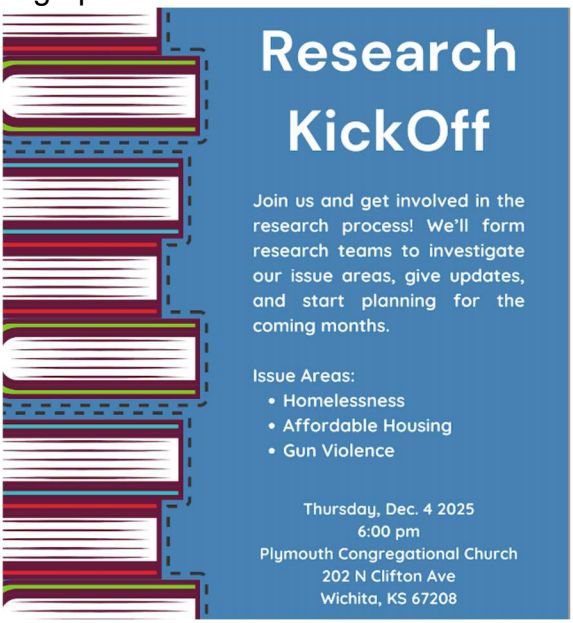

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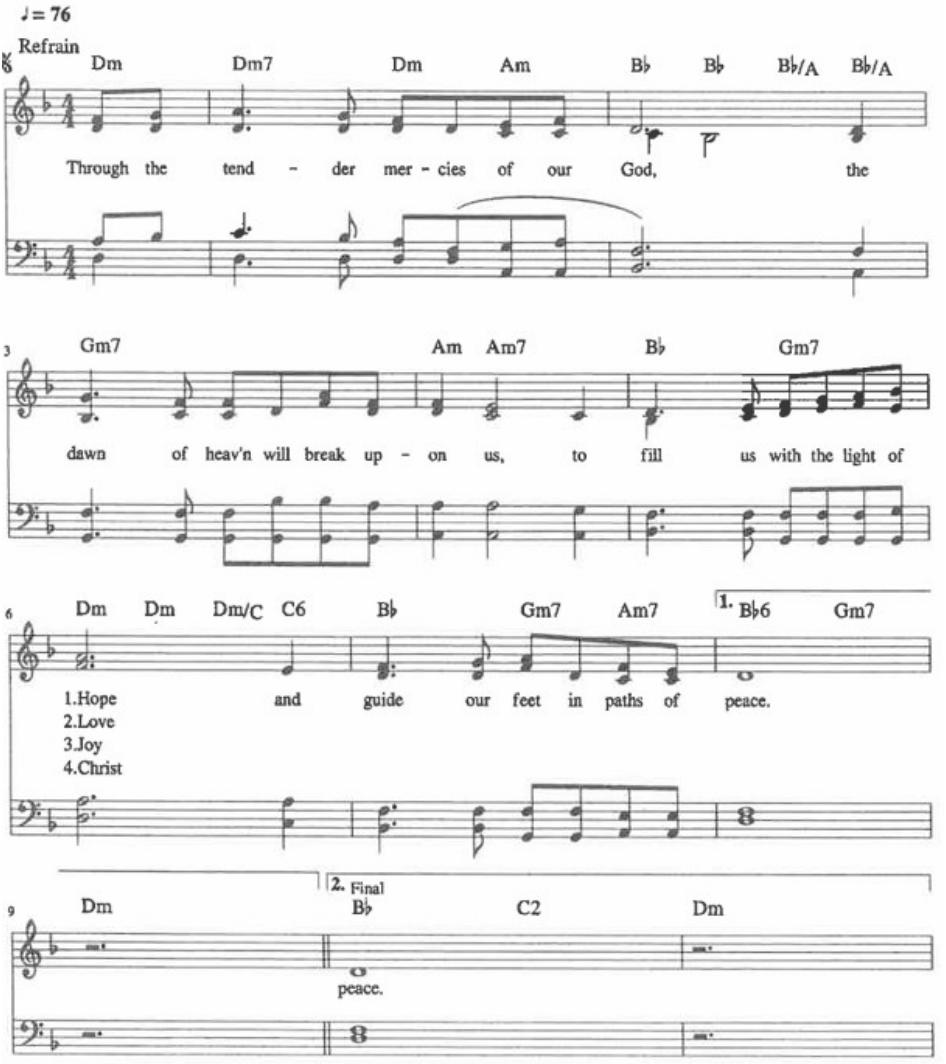
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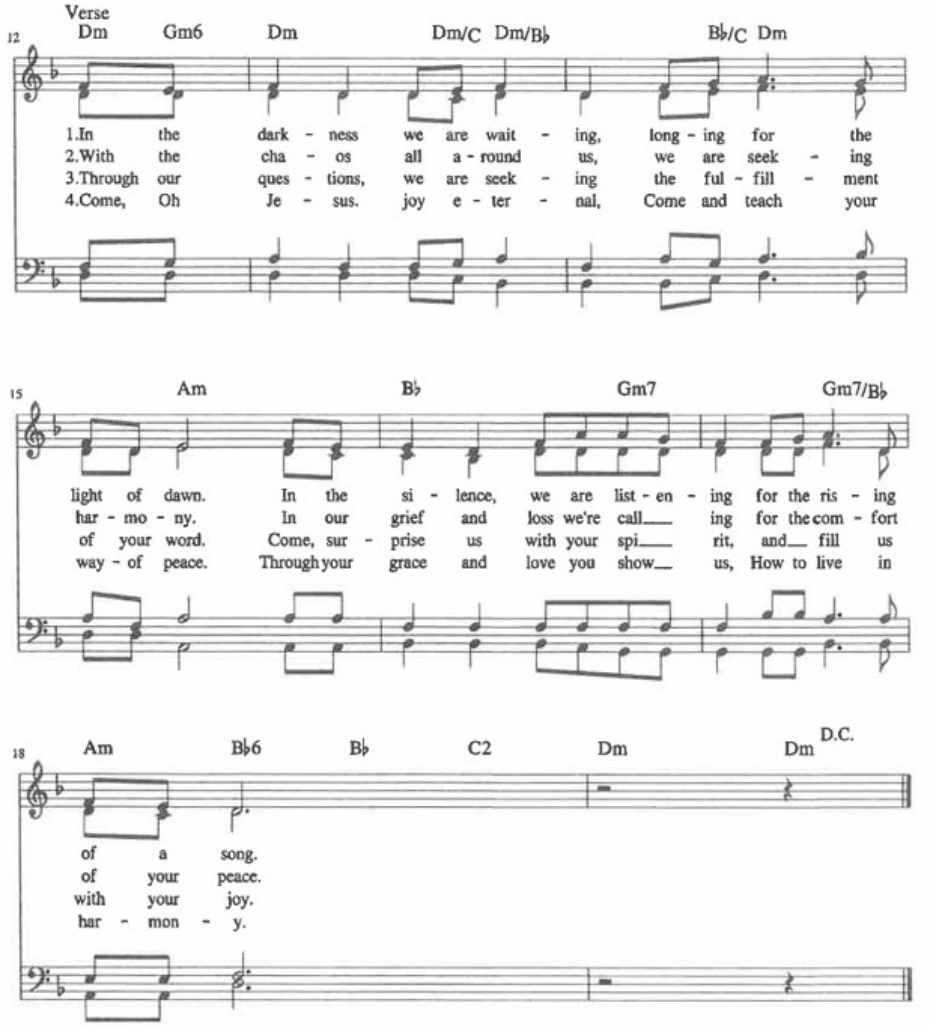
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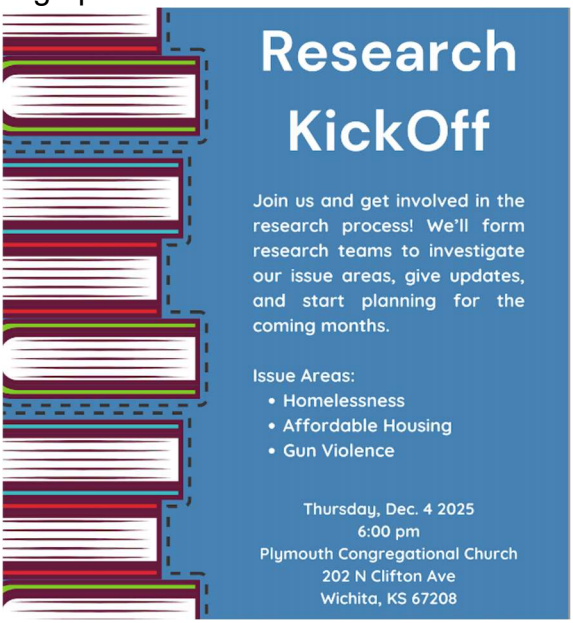

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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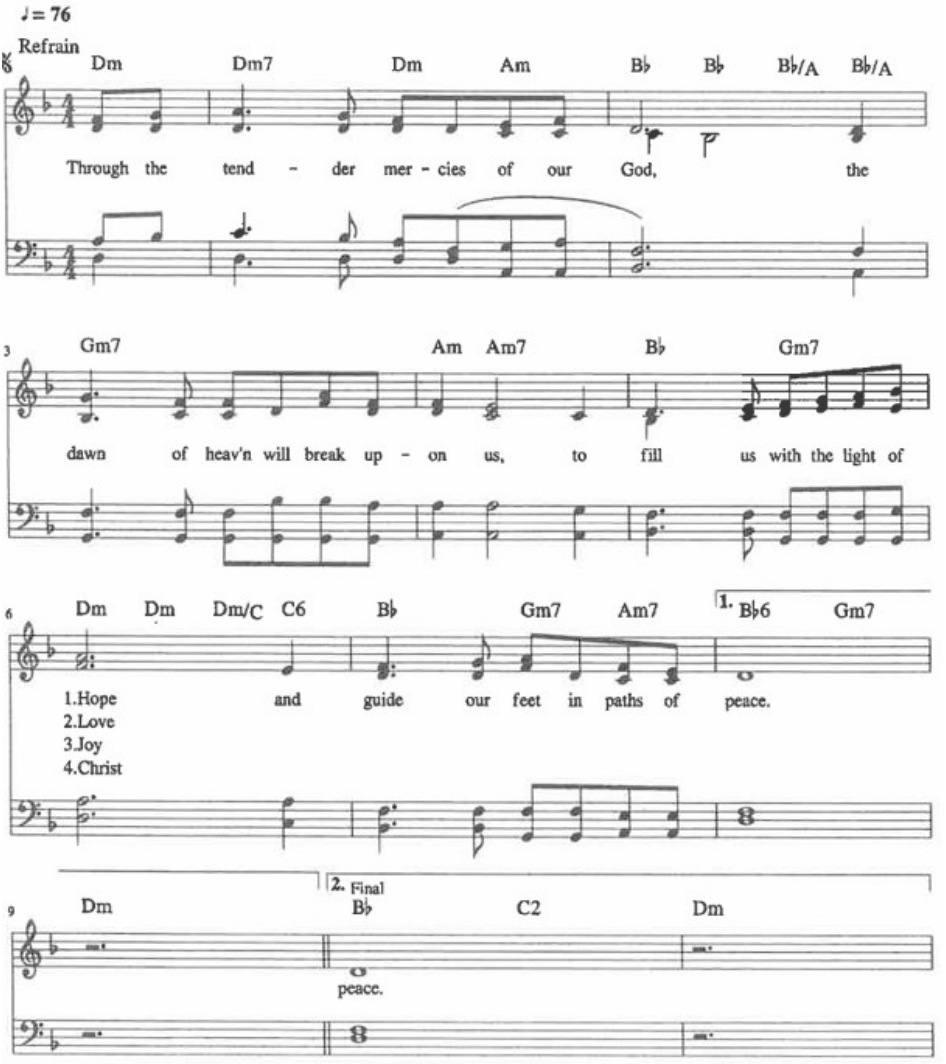
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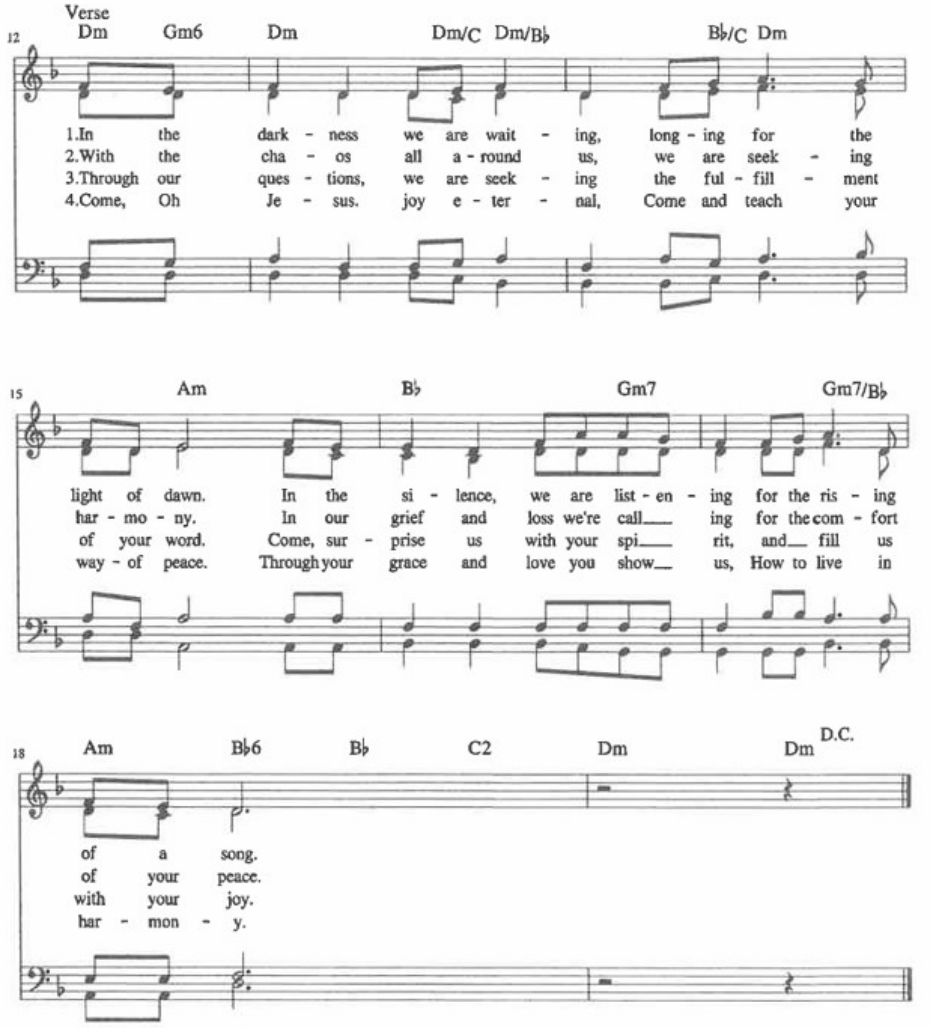
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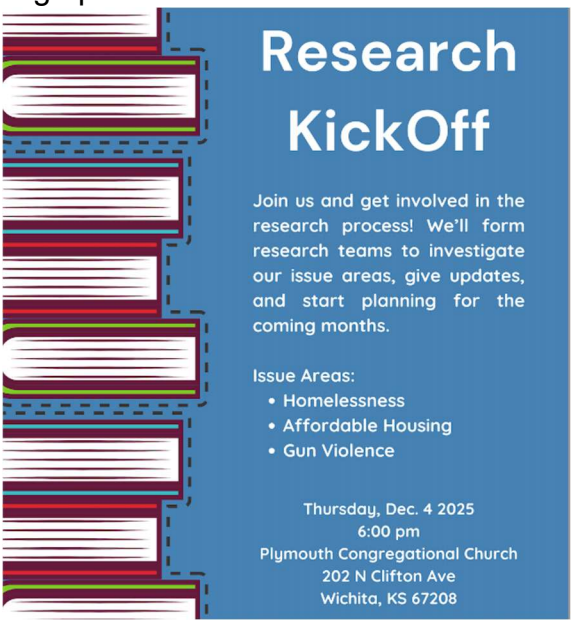

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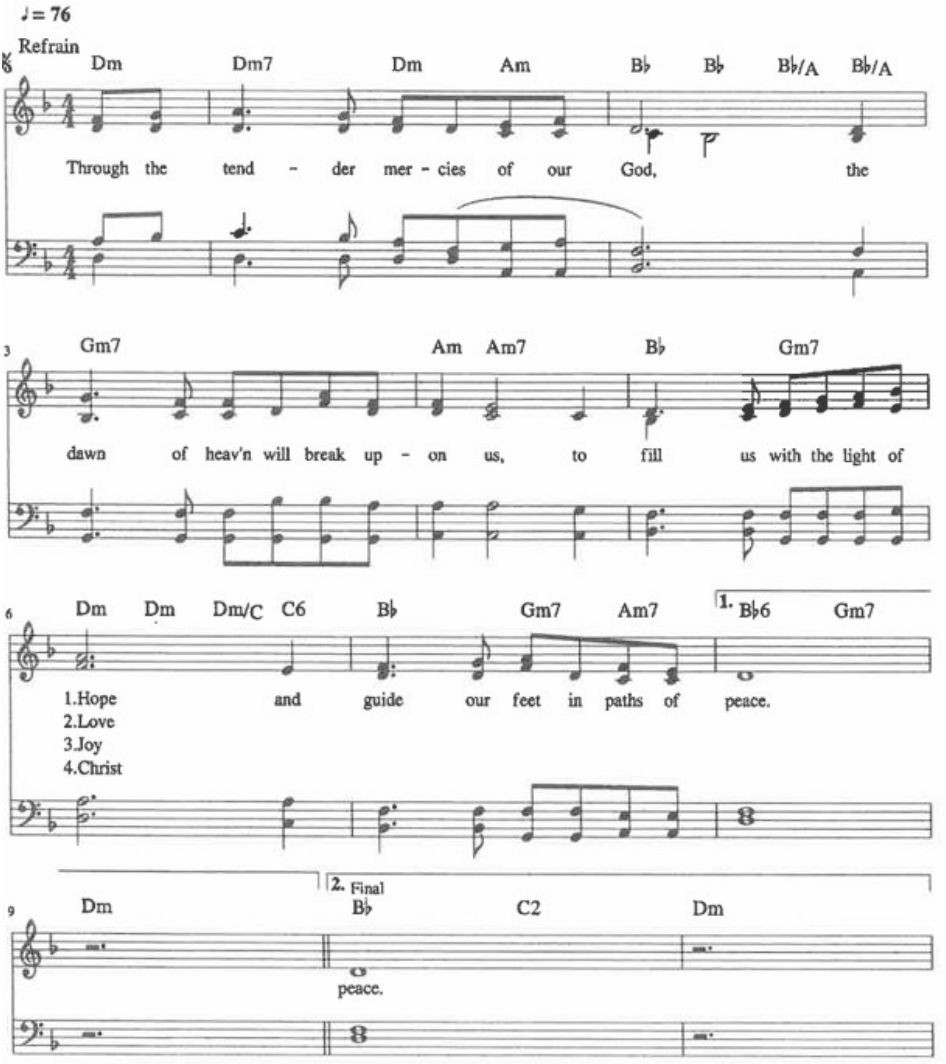
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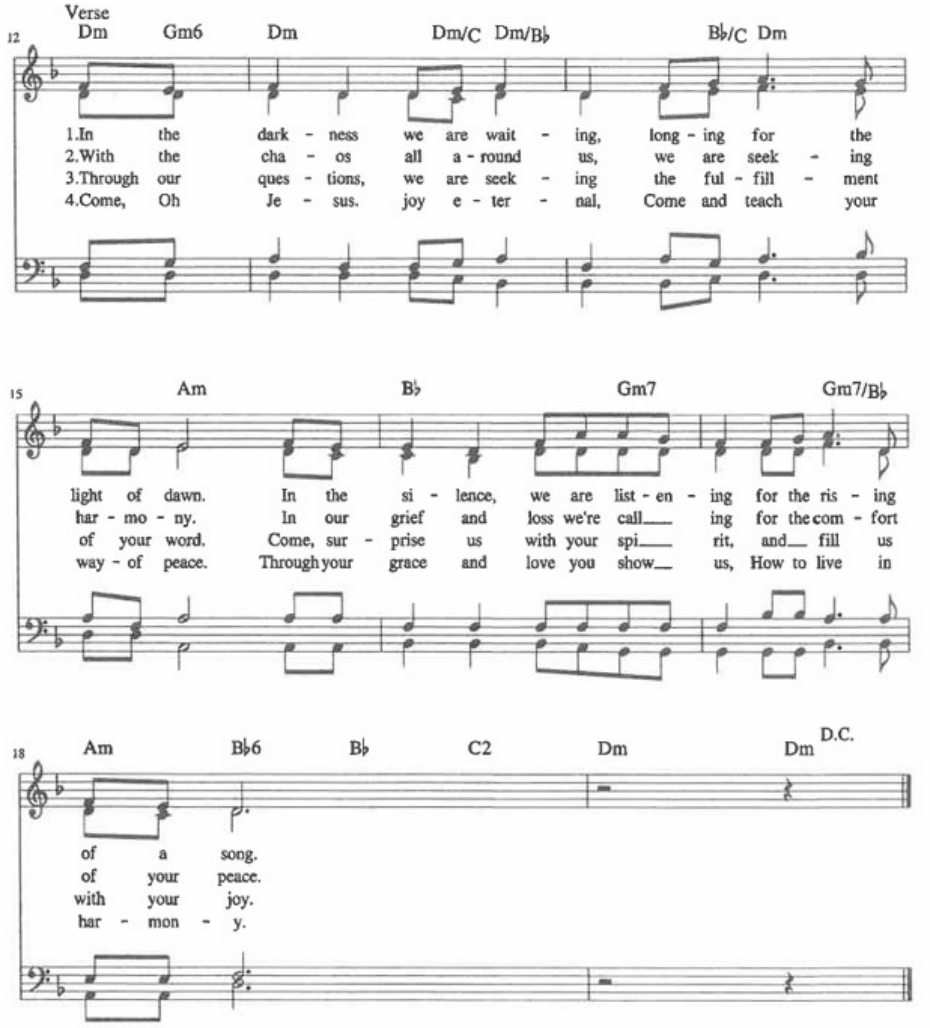
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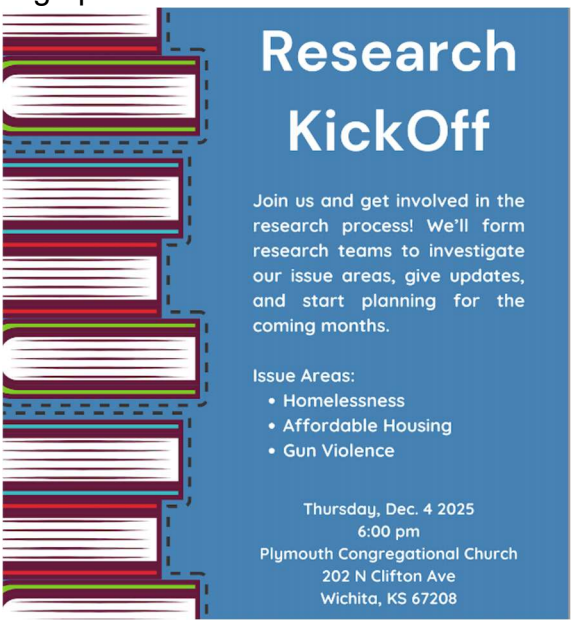

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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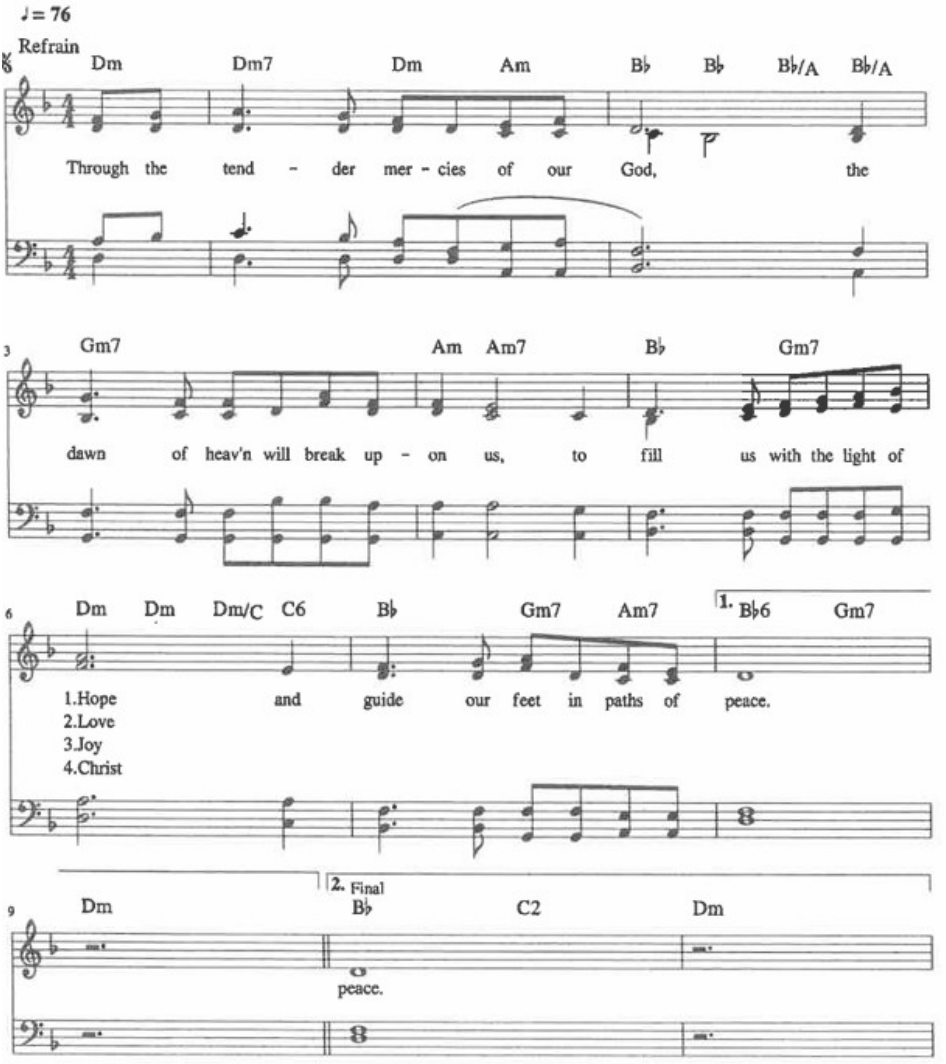
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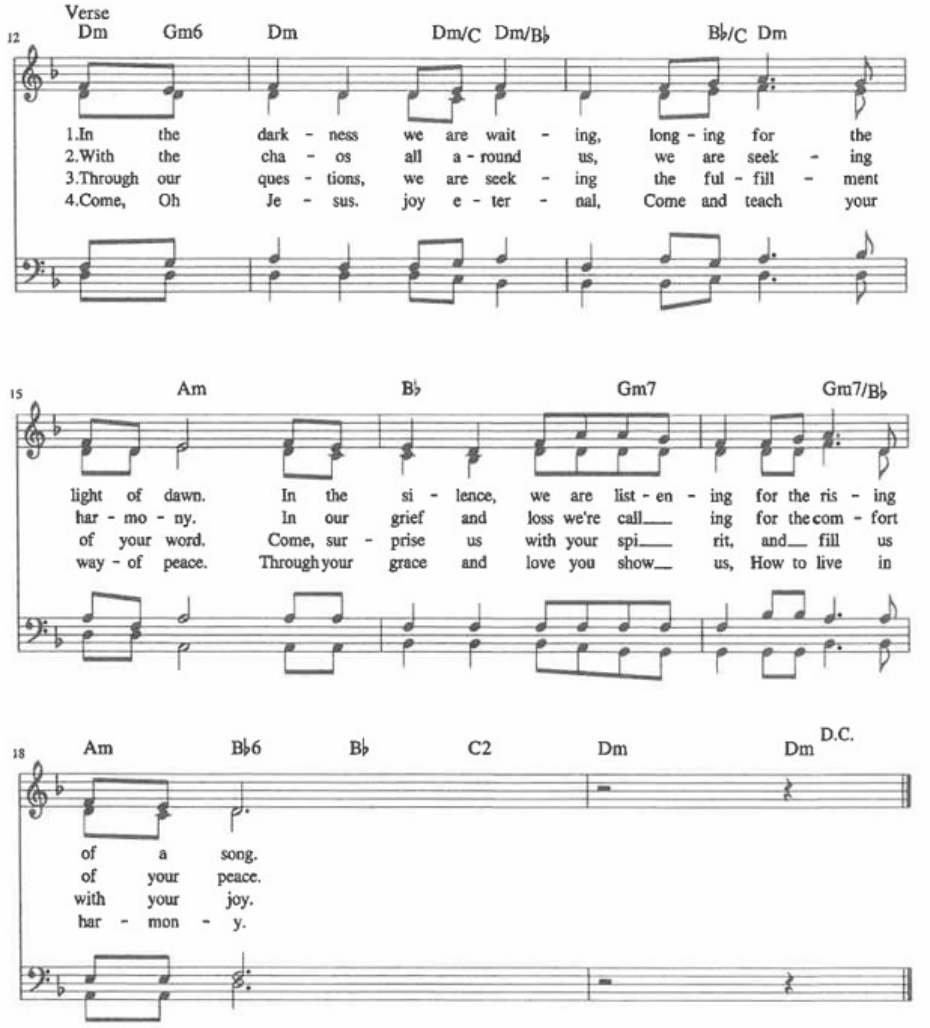
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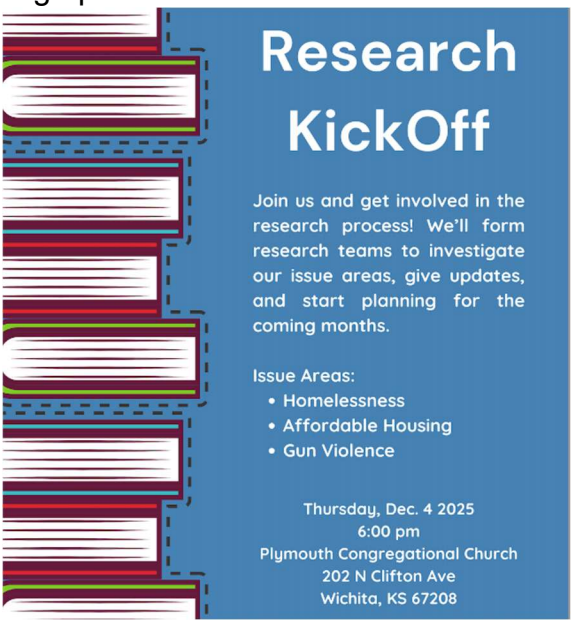

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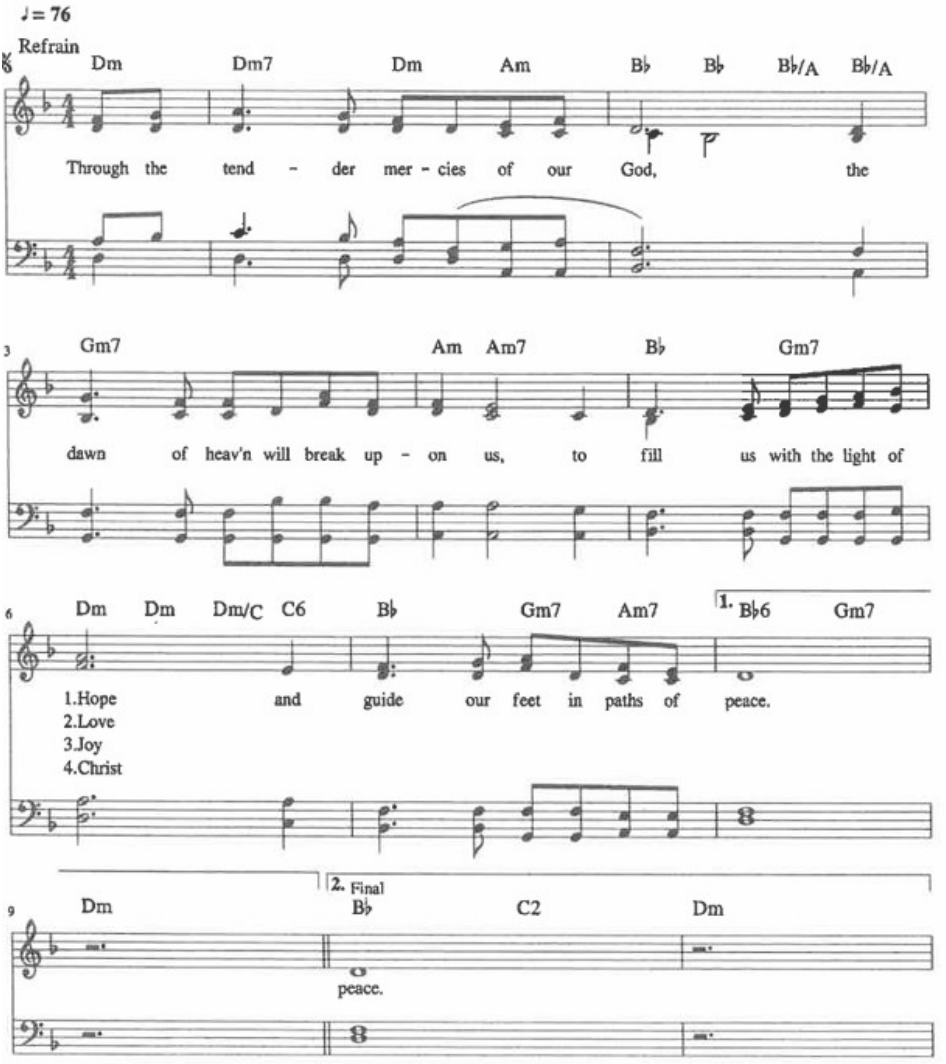
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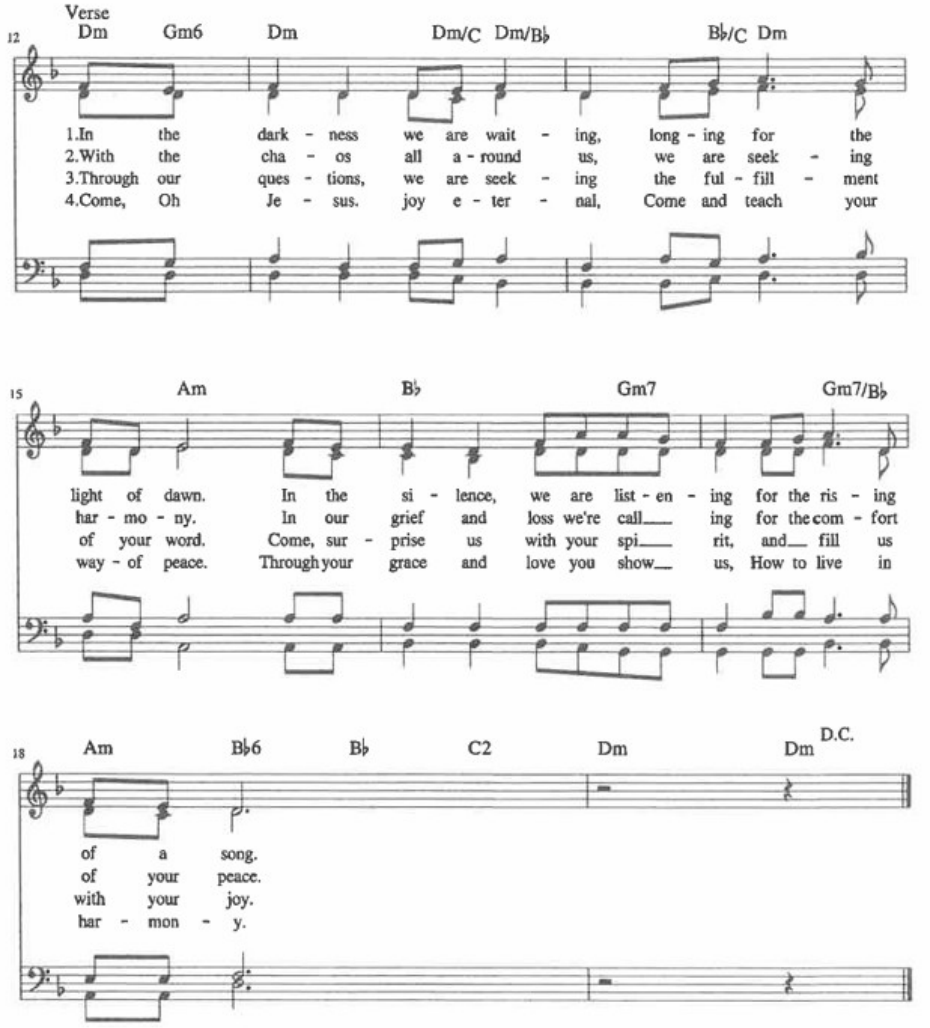
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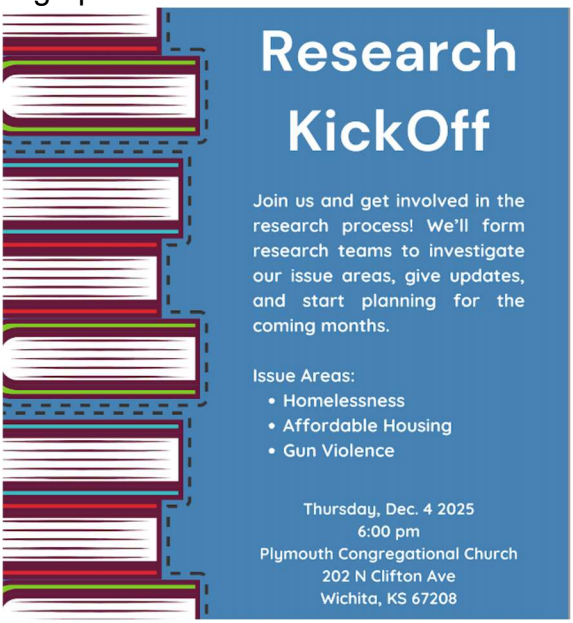

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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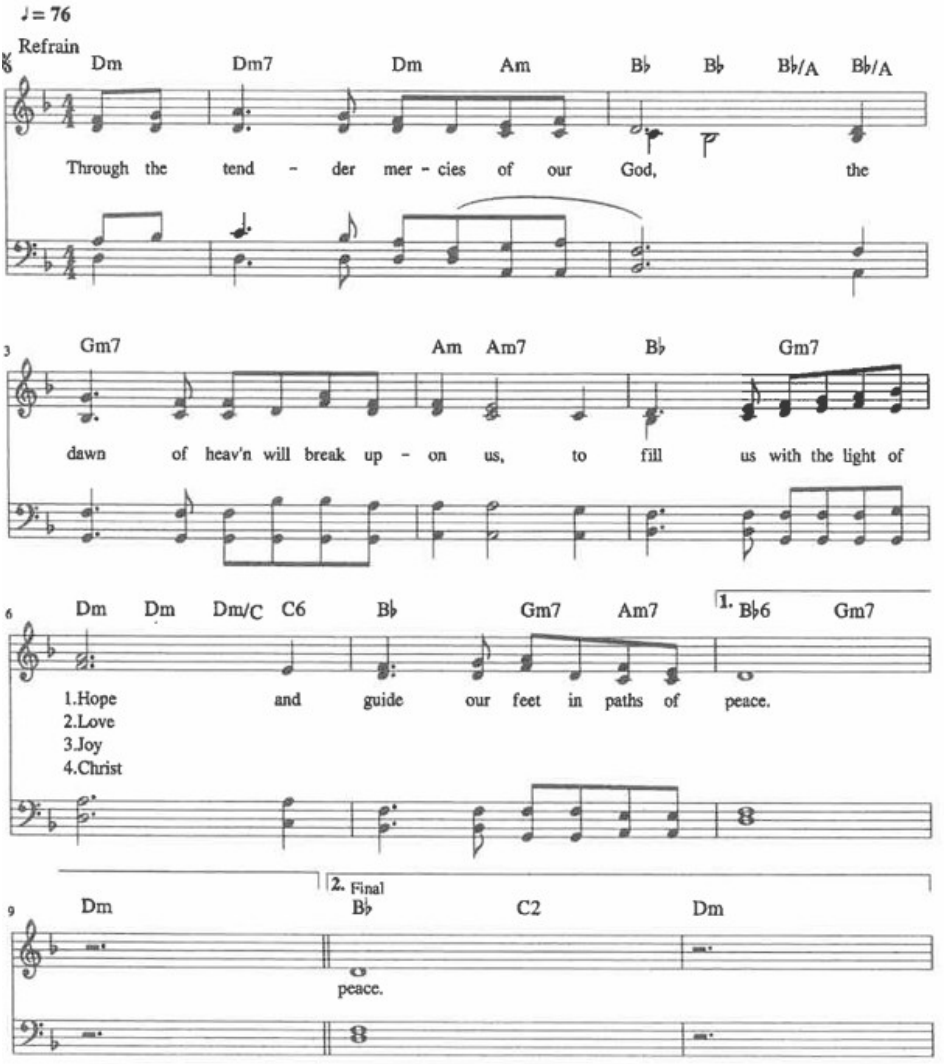
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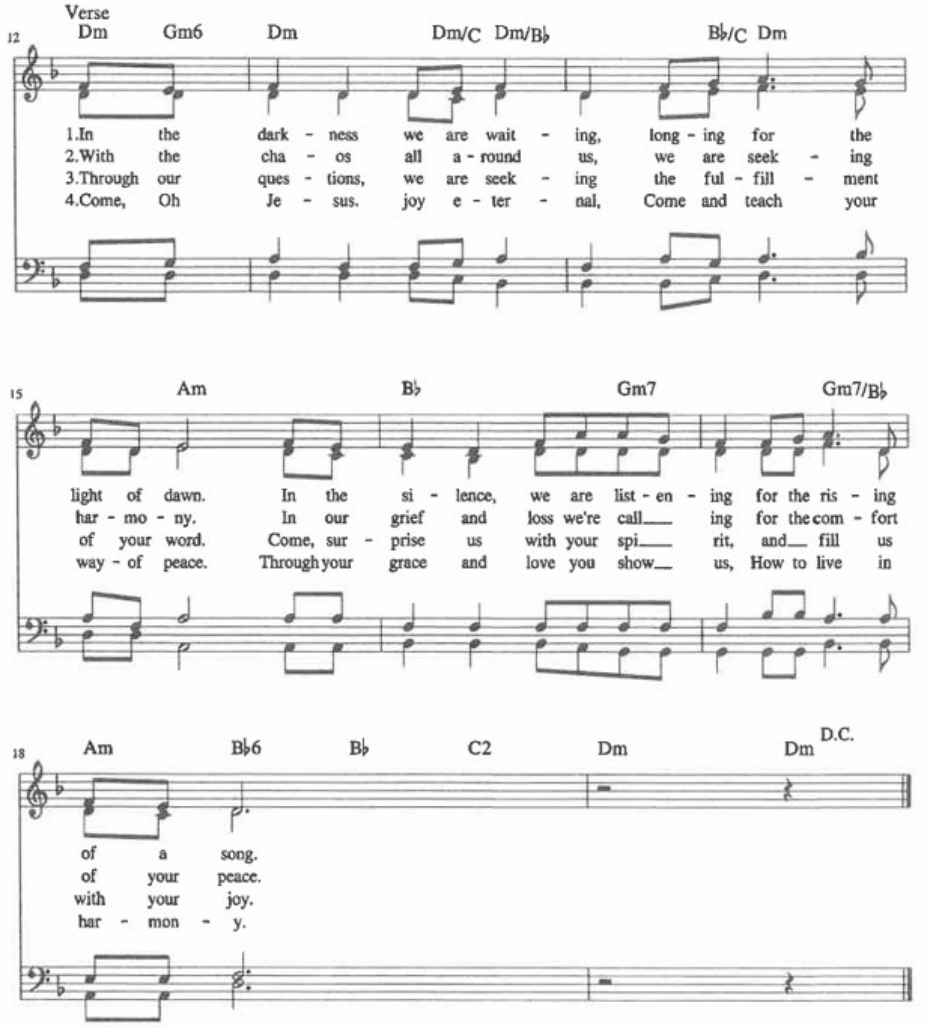
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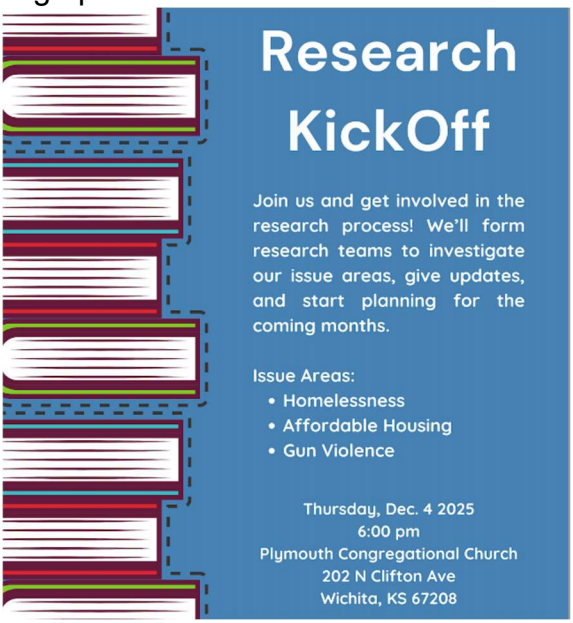

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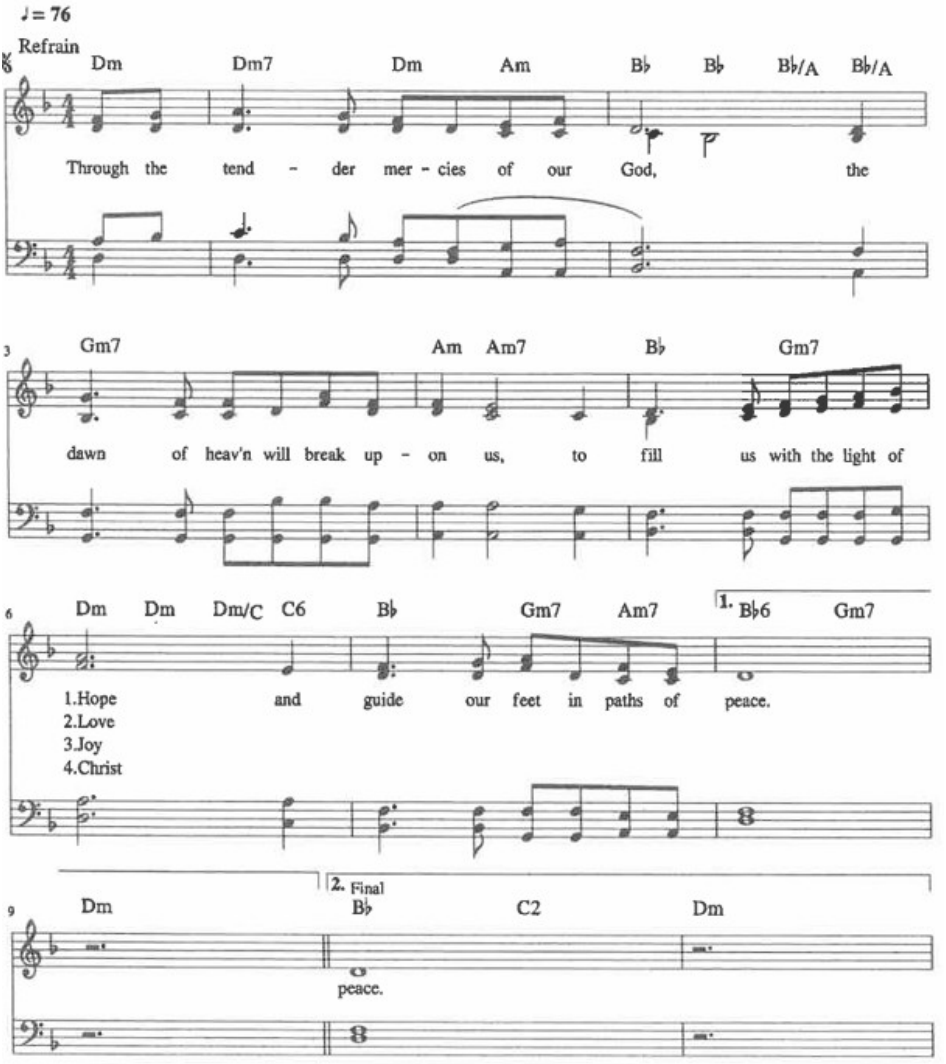
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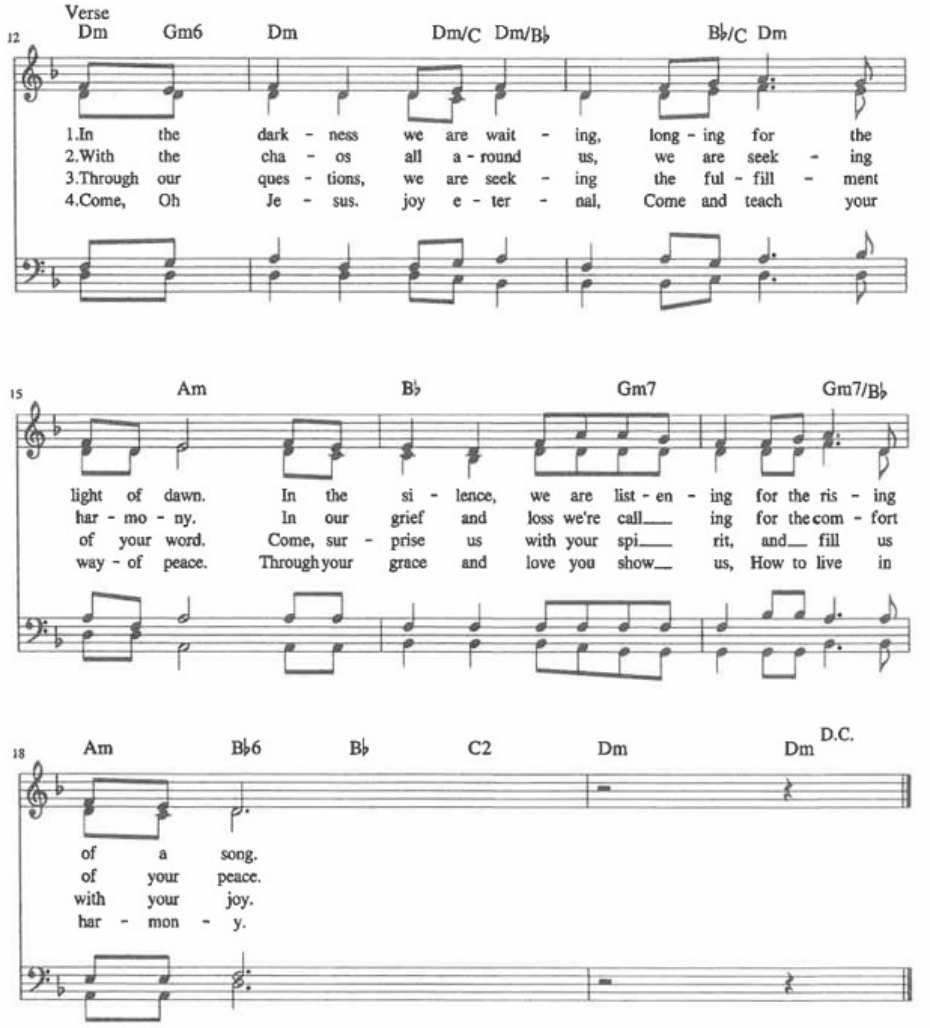
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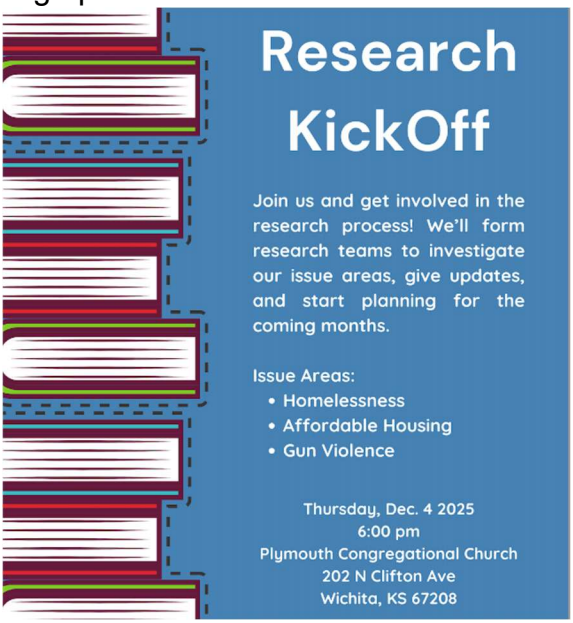

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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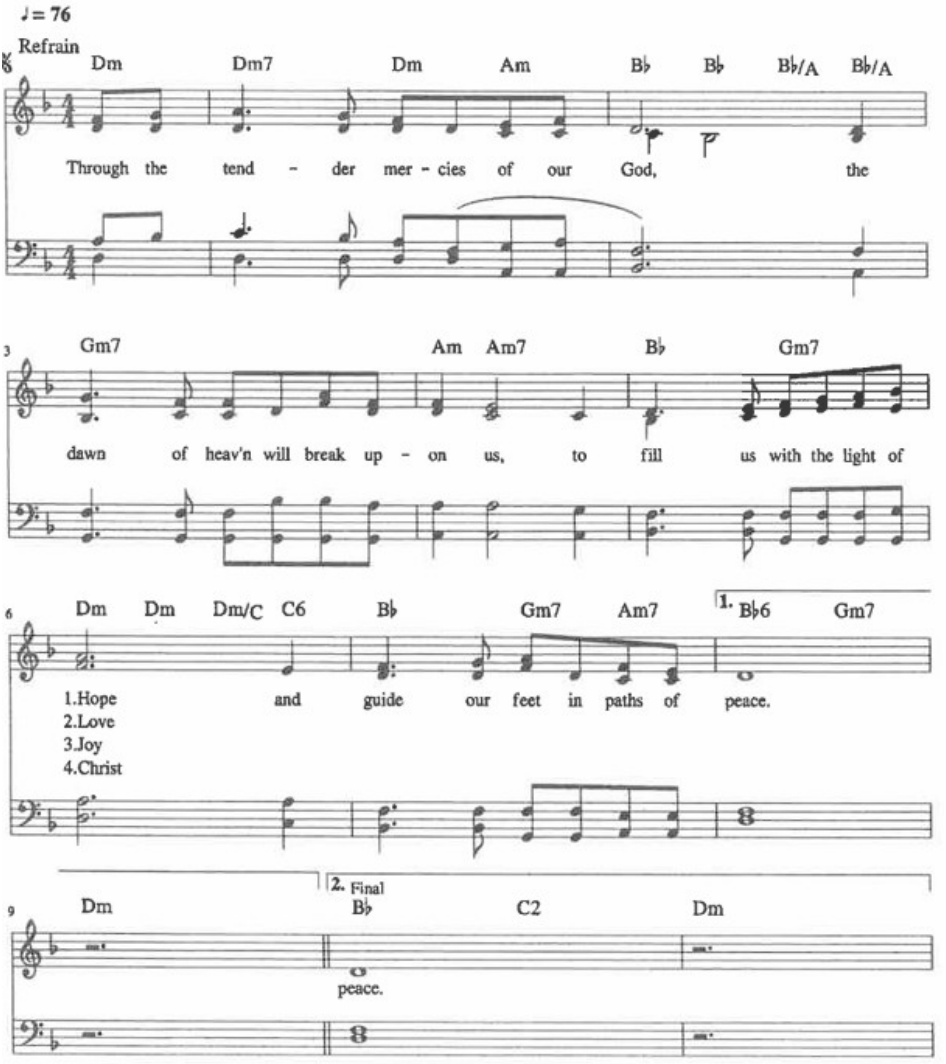
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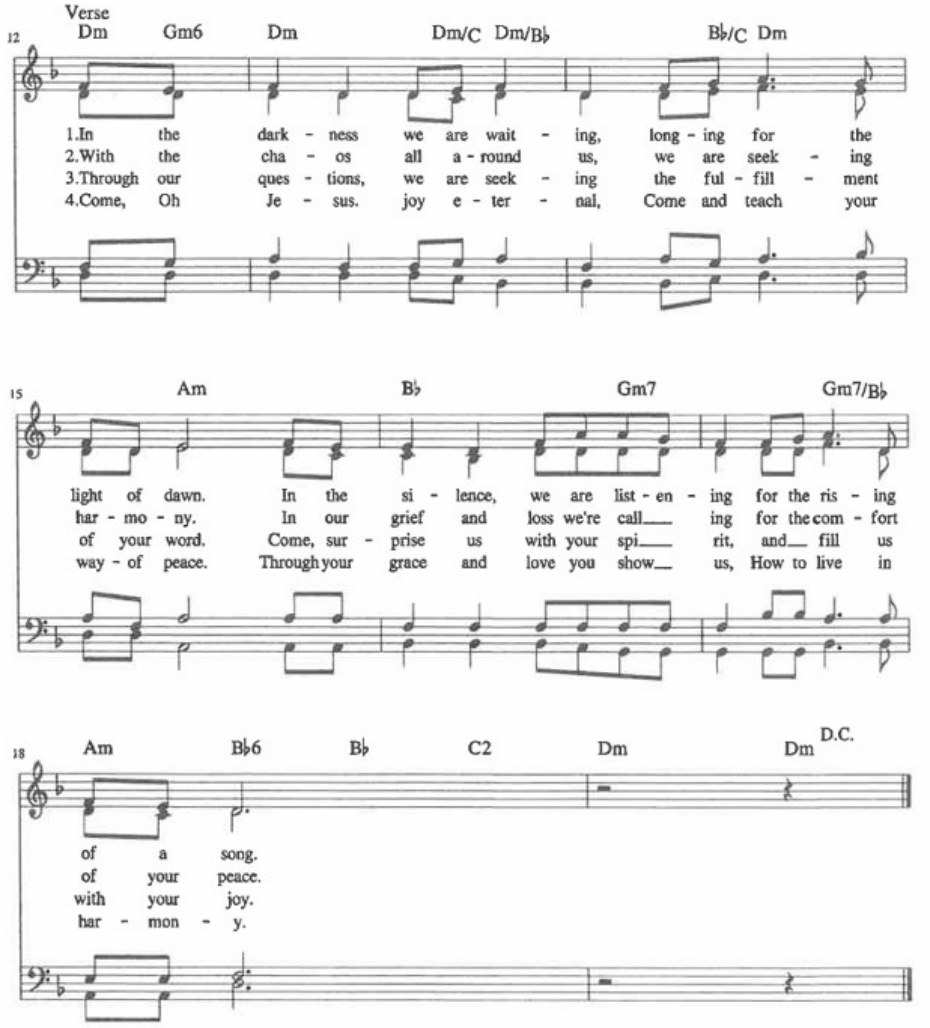
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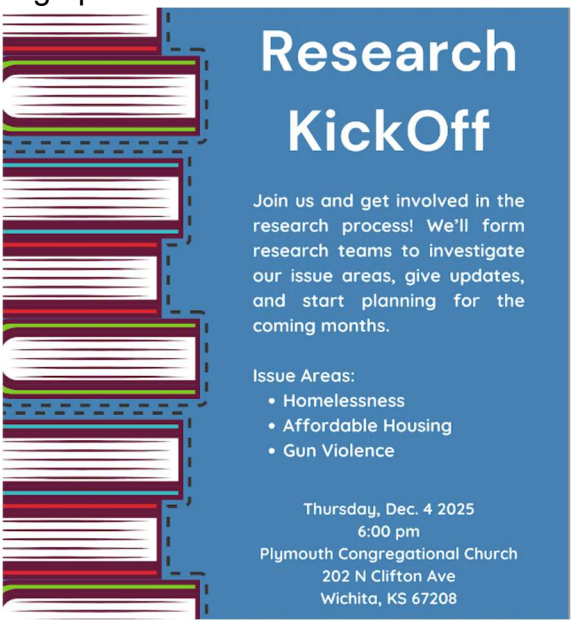

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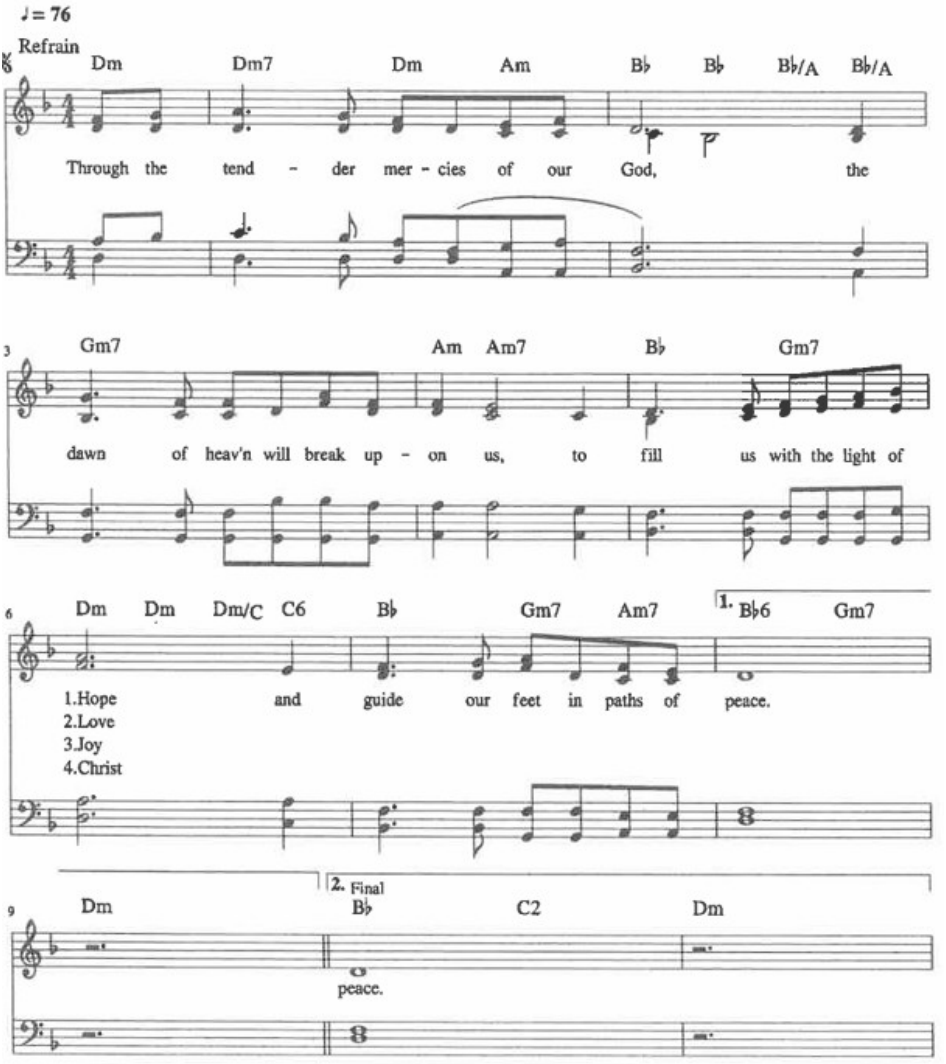
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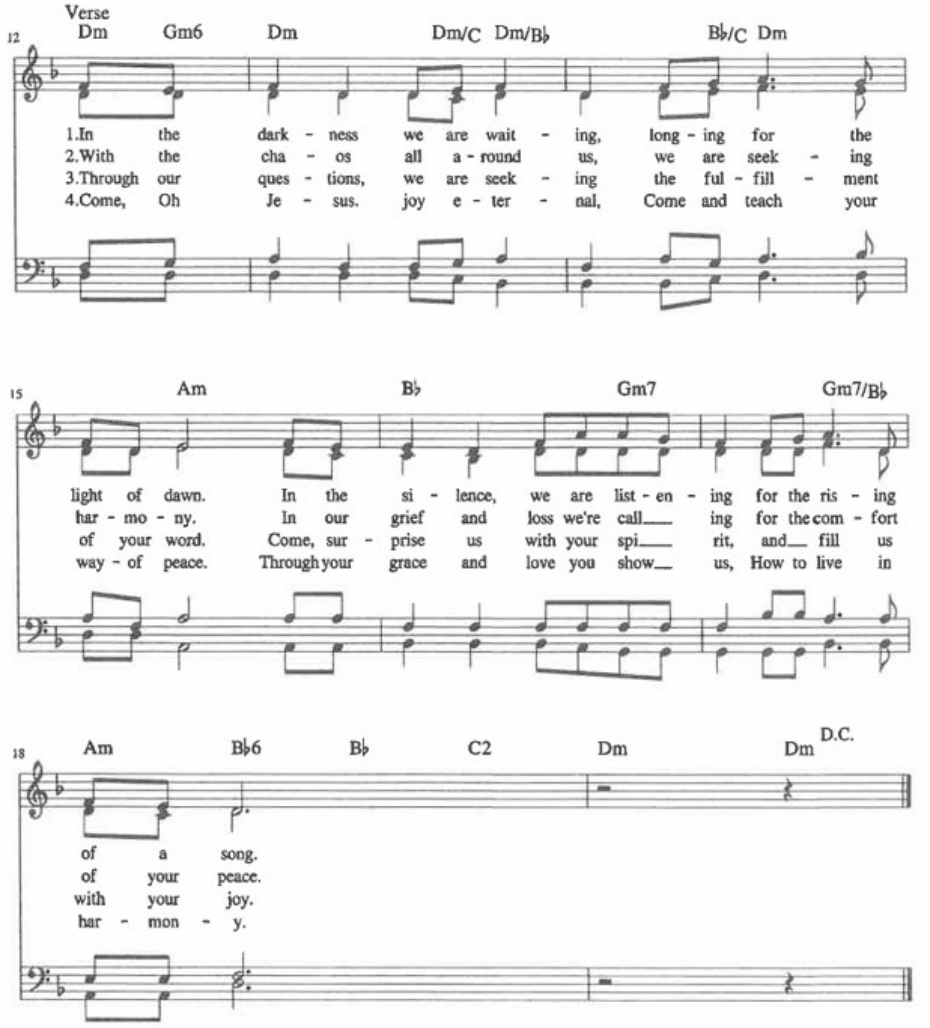
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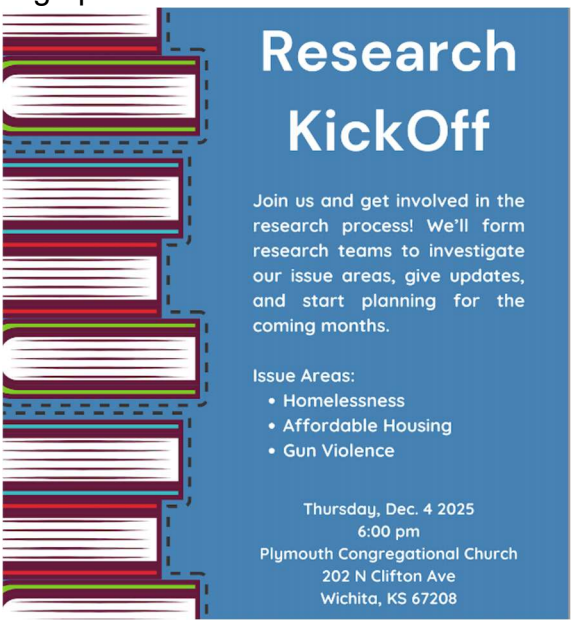

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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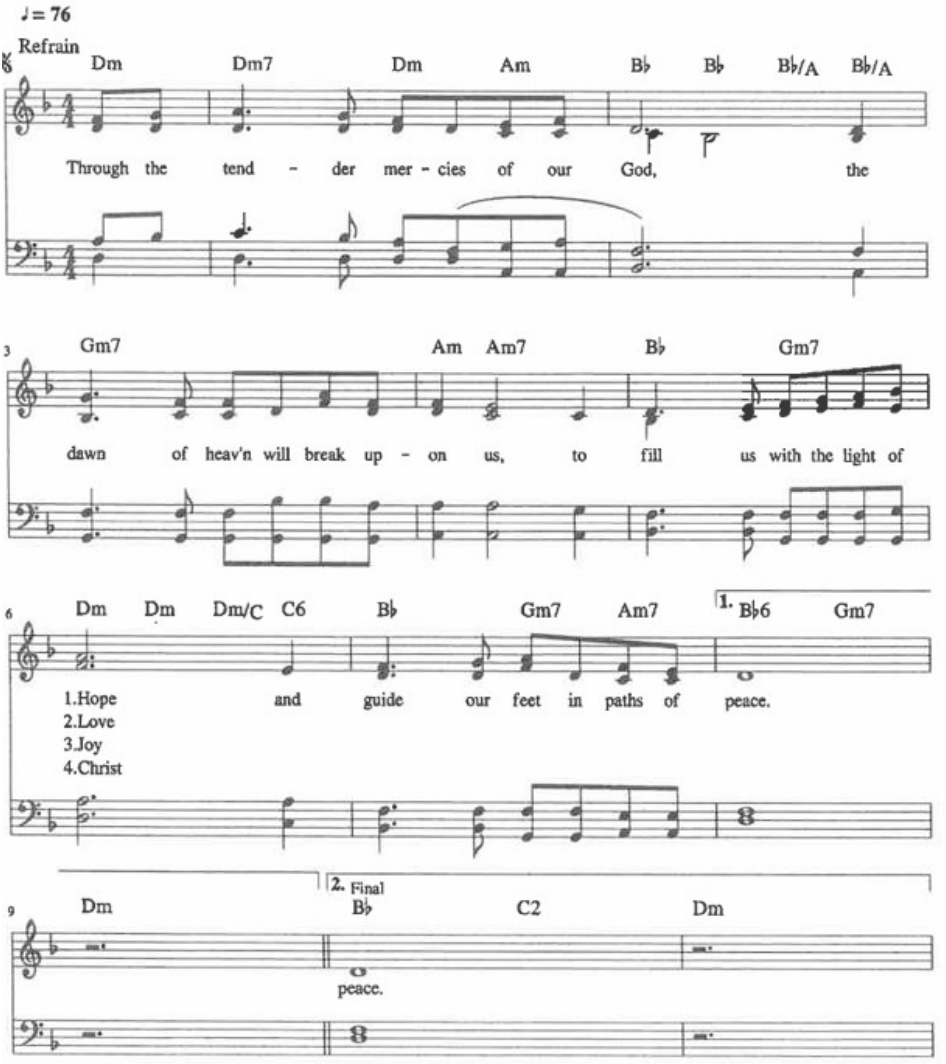
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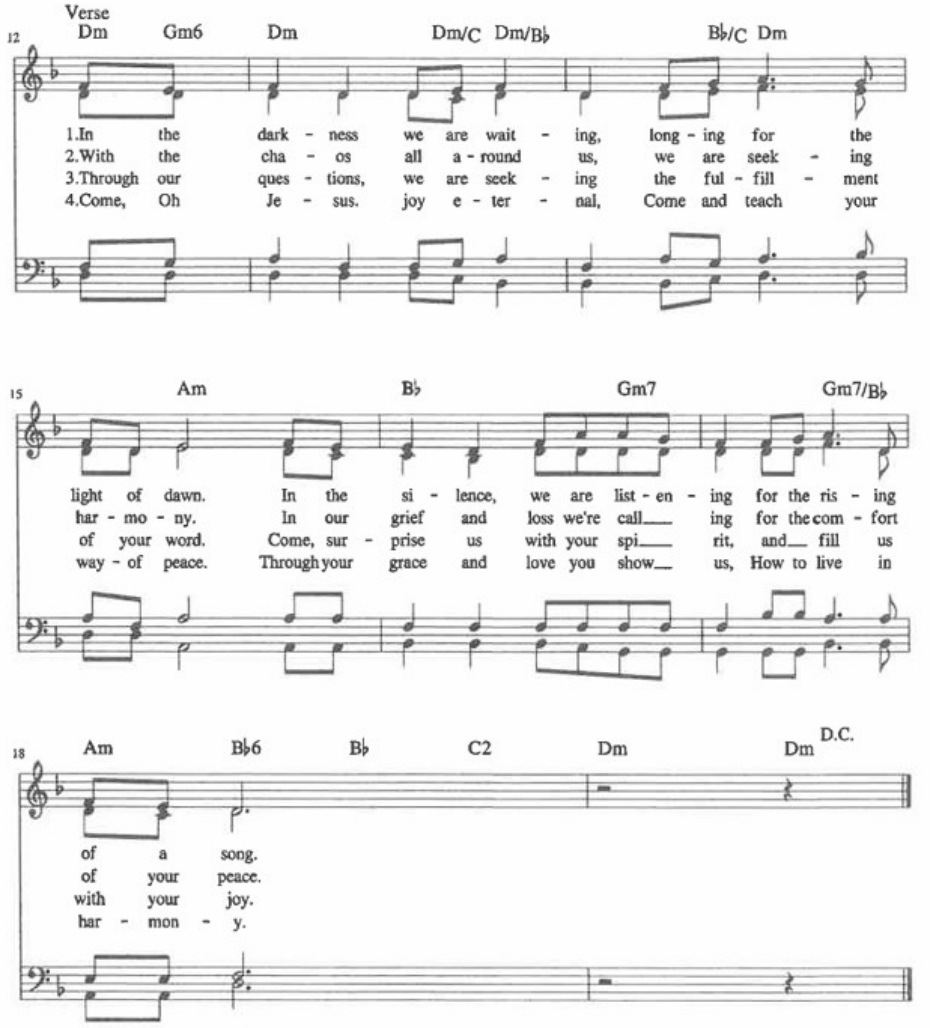
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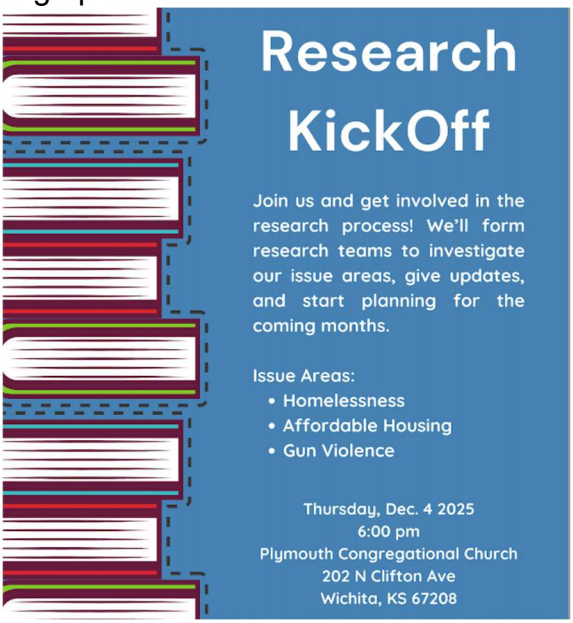

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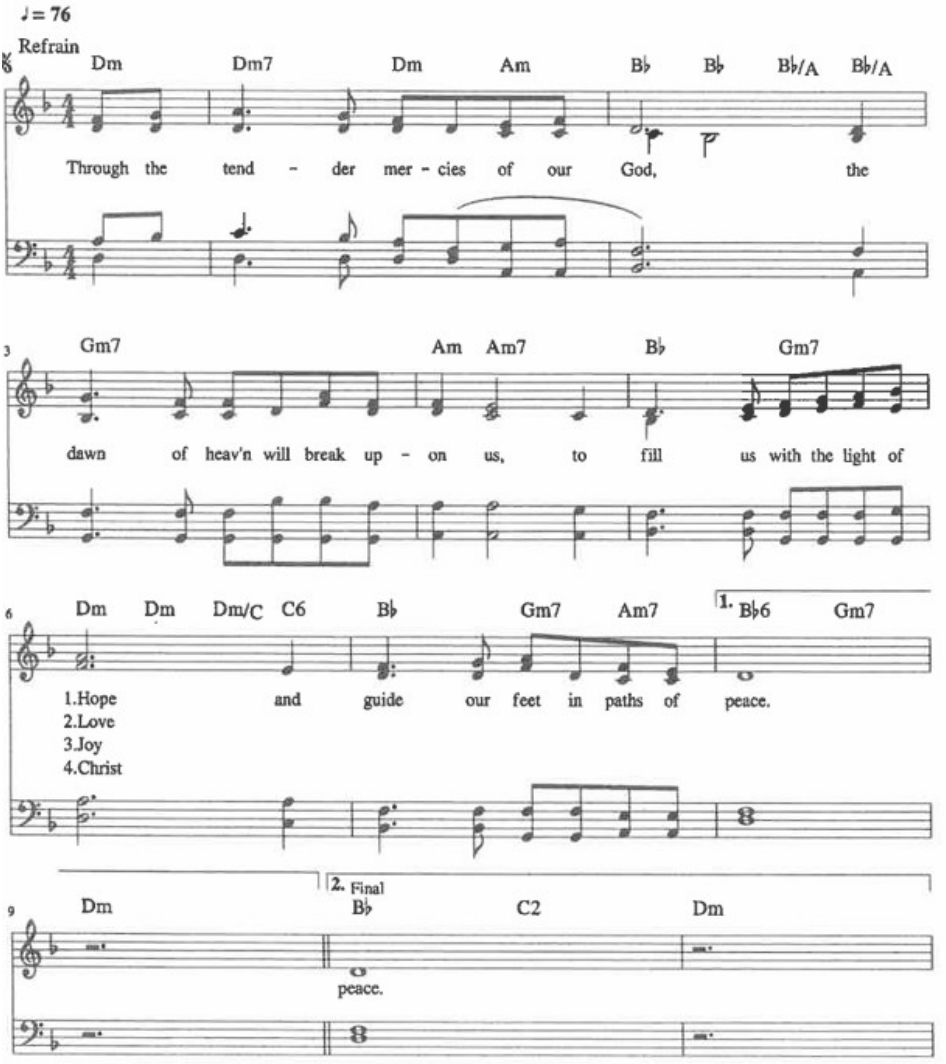
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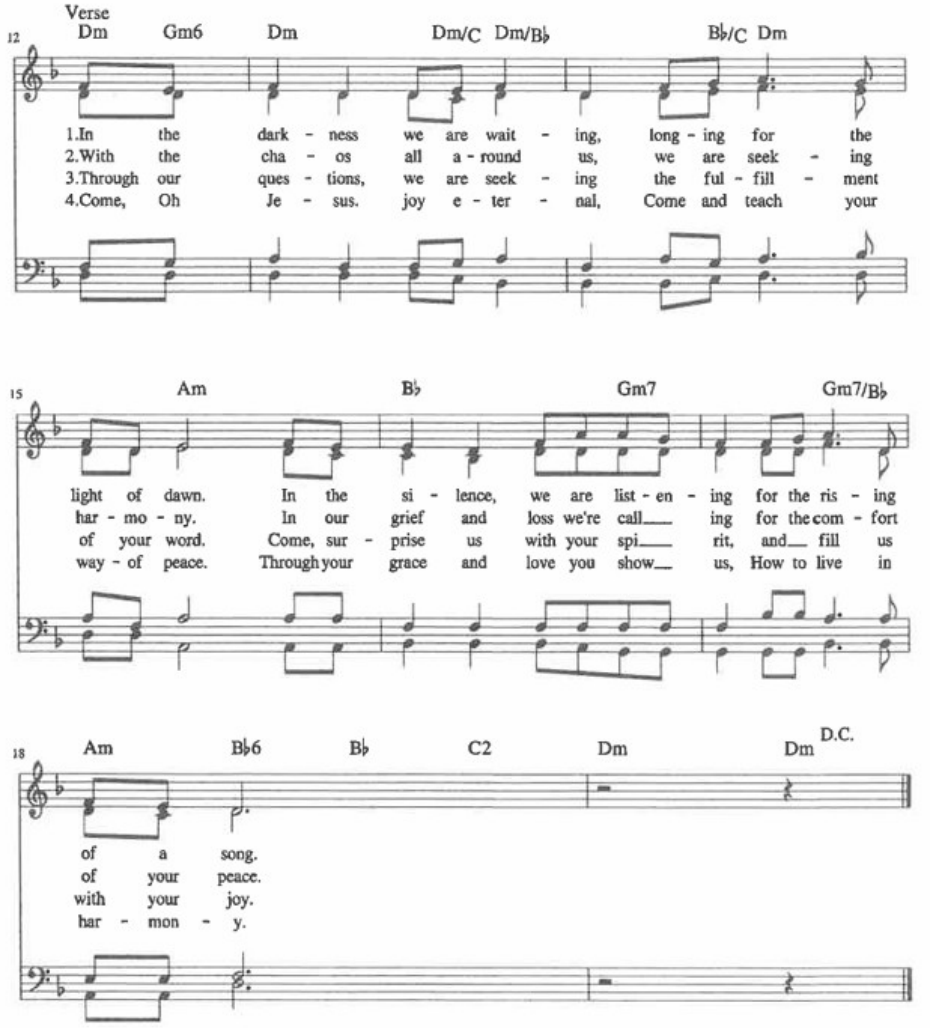
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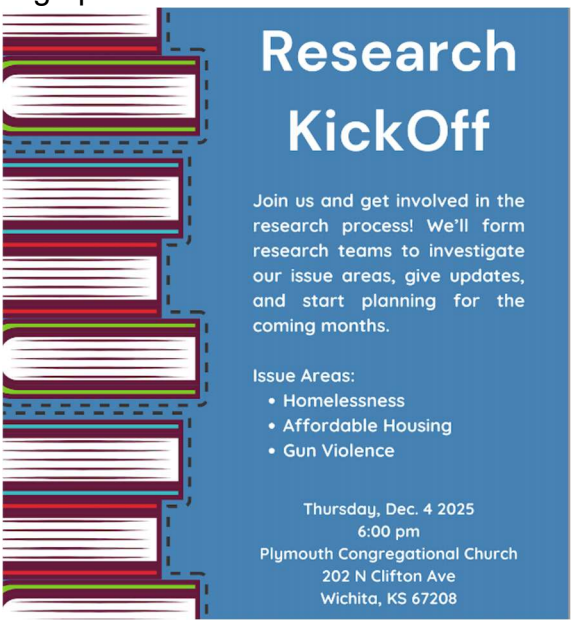

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
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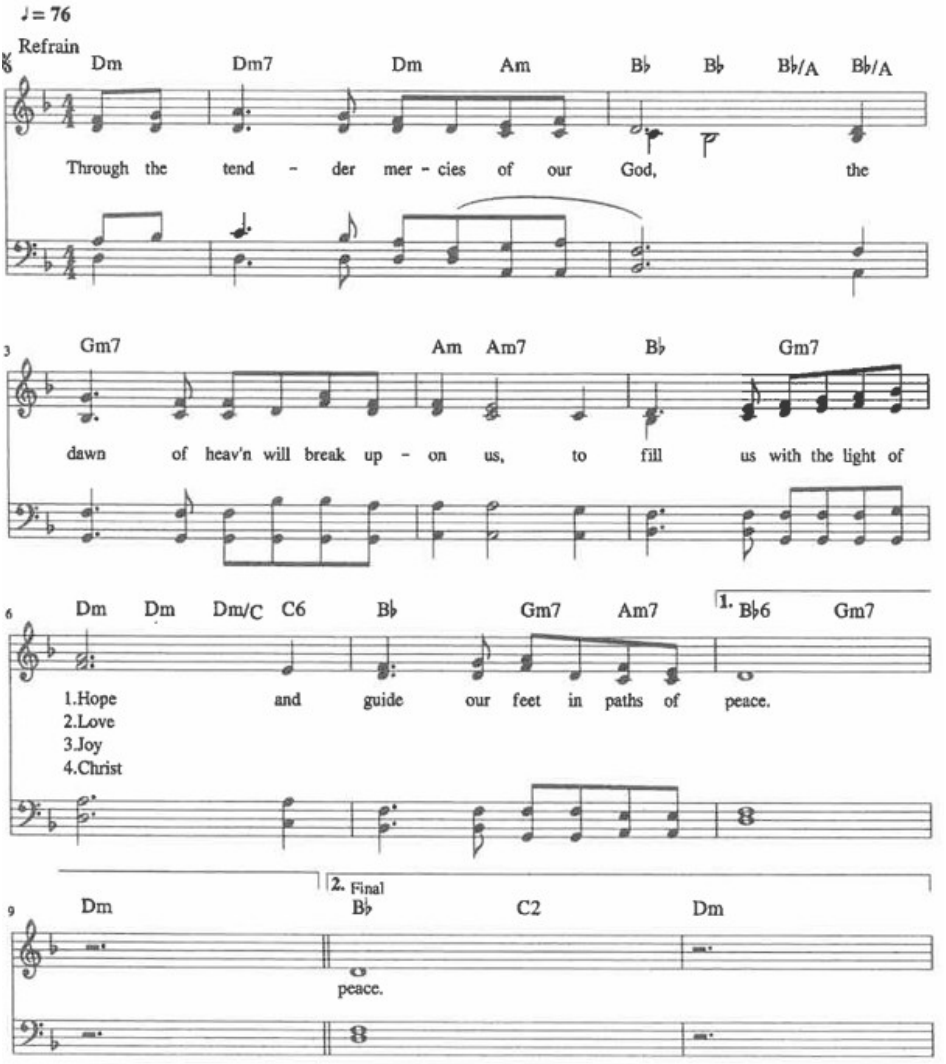
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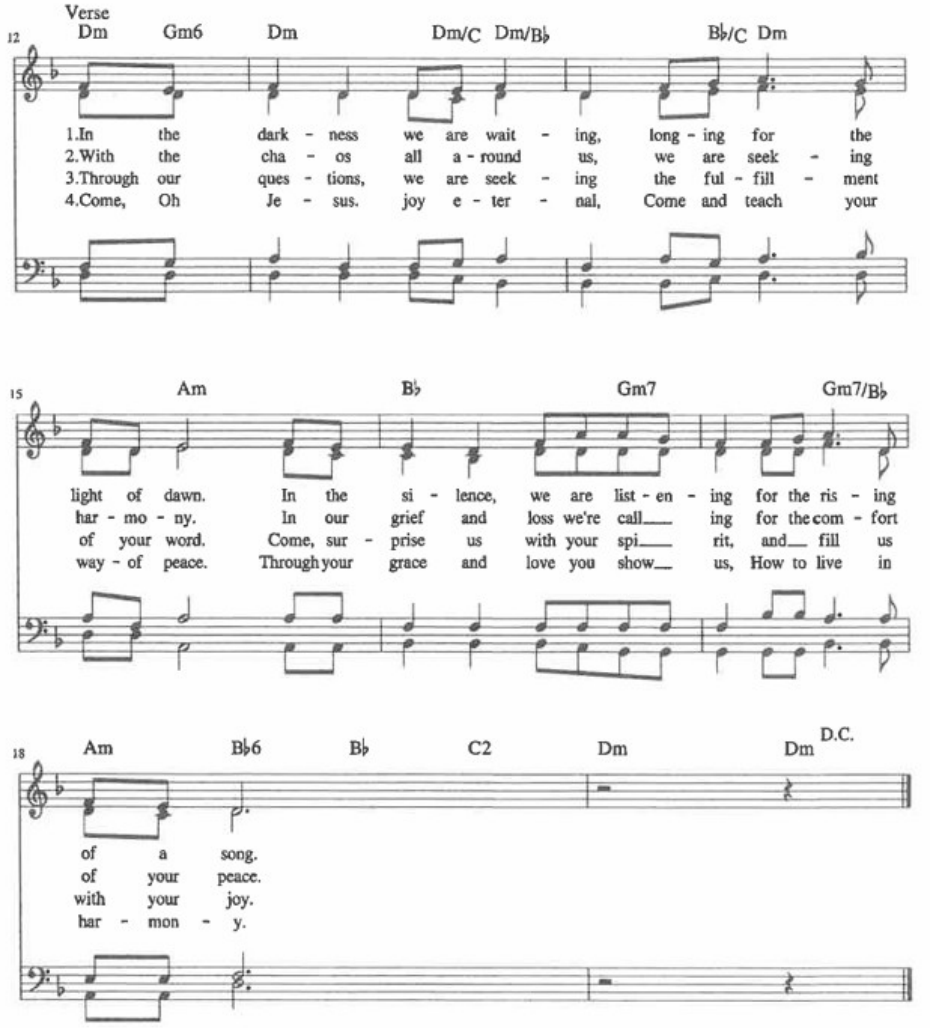
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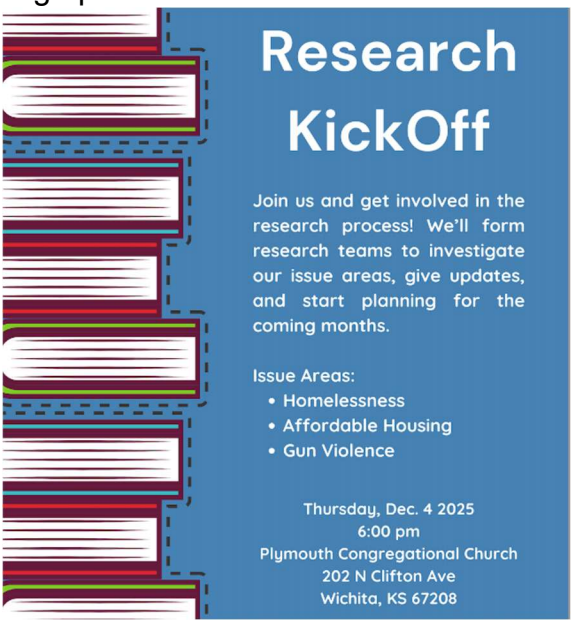

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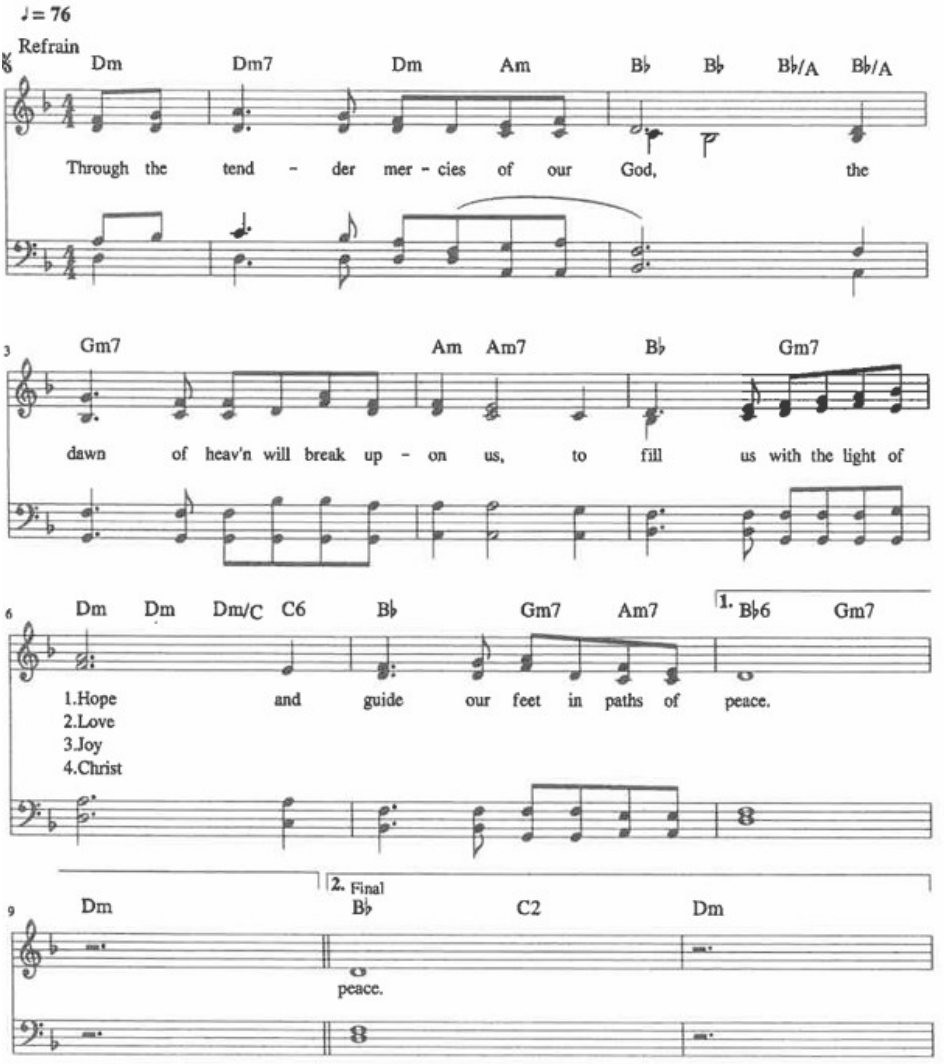
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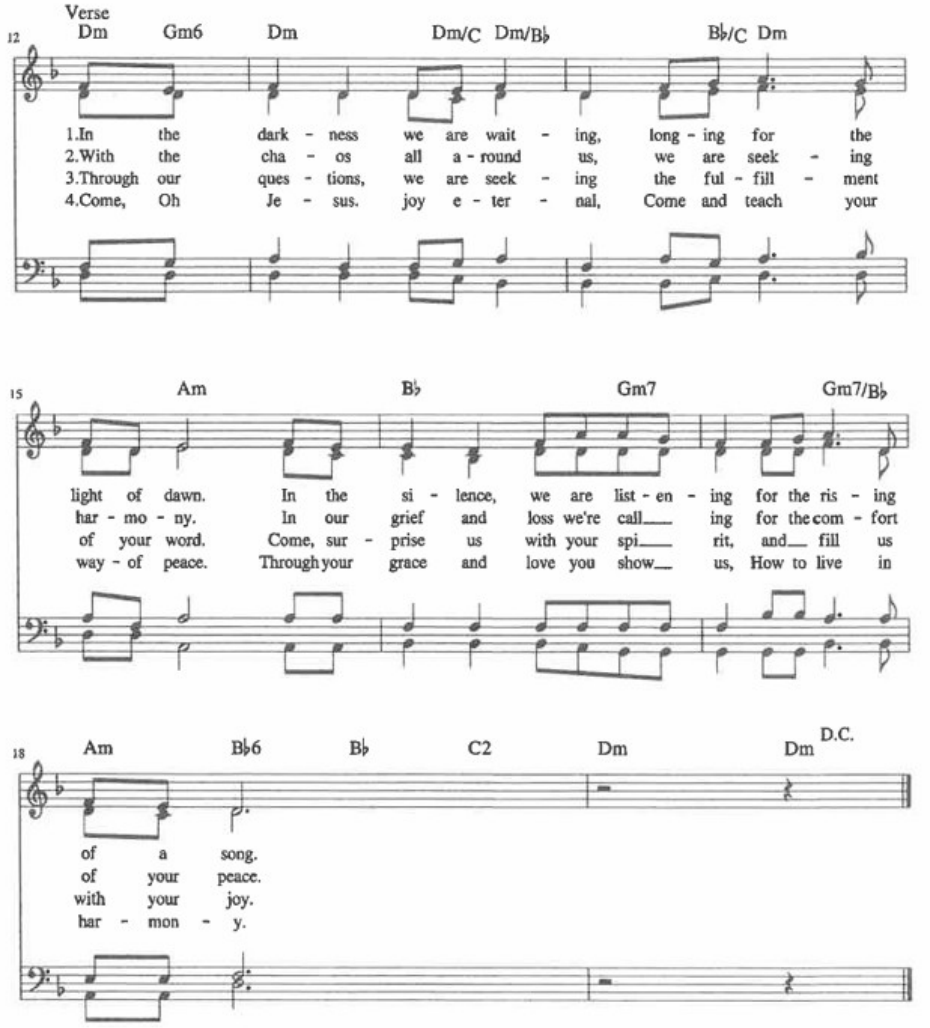
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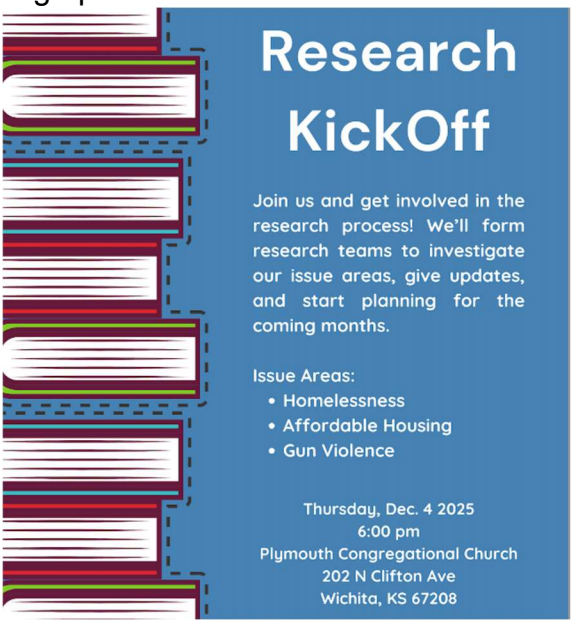

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Greeting our Guests (Please pass the welcome registers)

Seeing and Seeking God
Work of the Church
Sharing our Praises and Concerns

Sung prayer of God's People
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus #218

Sending

**Light Dawns on a Weary World* #205

*Benediction

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It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
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"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
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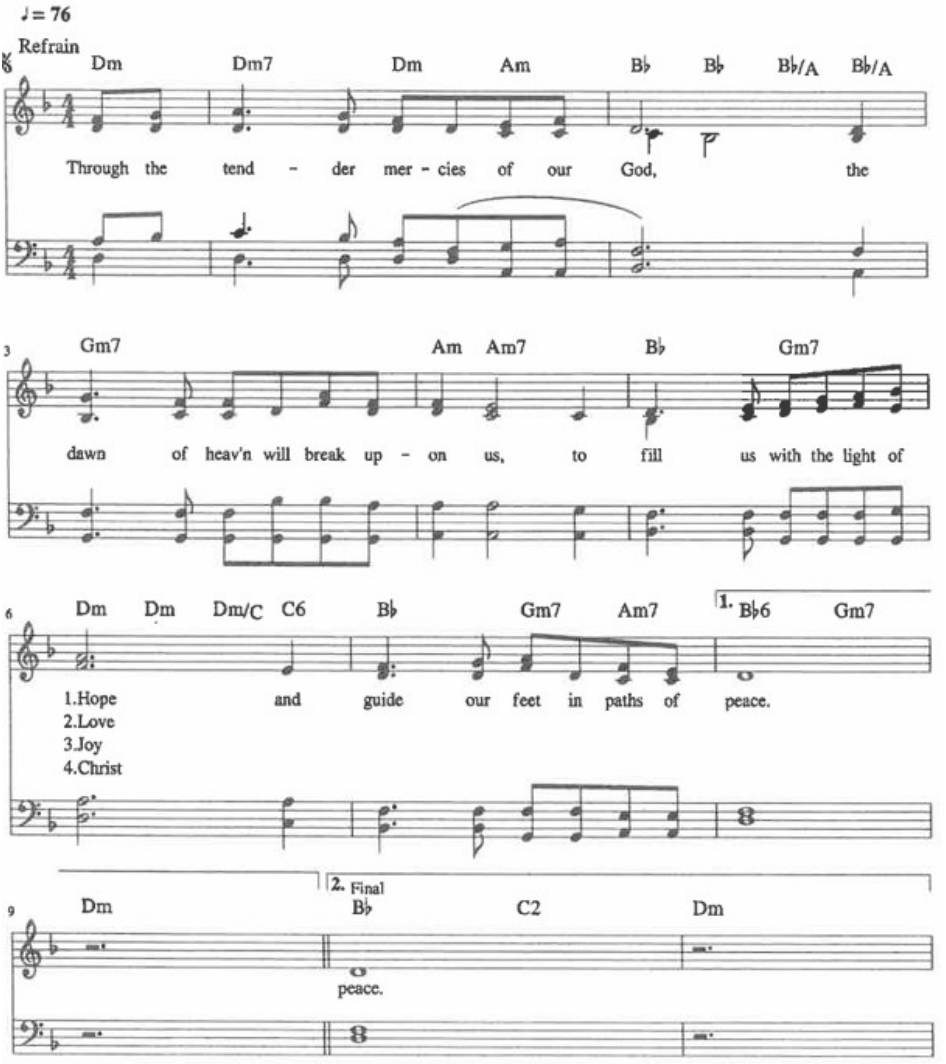
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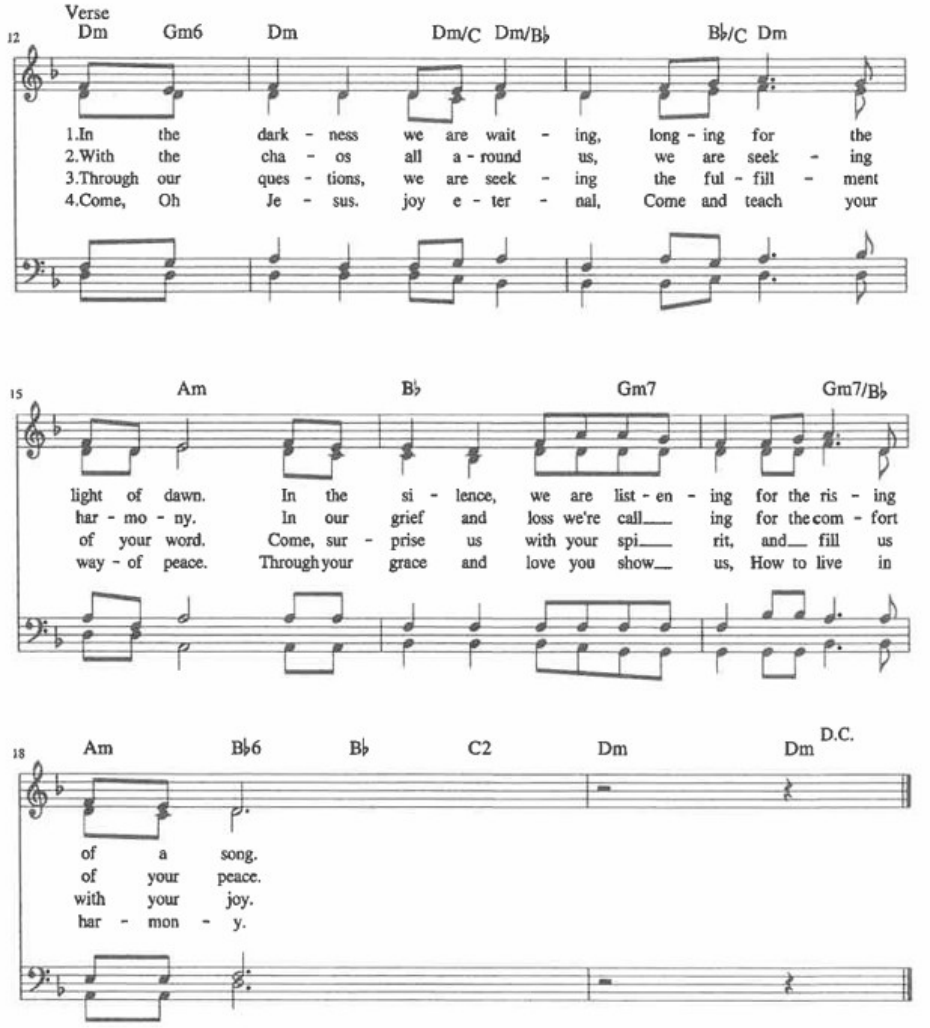
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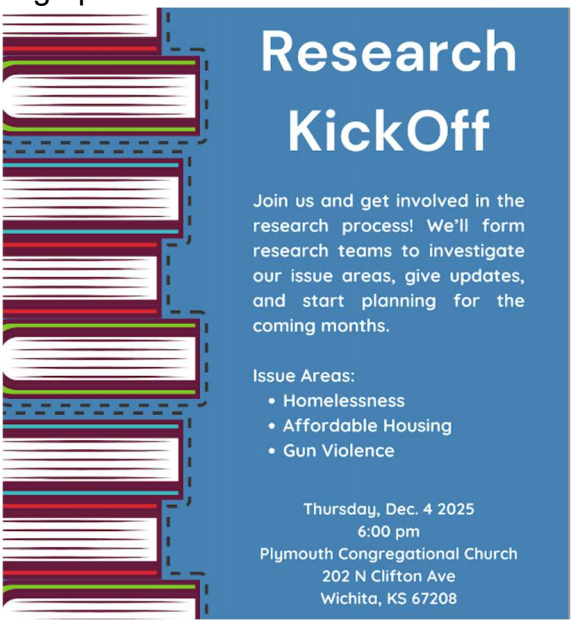

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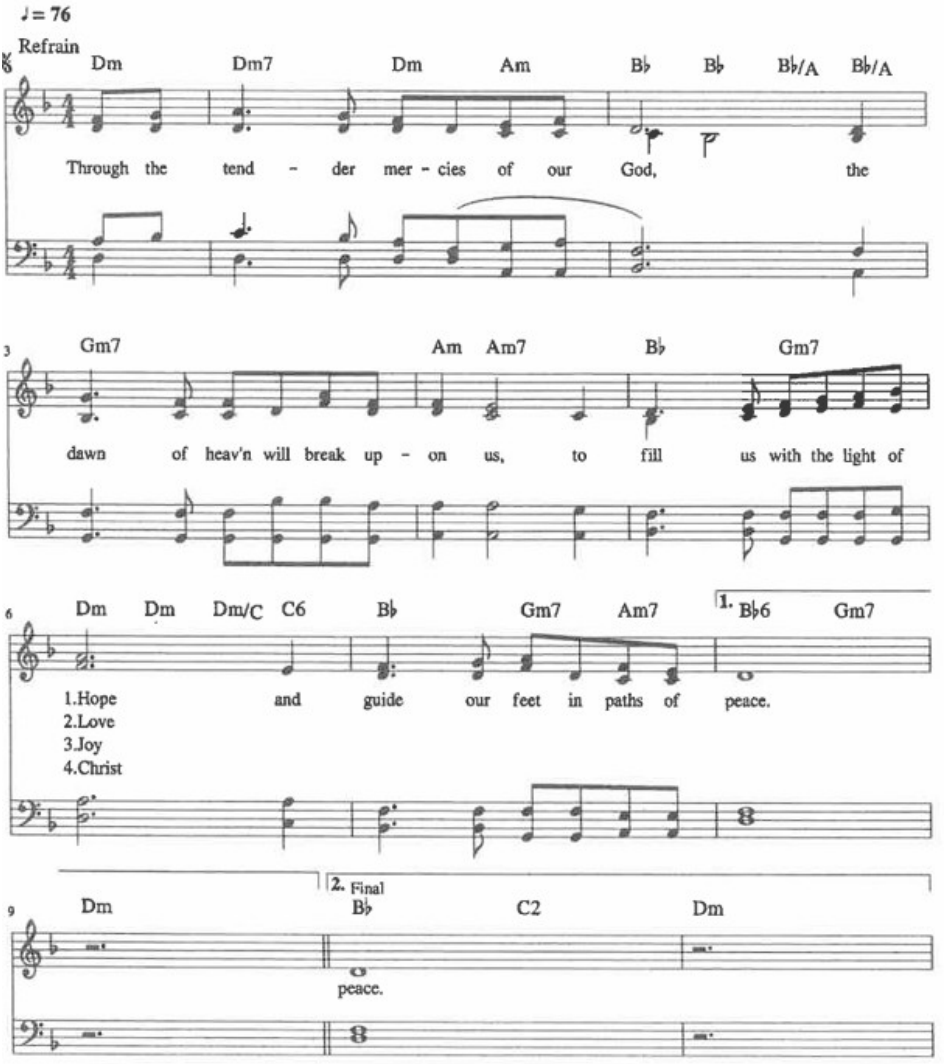
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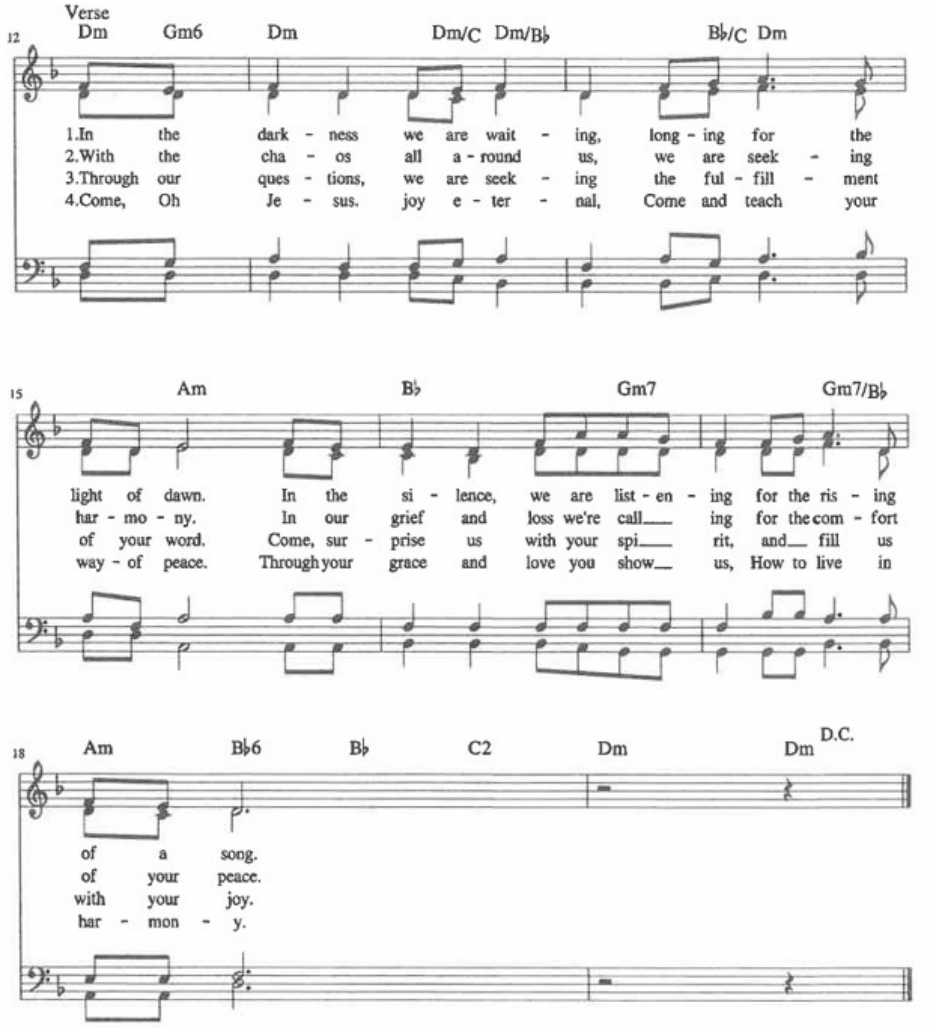
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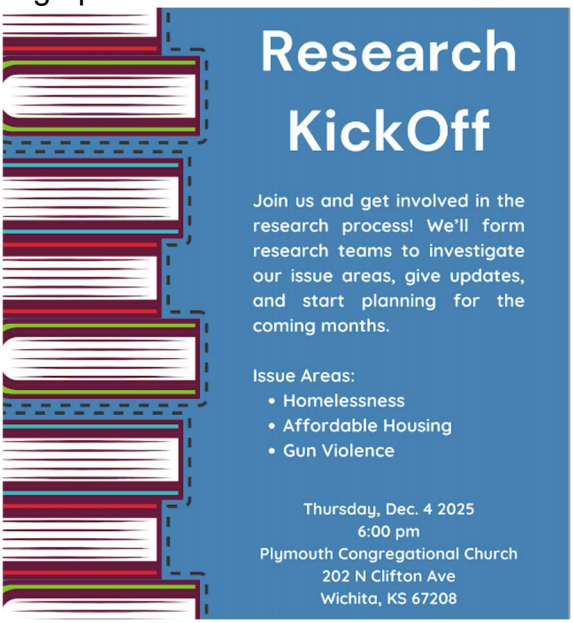

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It has had more than its share of conflict,
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You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
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"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
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cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
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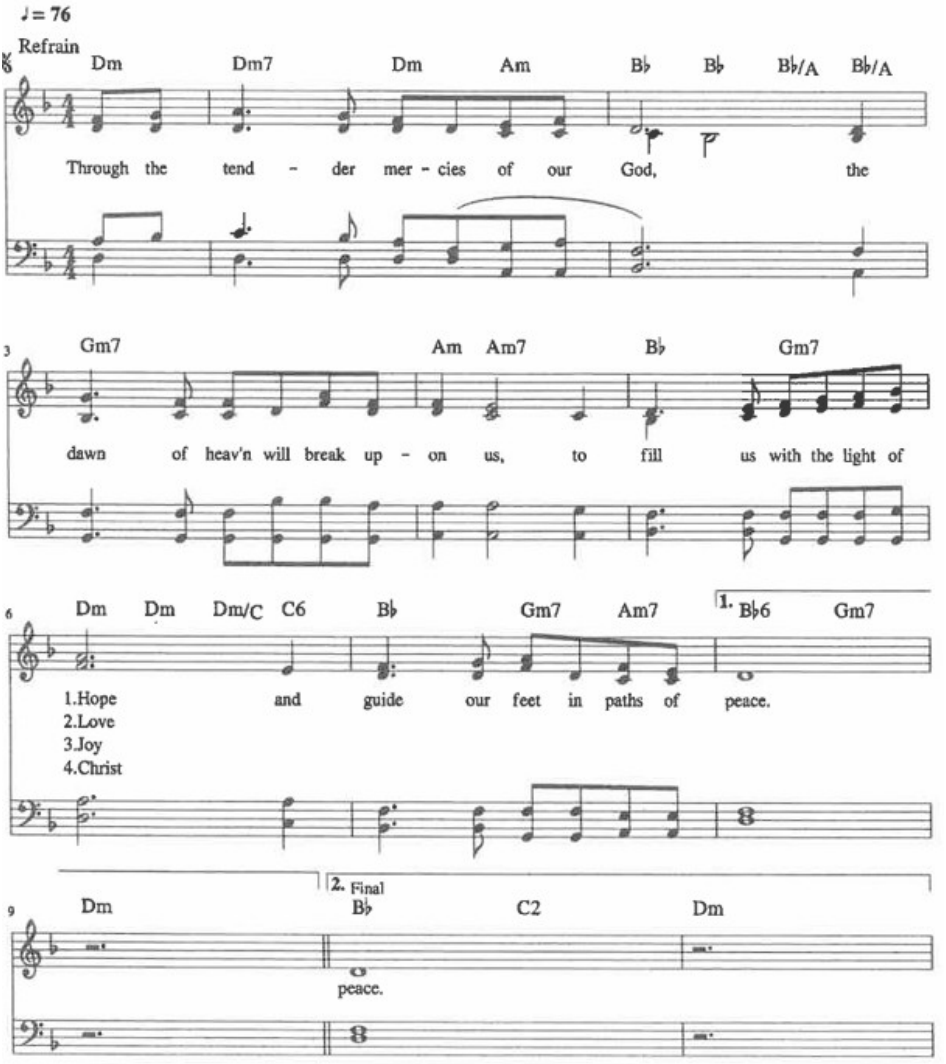
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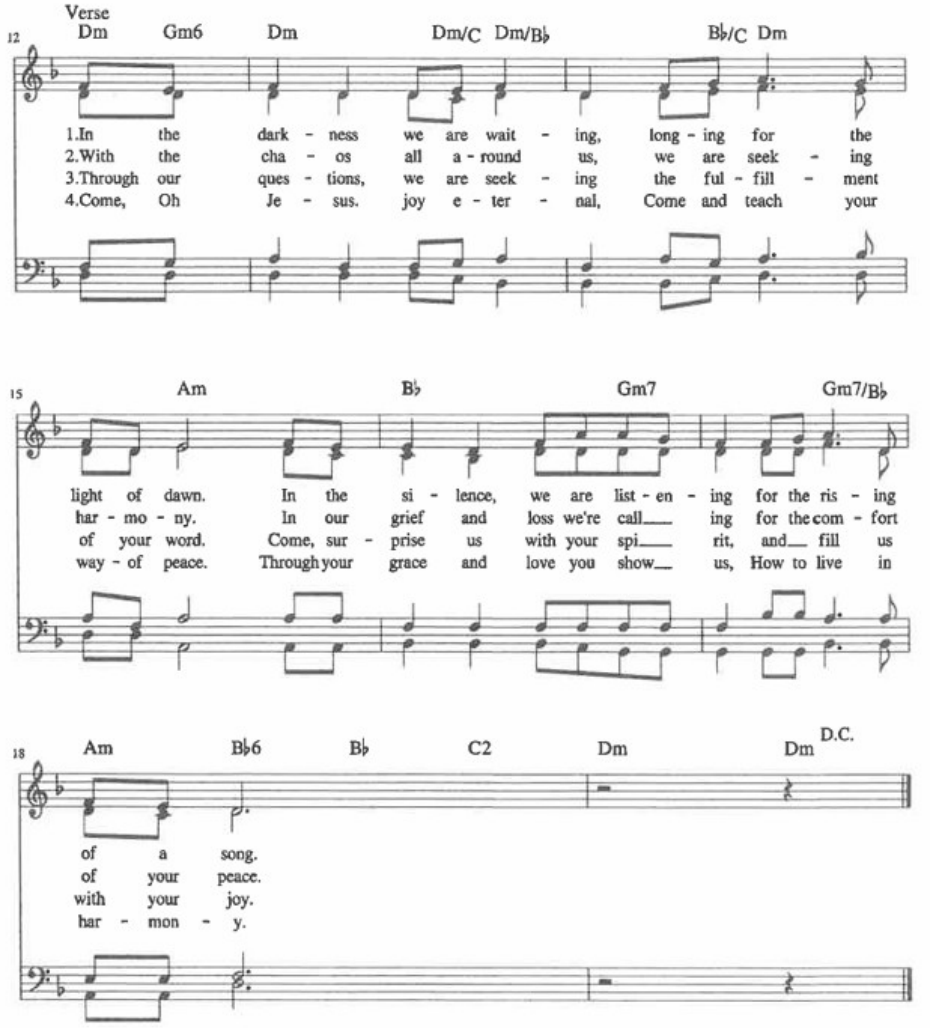
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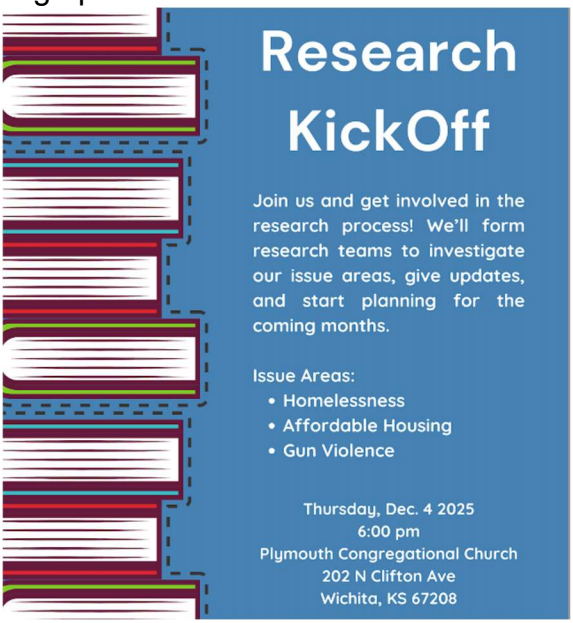

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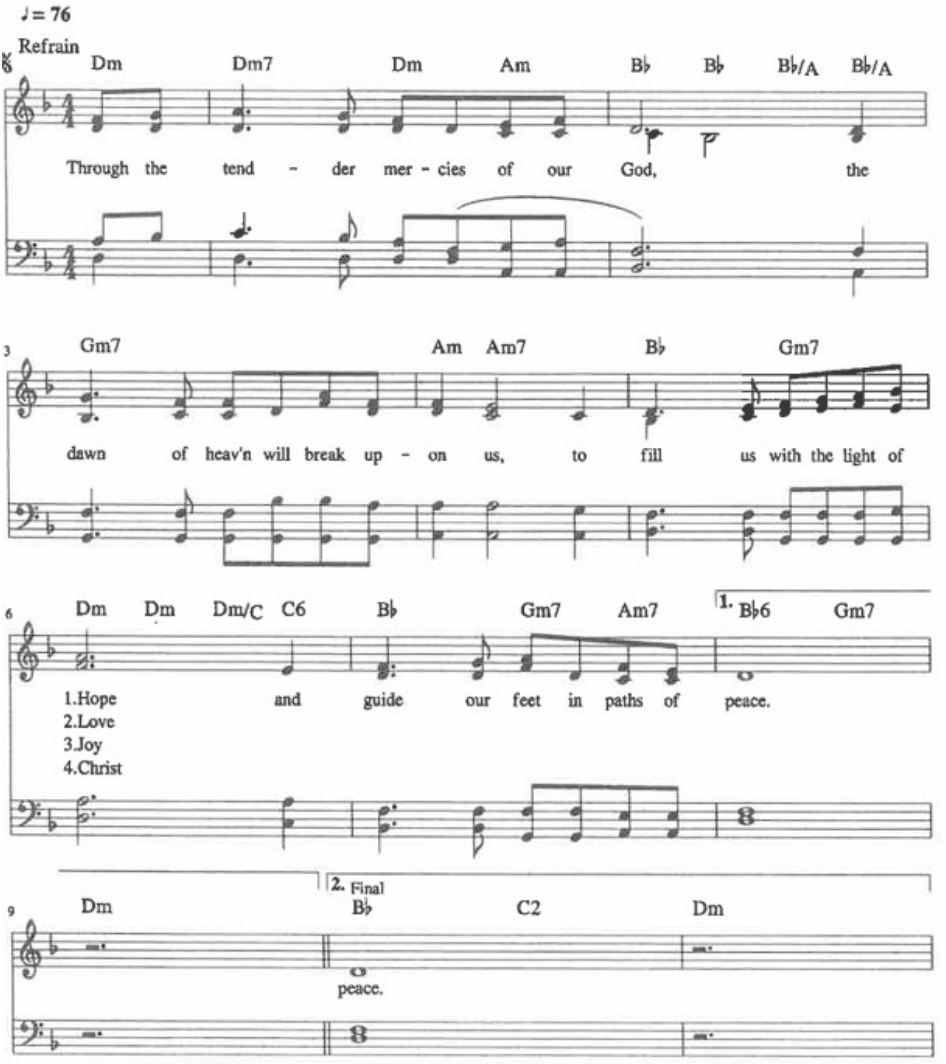
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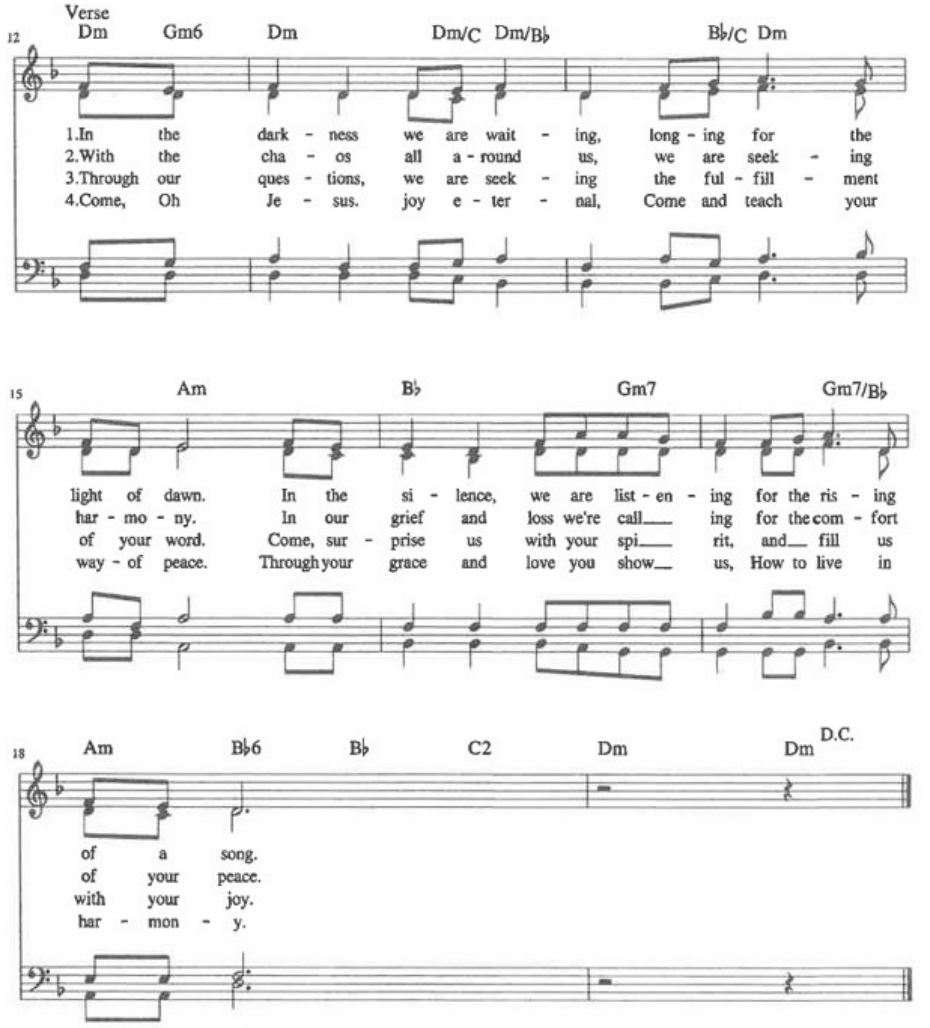
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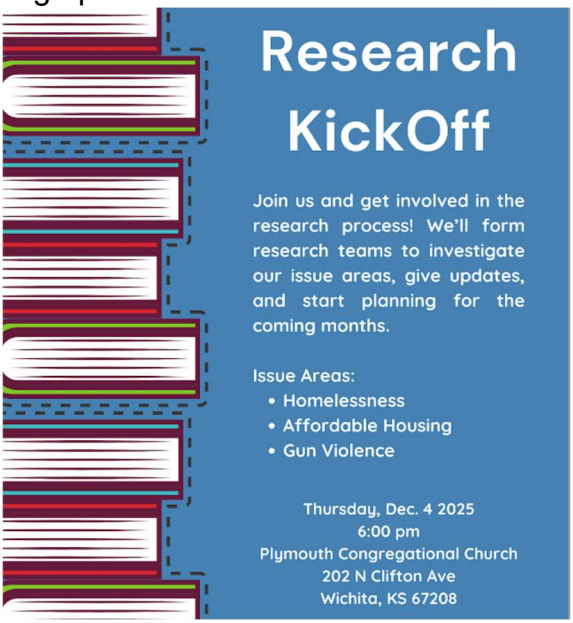

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Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
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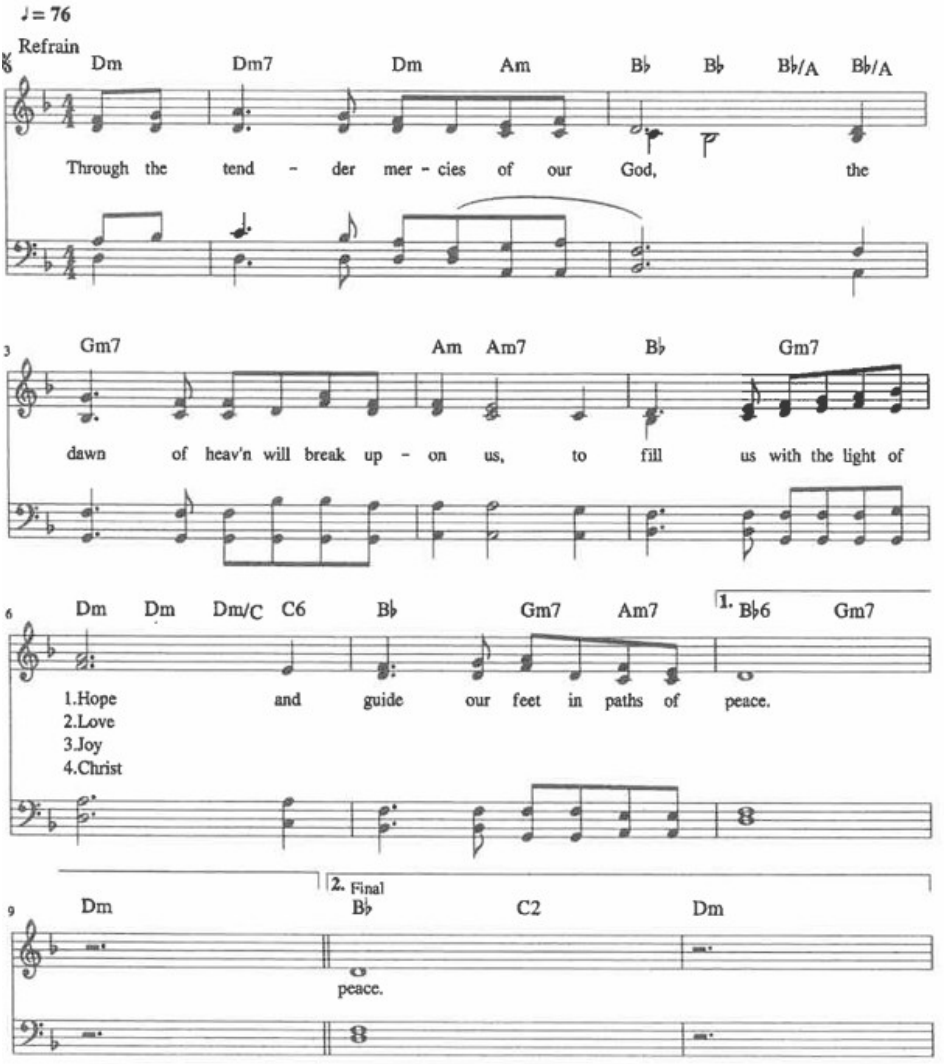
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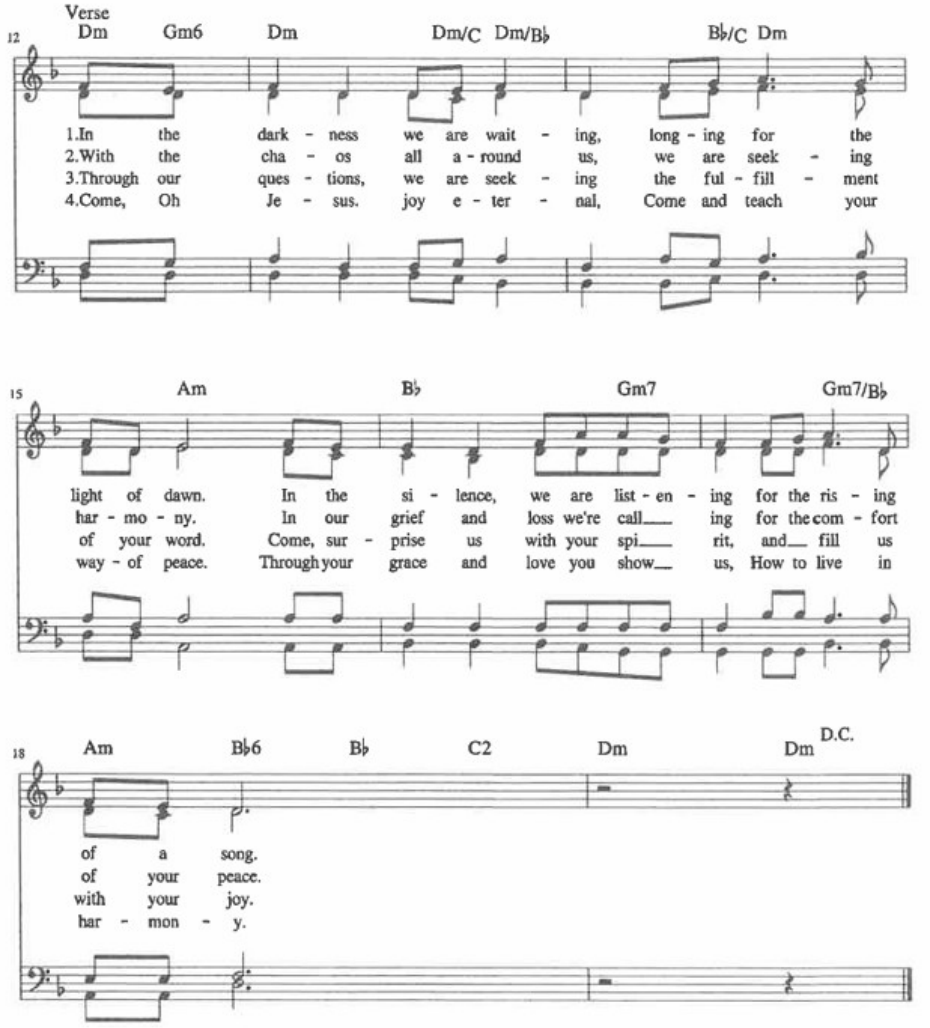
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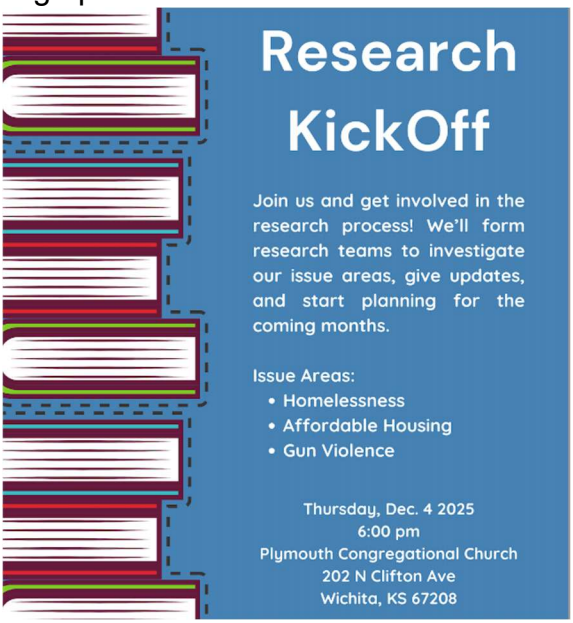

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
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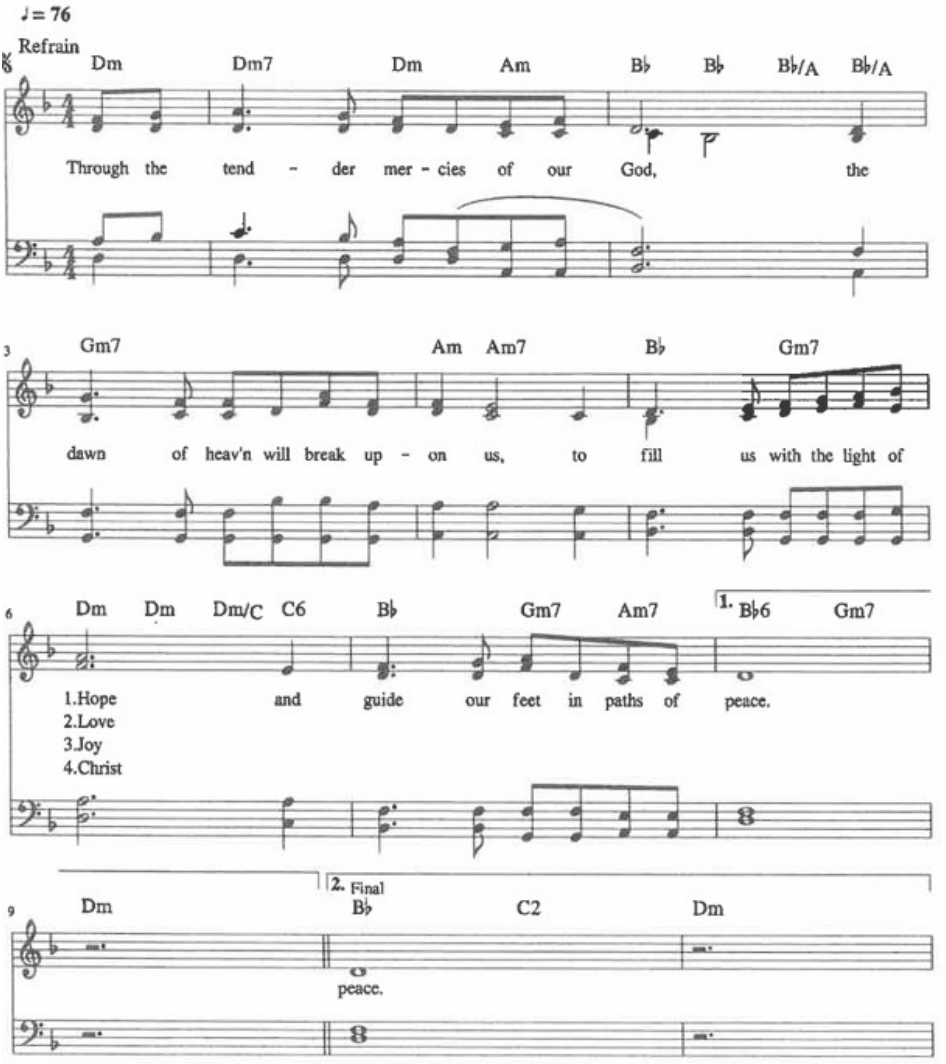
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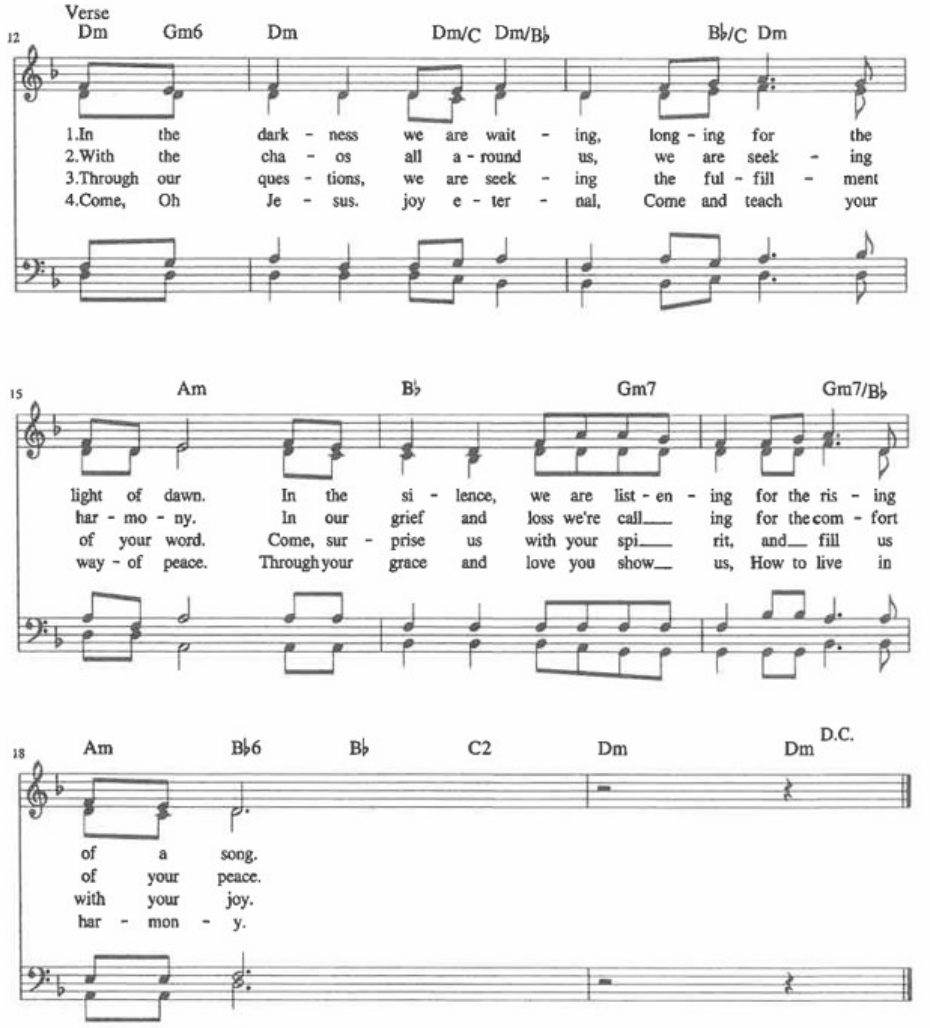
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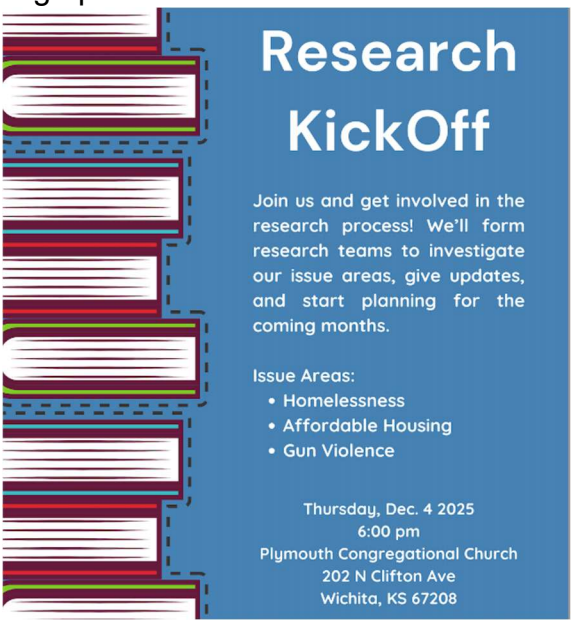

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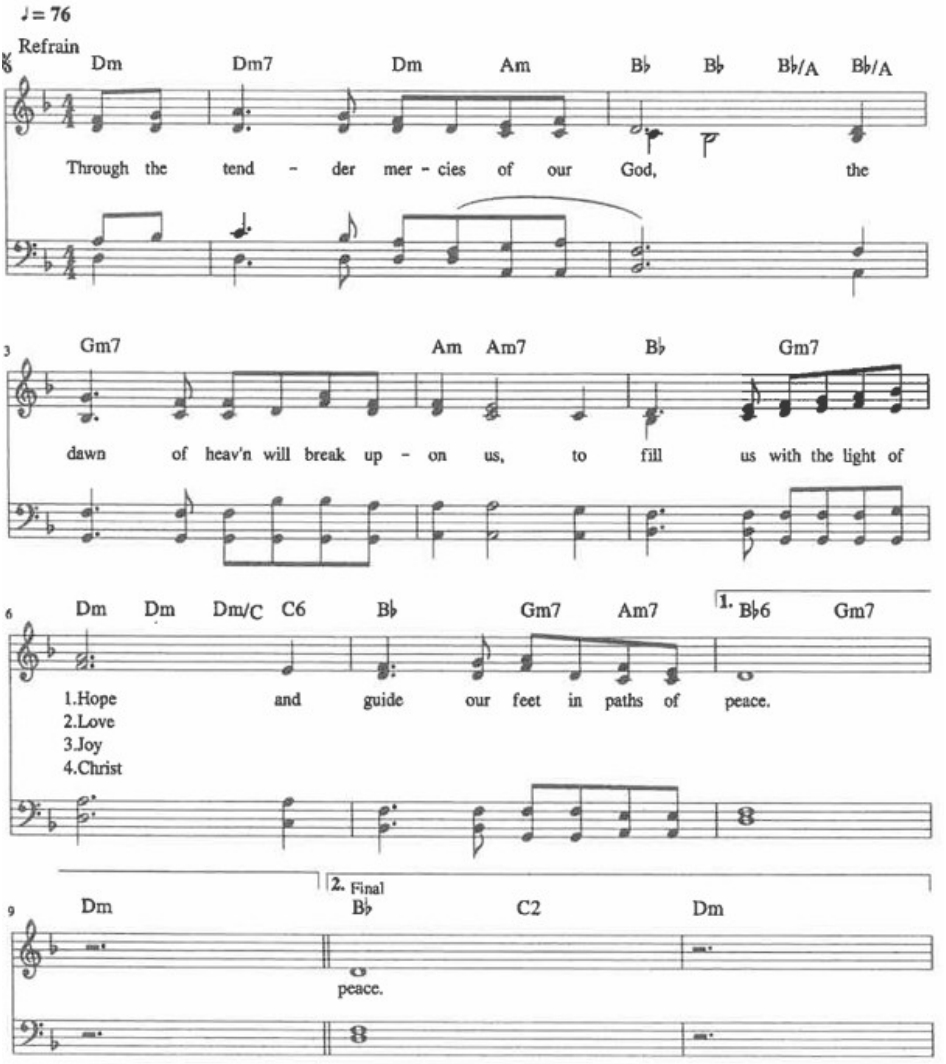
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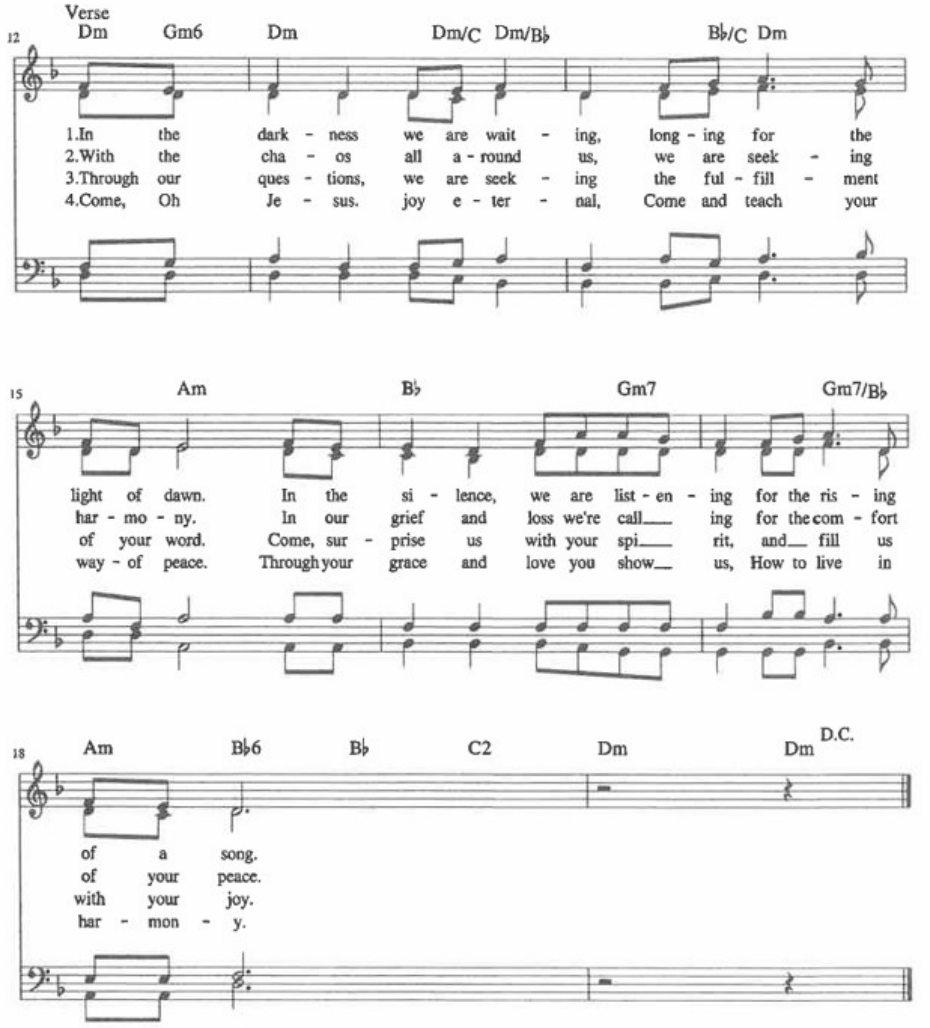
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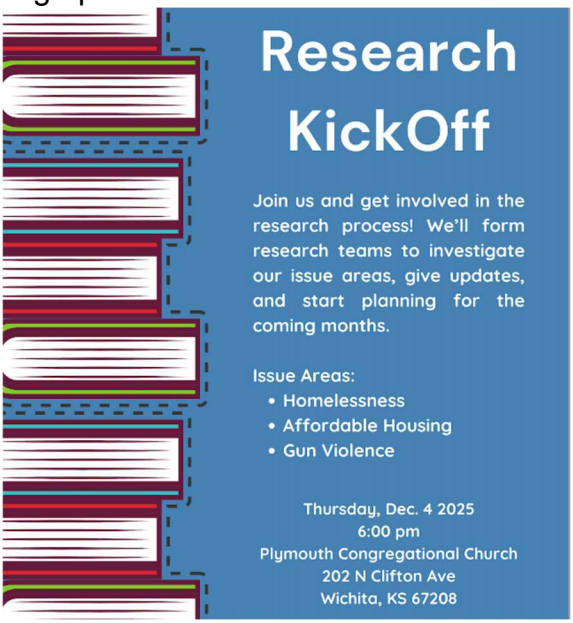

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
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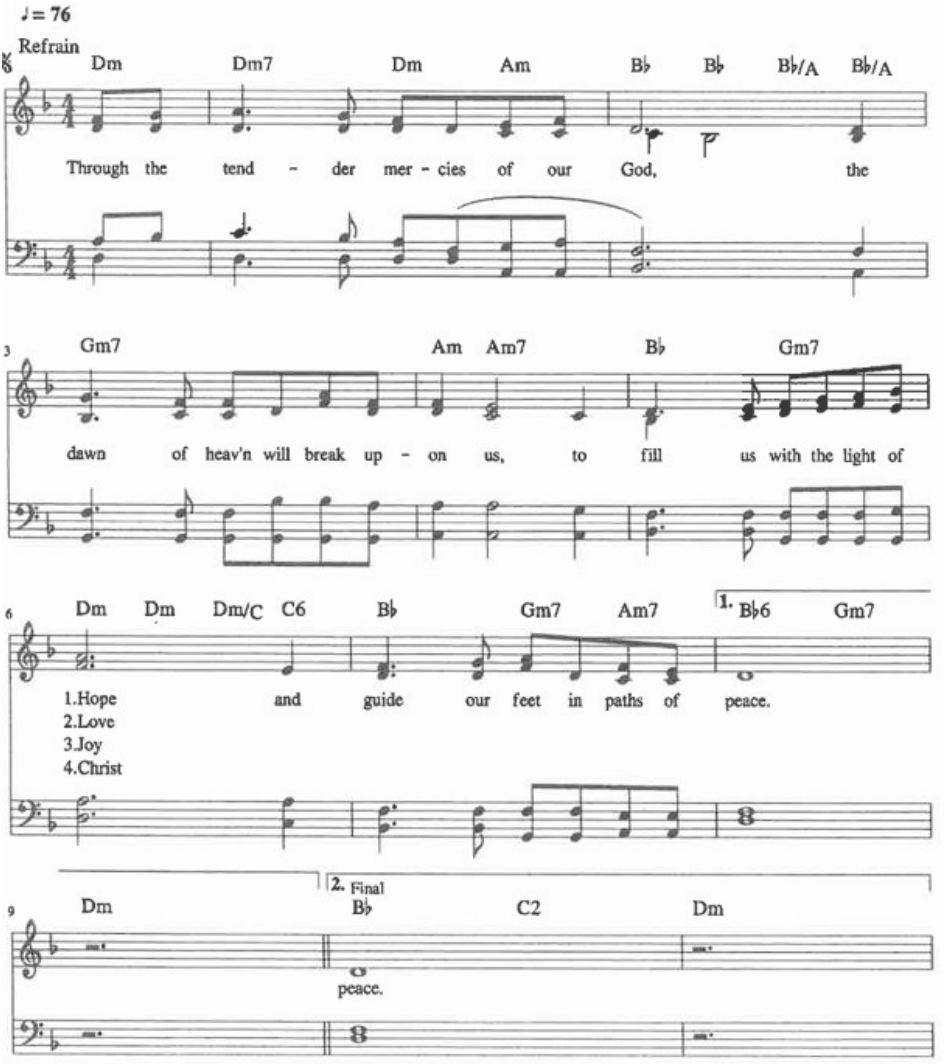
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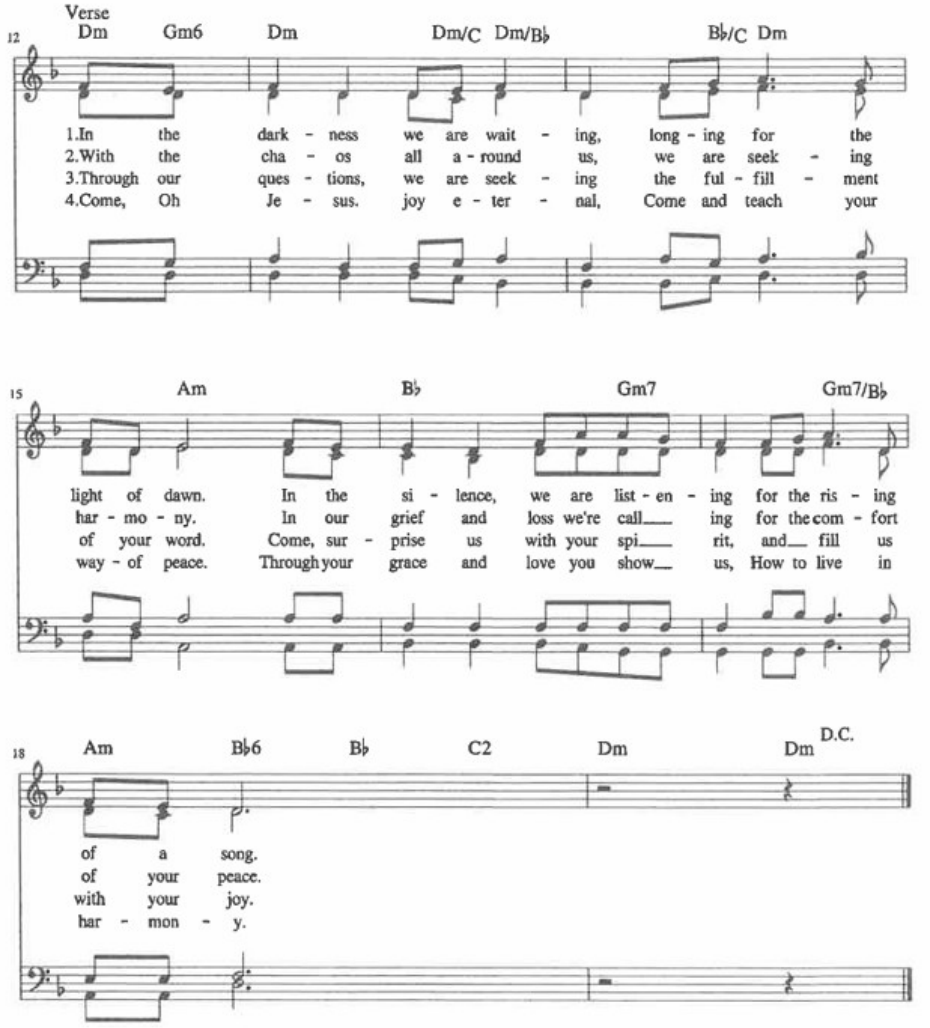
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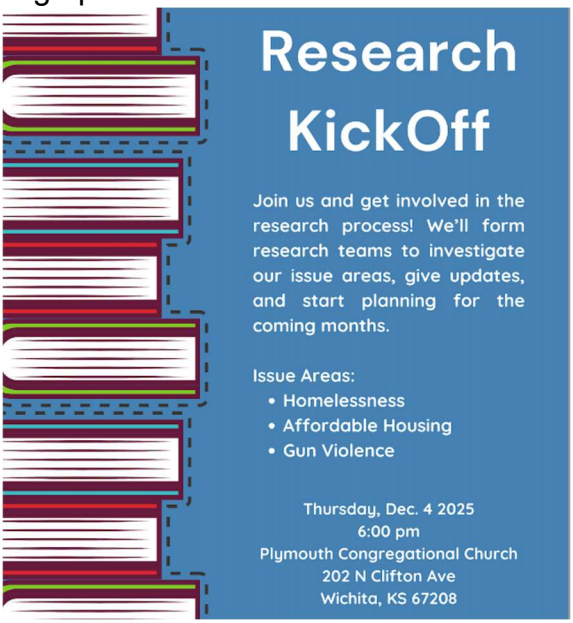

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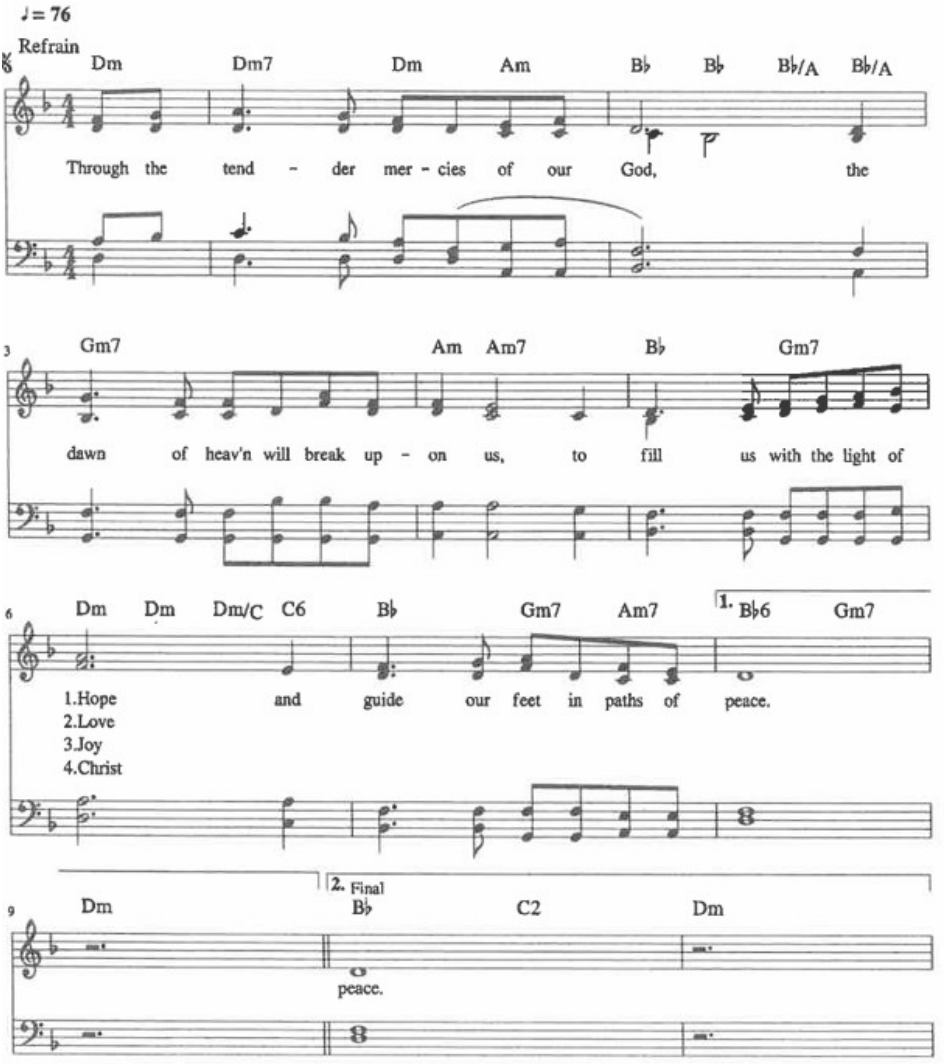
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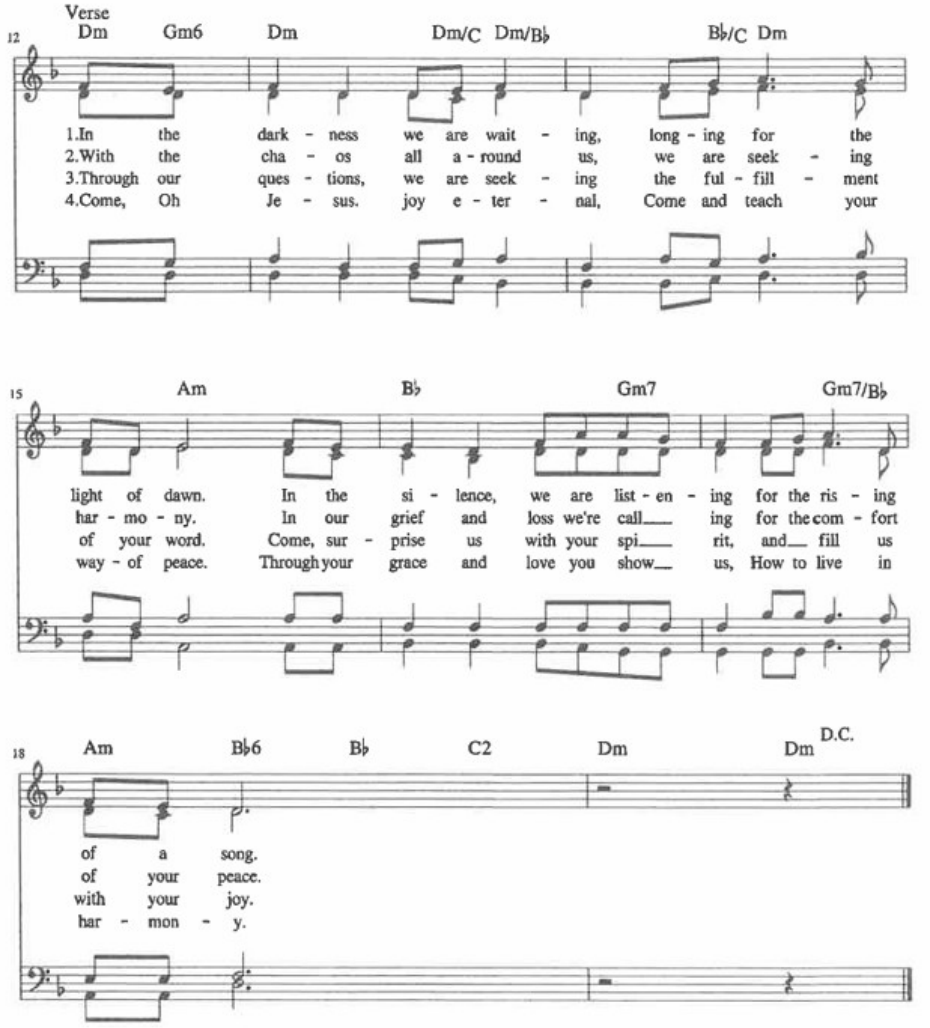
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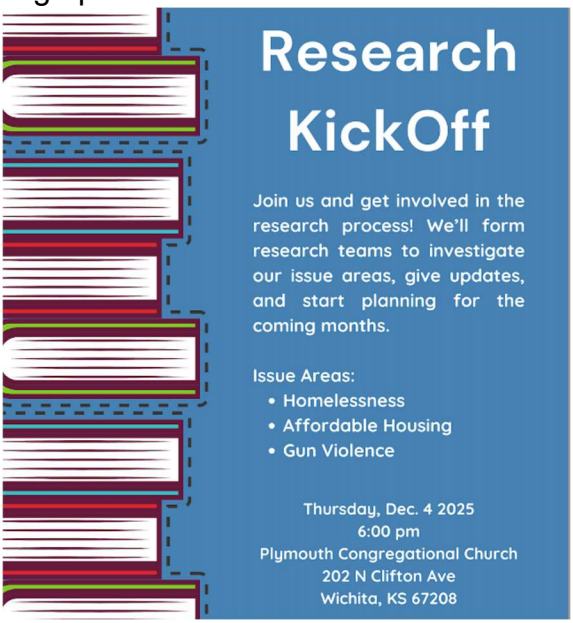

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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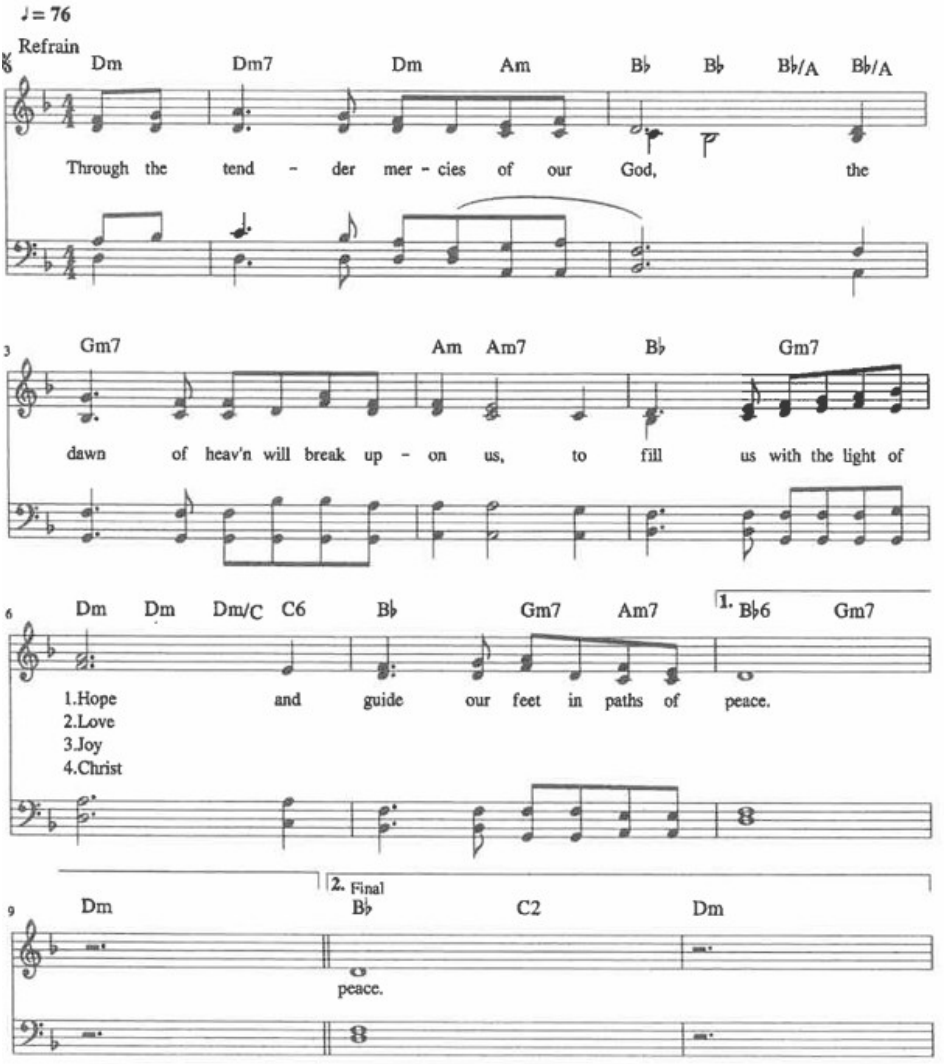
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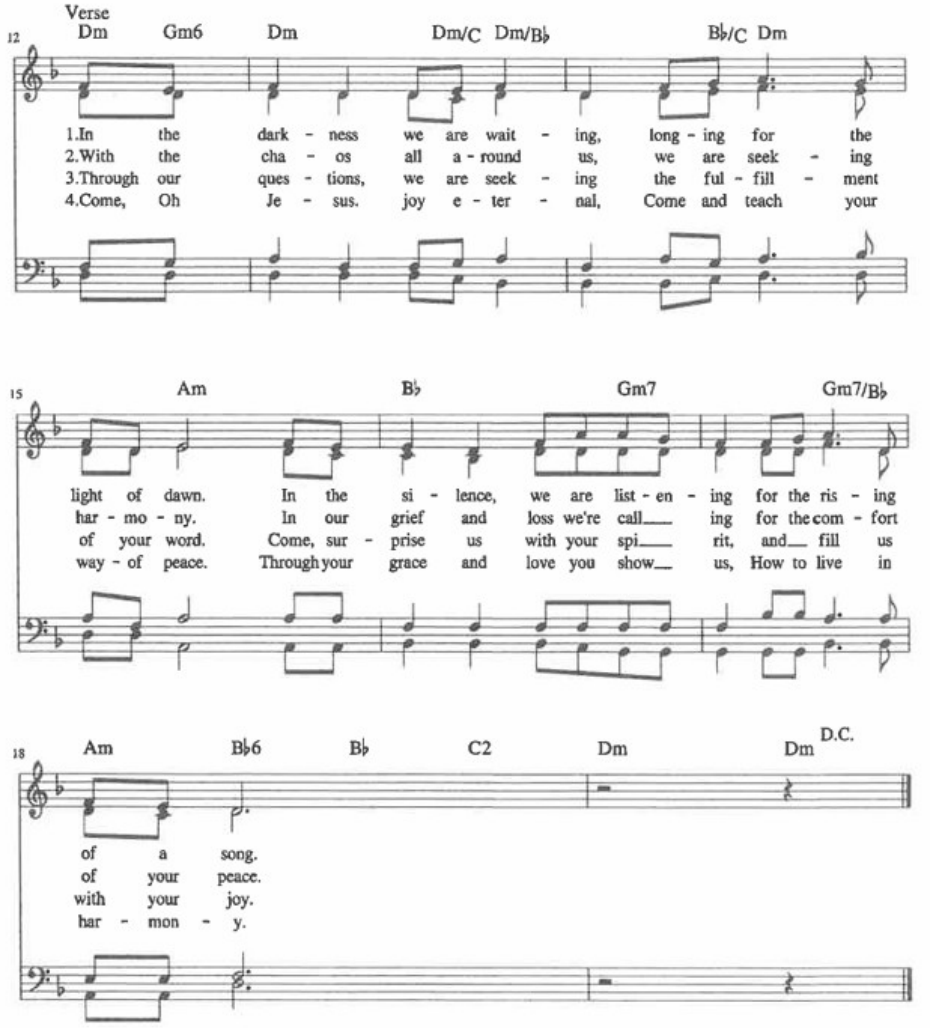
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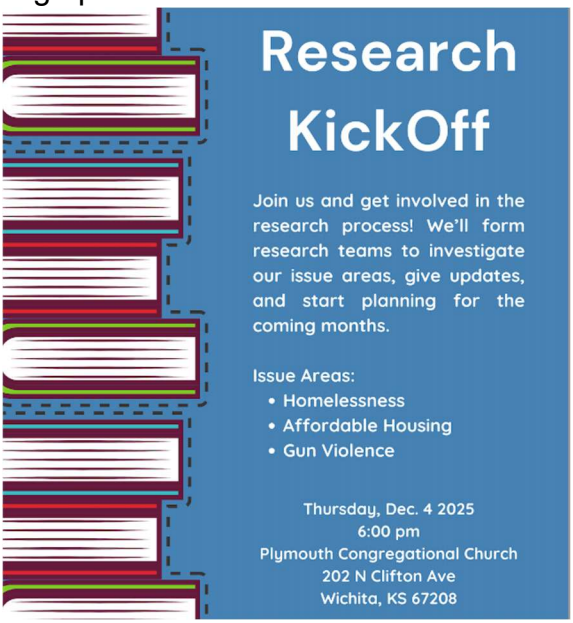

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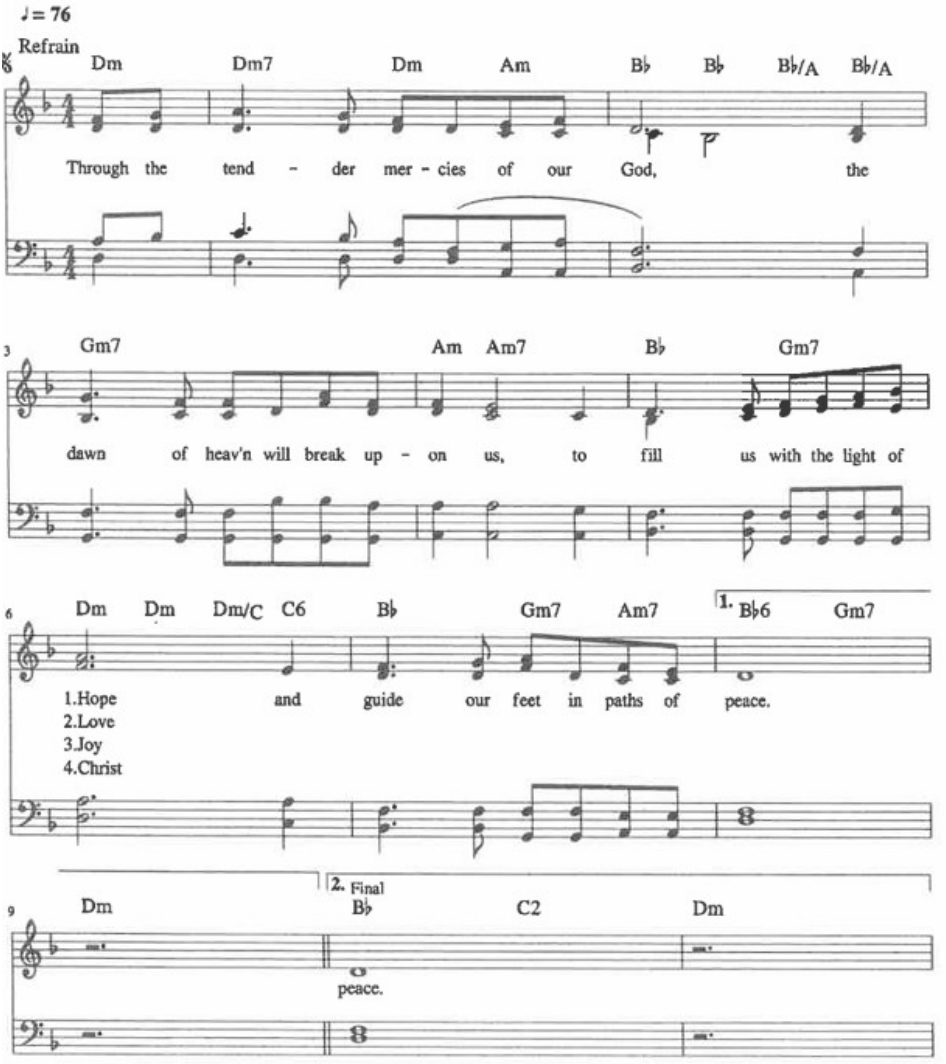
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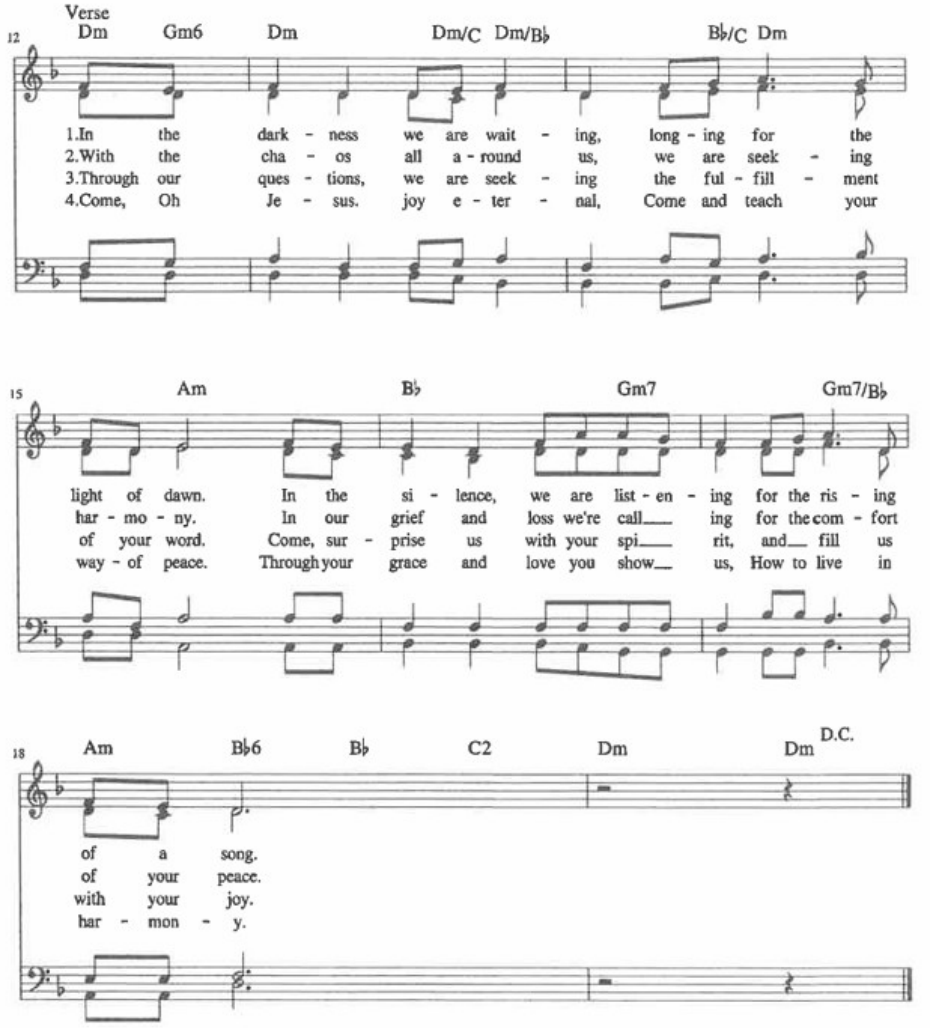
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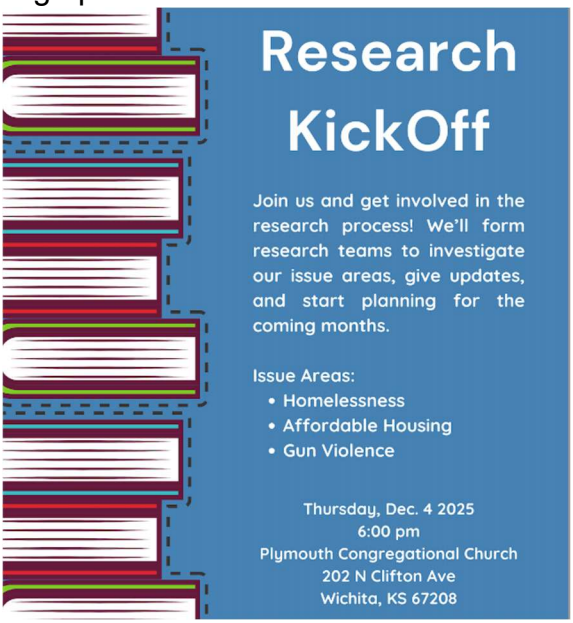

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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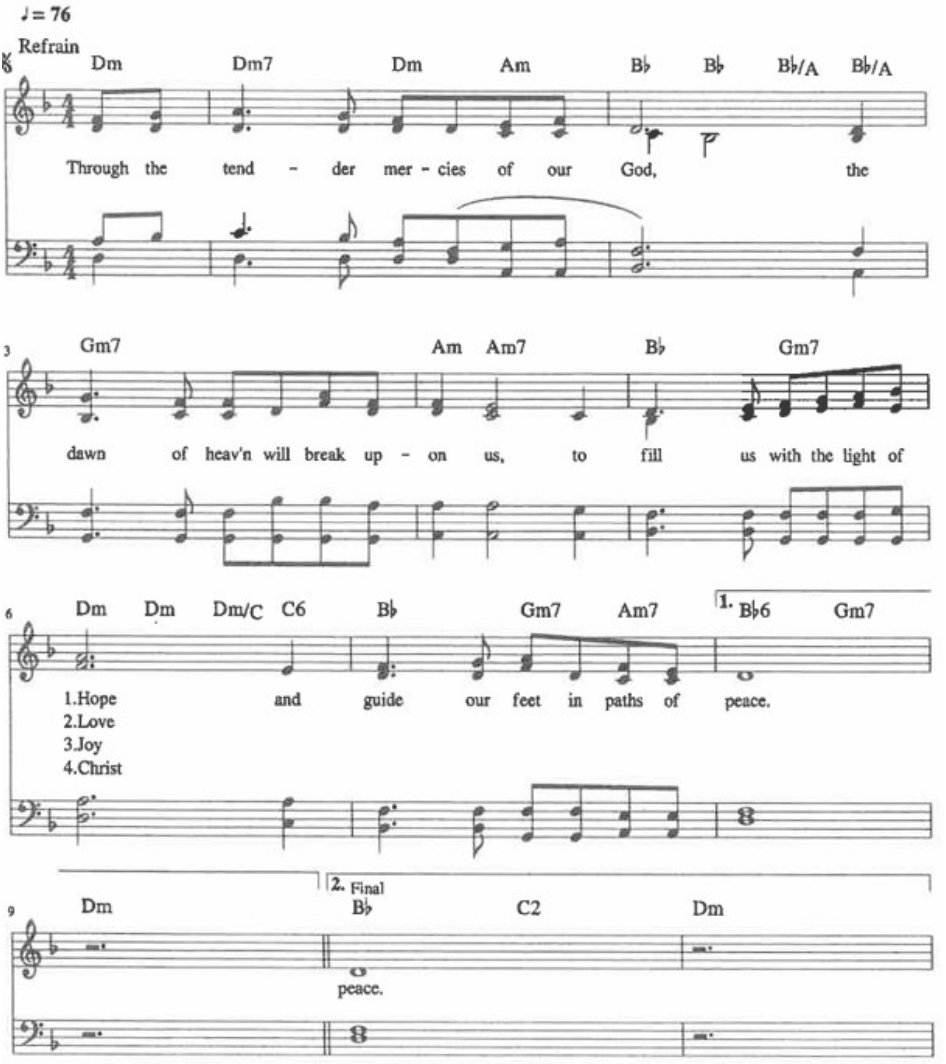
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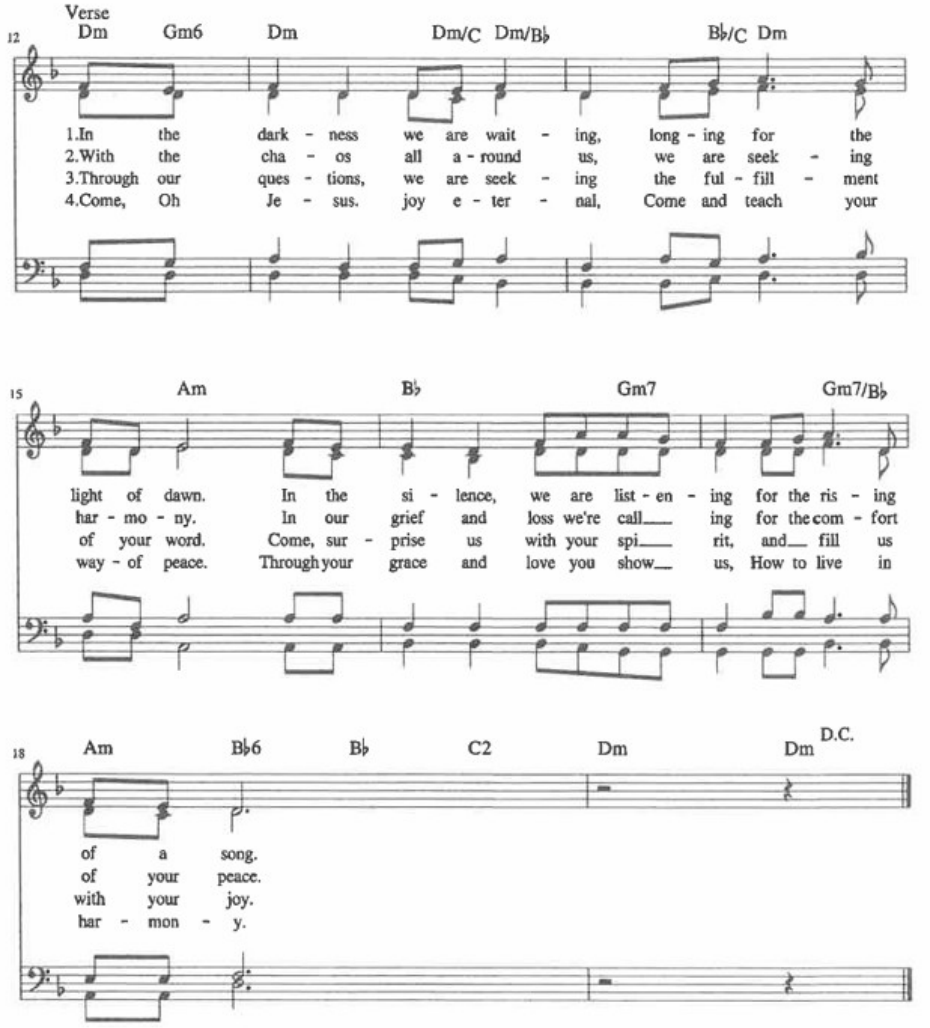
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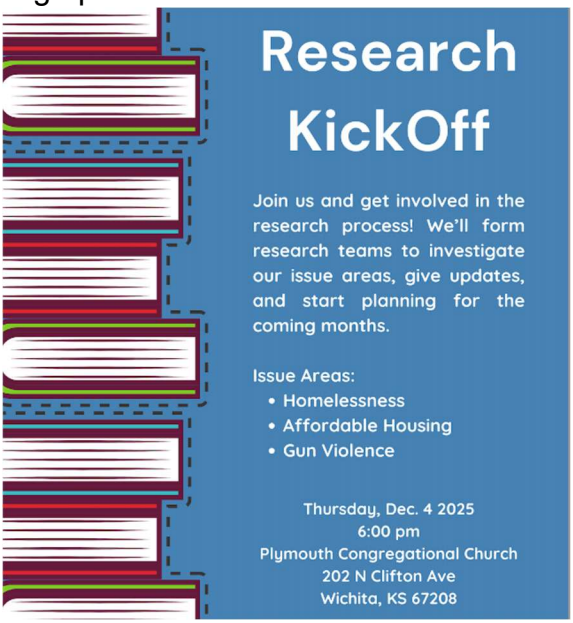

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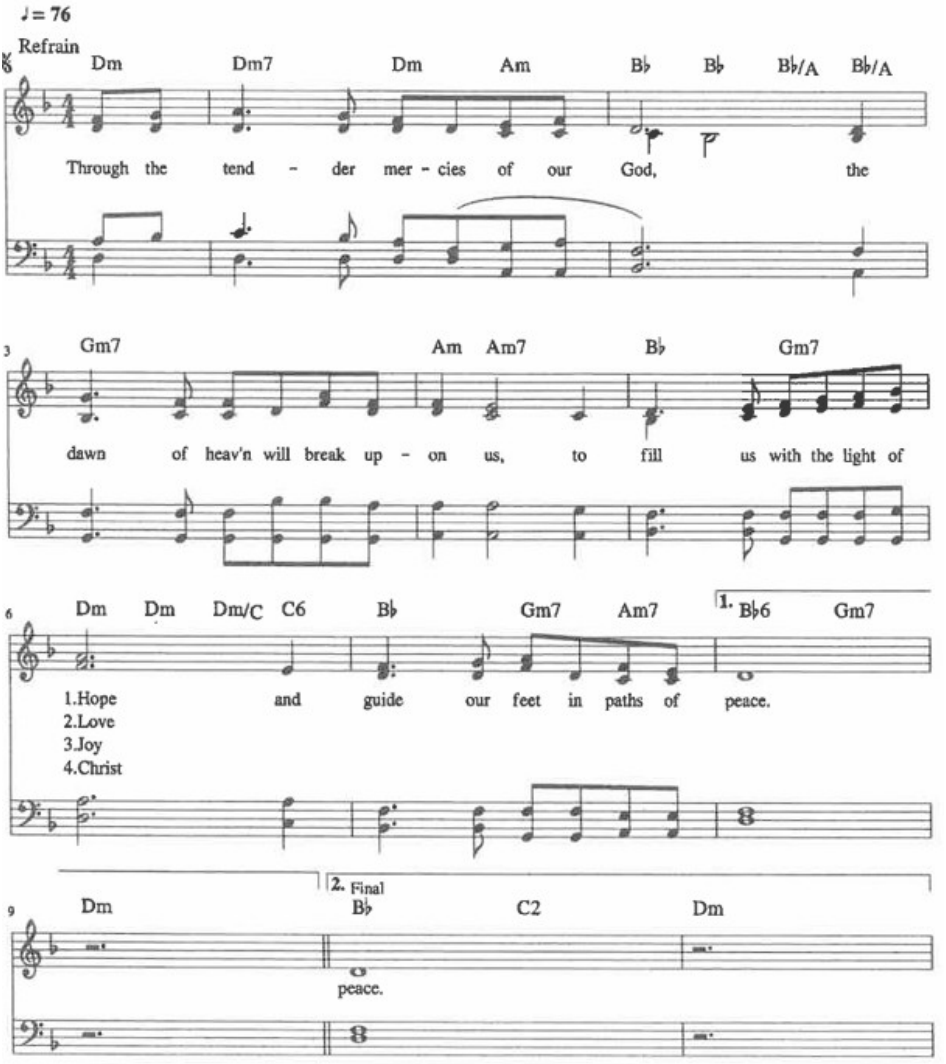
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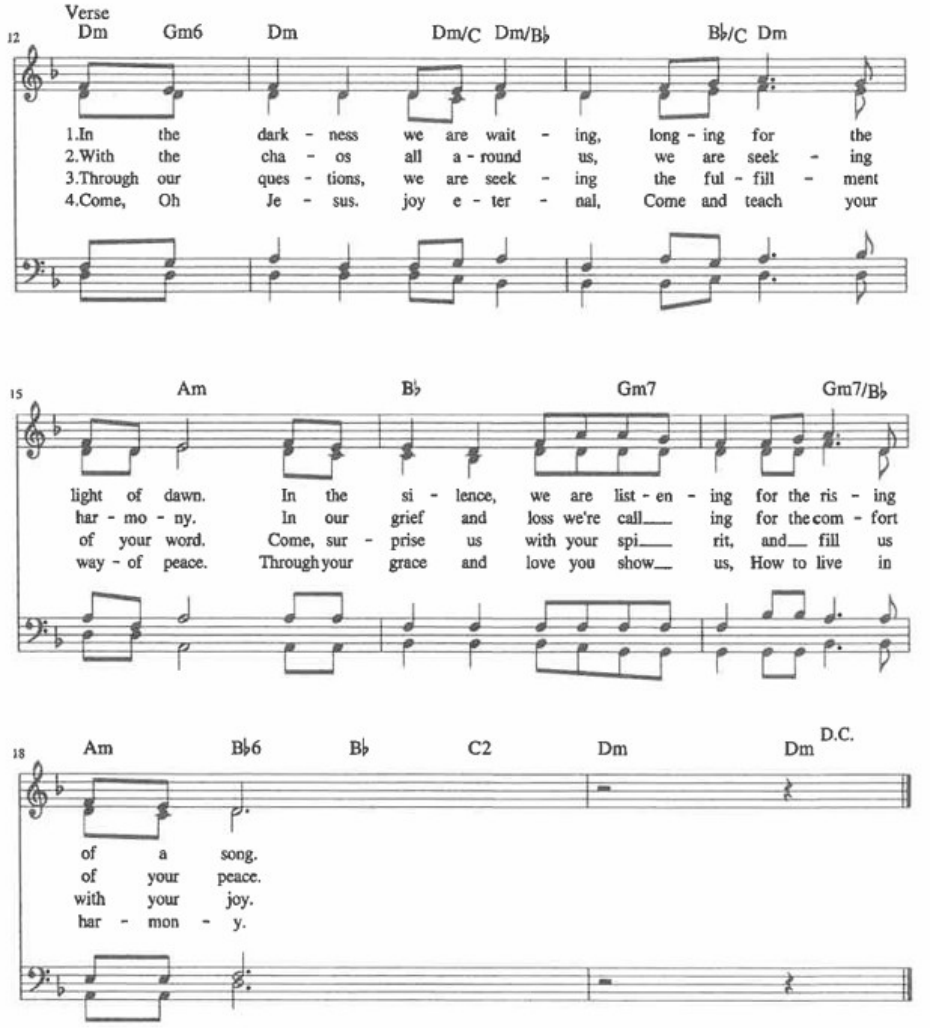
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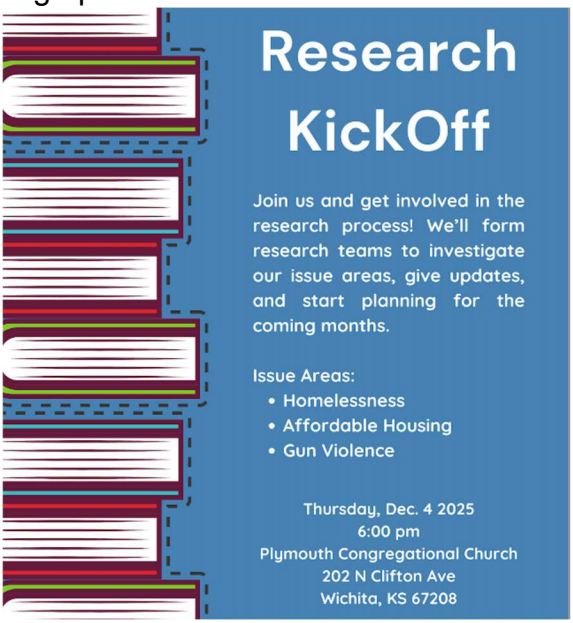

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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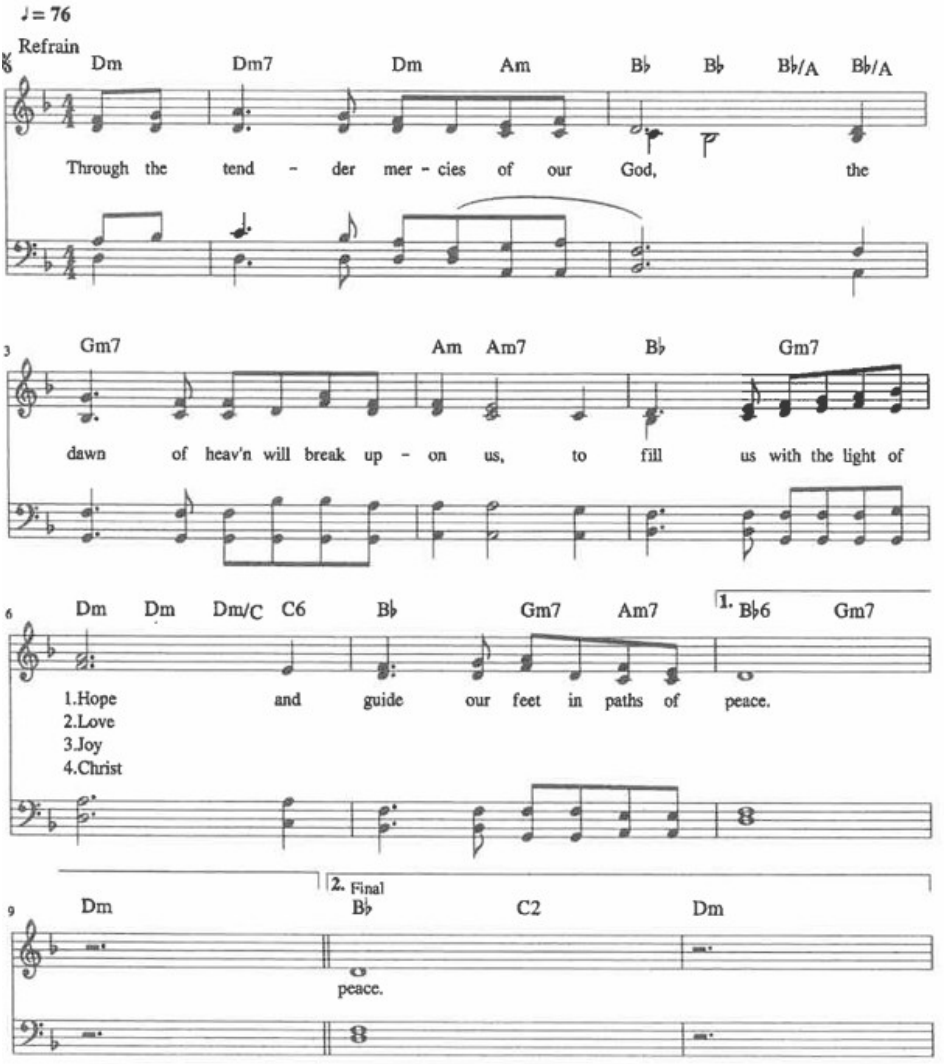
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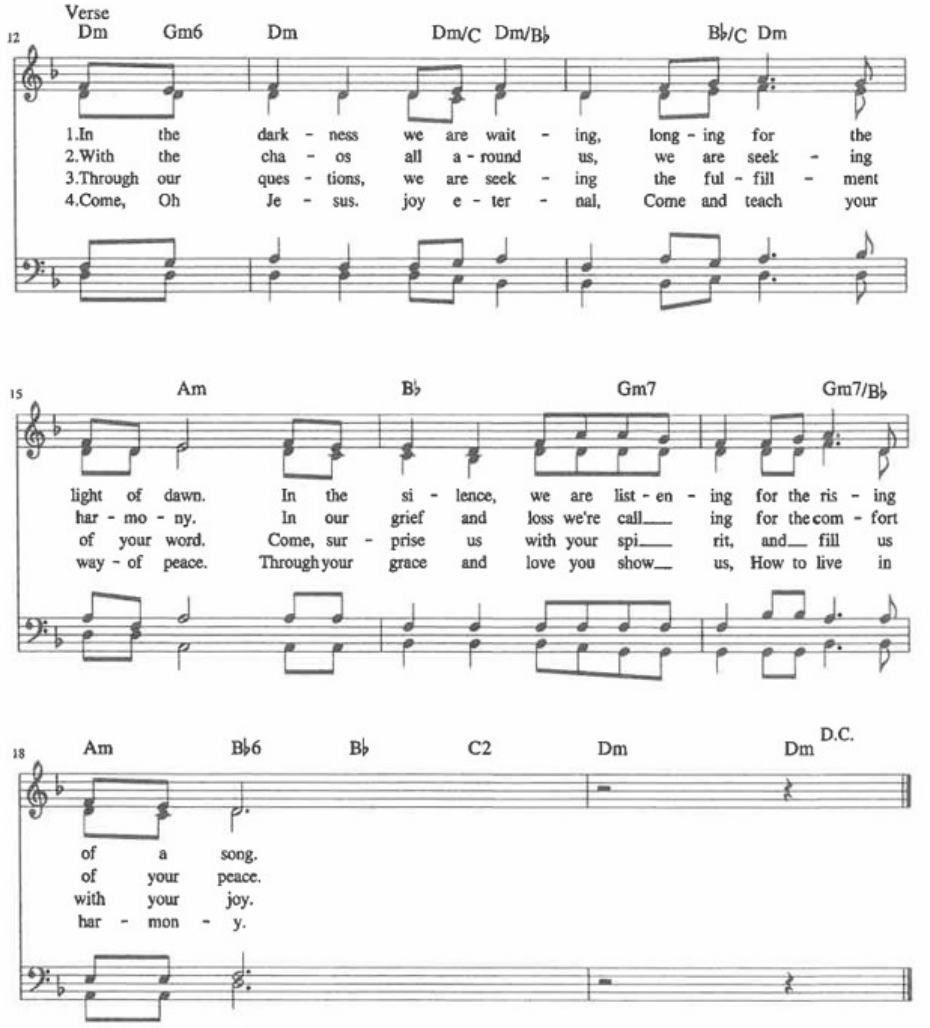
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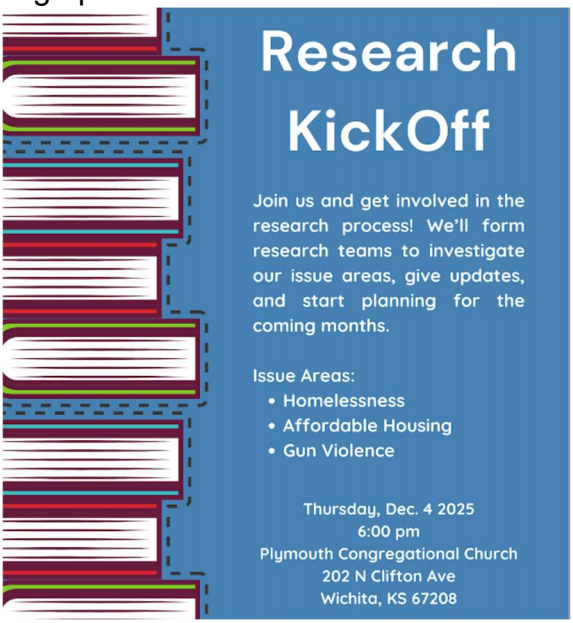

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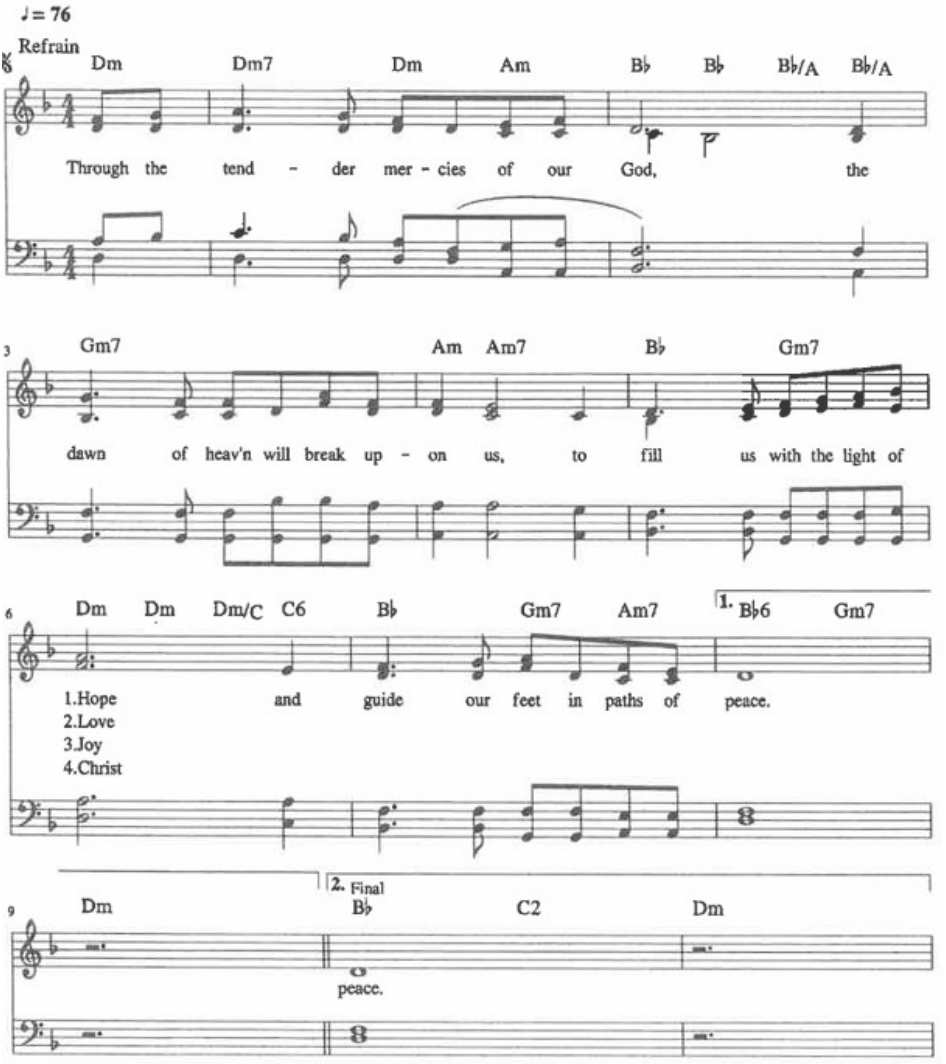
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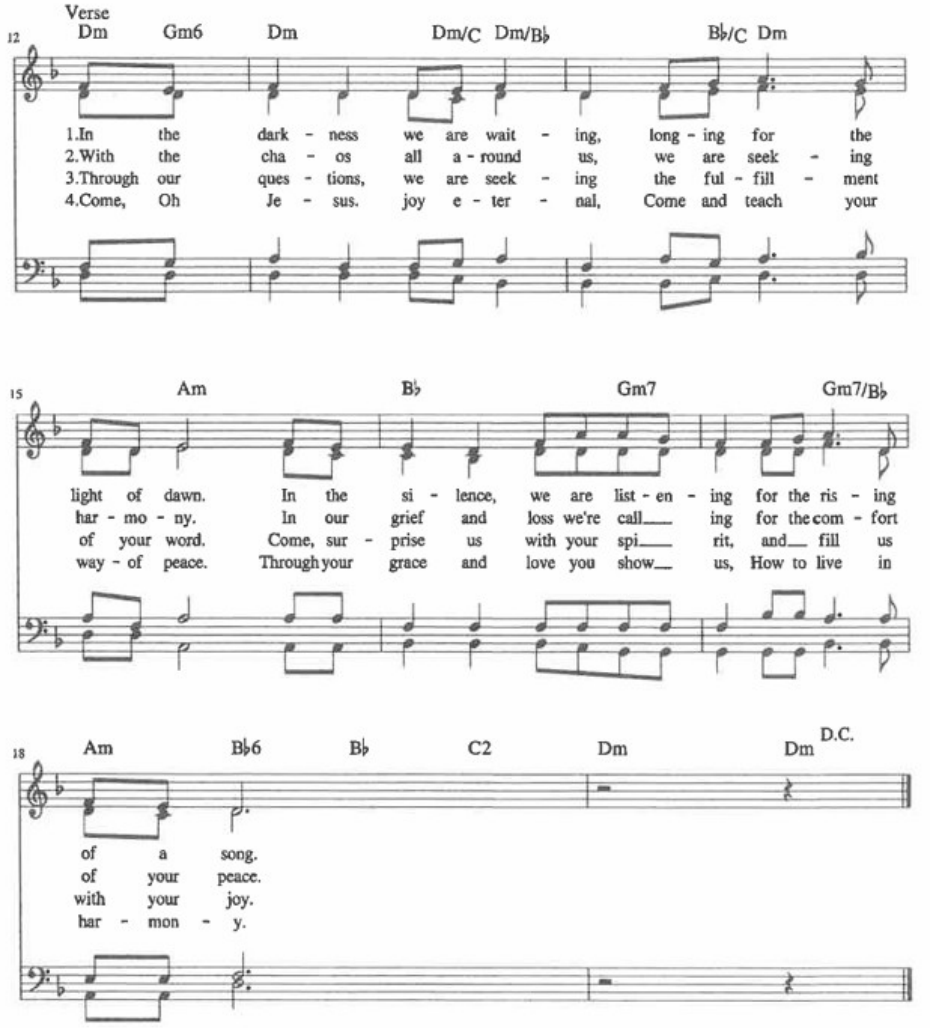
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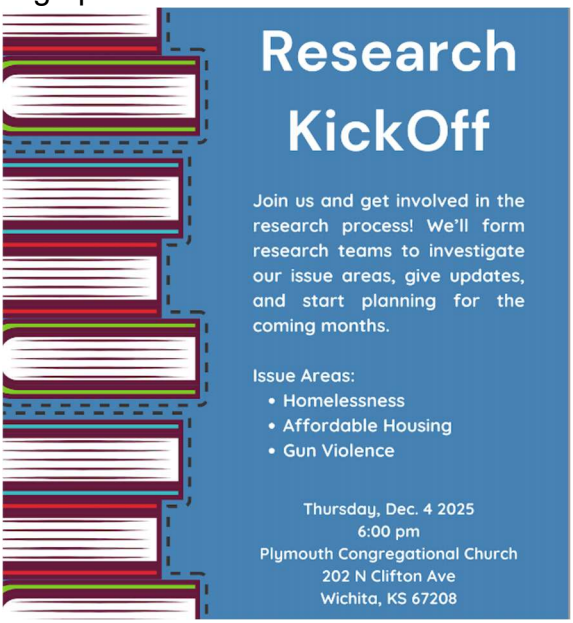

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
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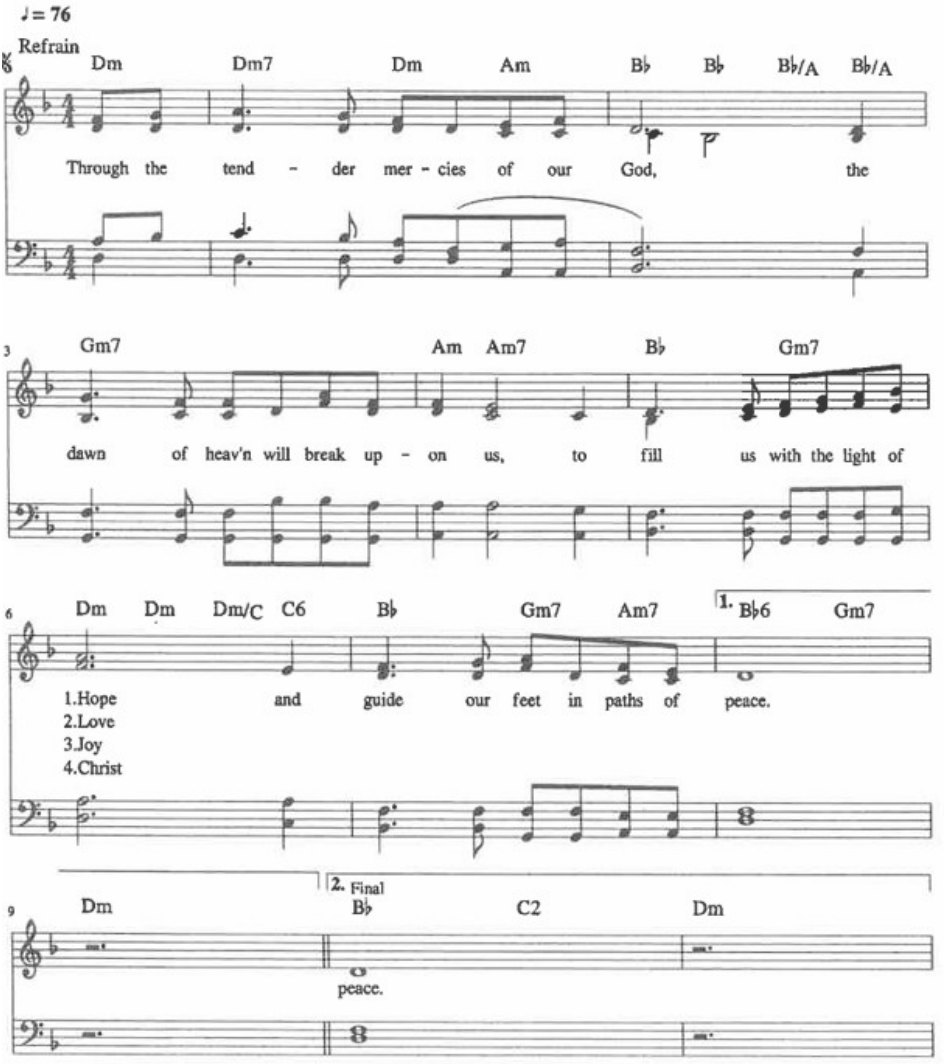
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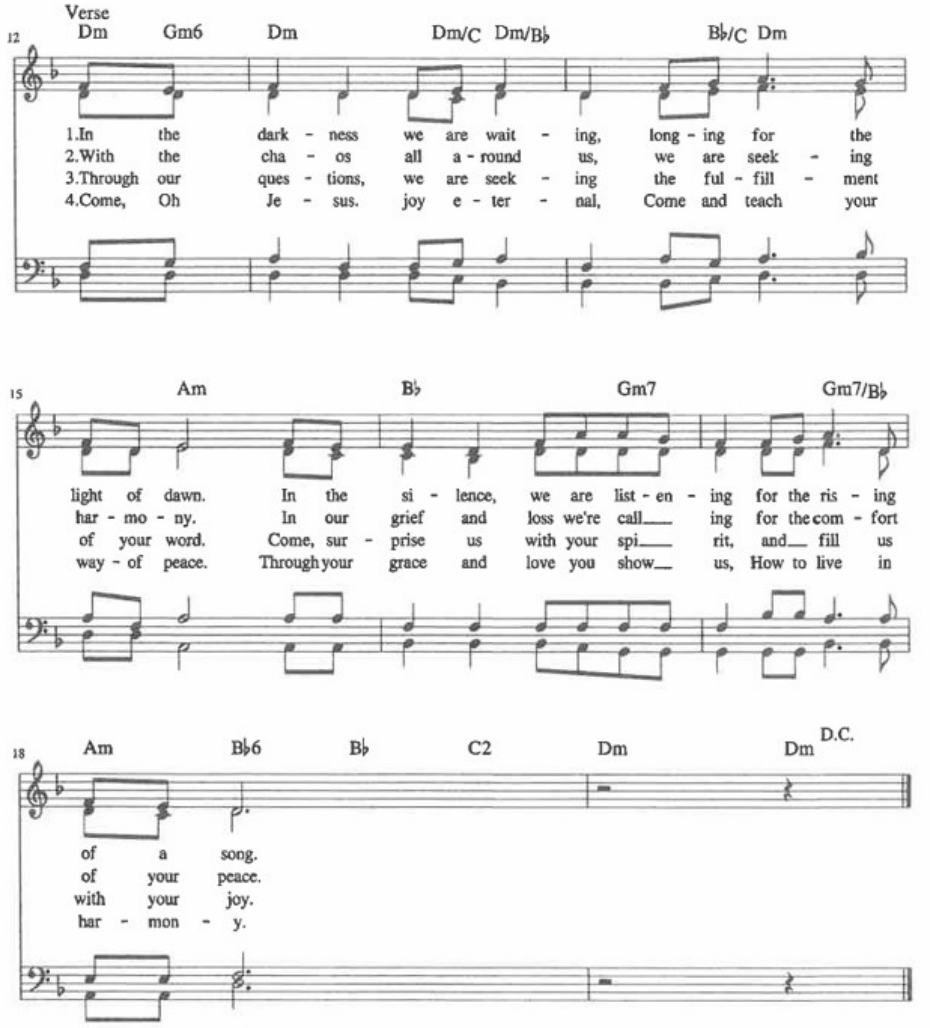
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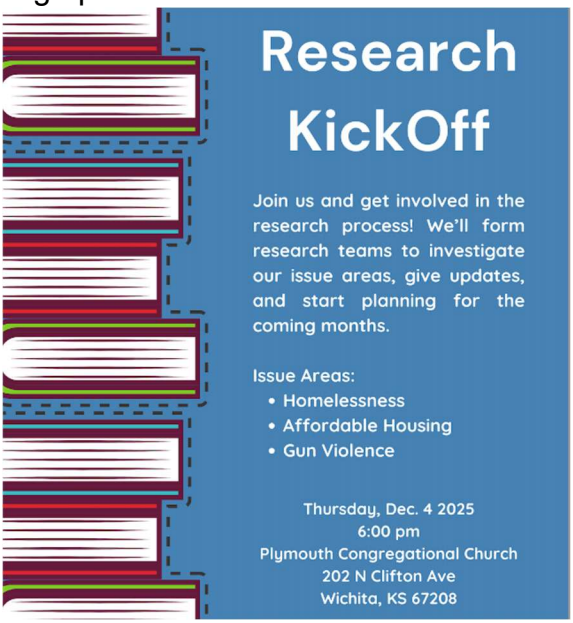

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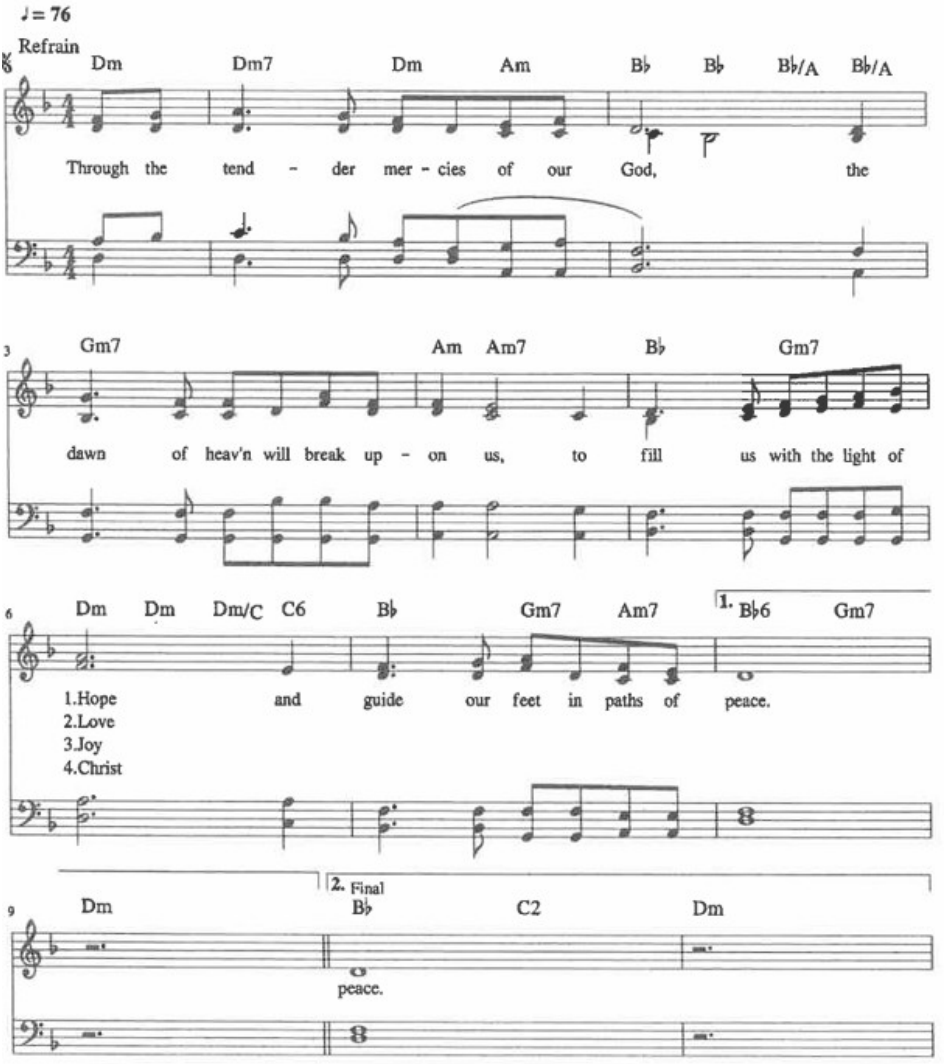
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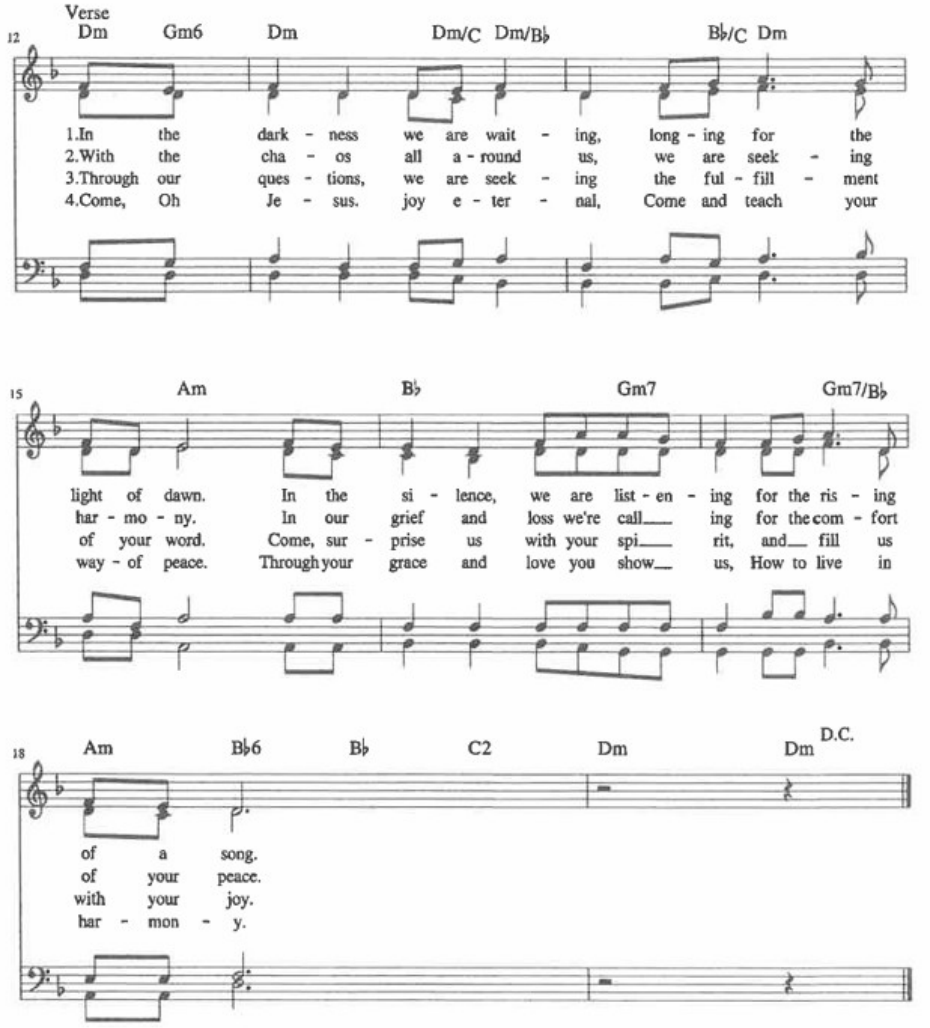
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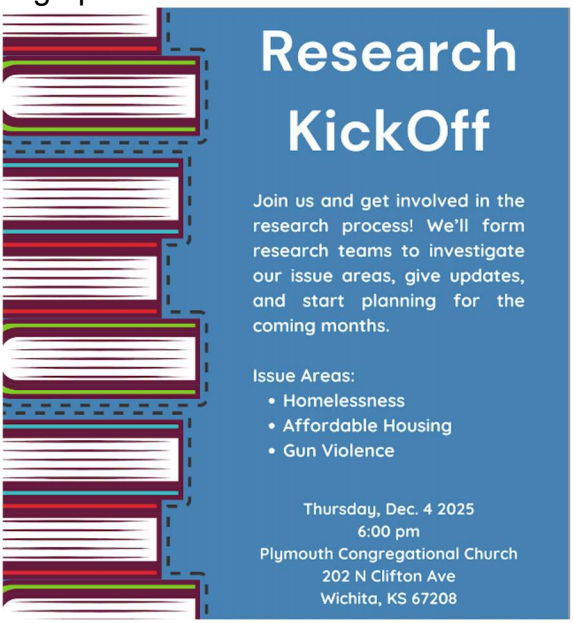

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
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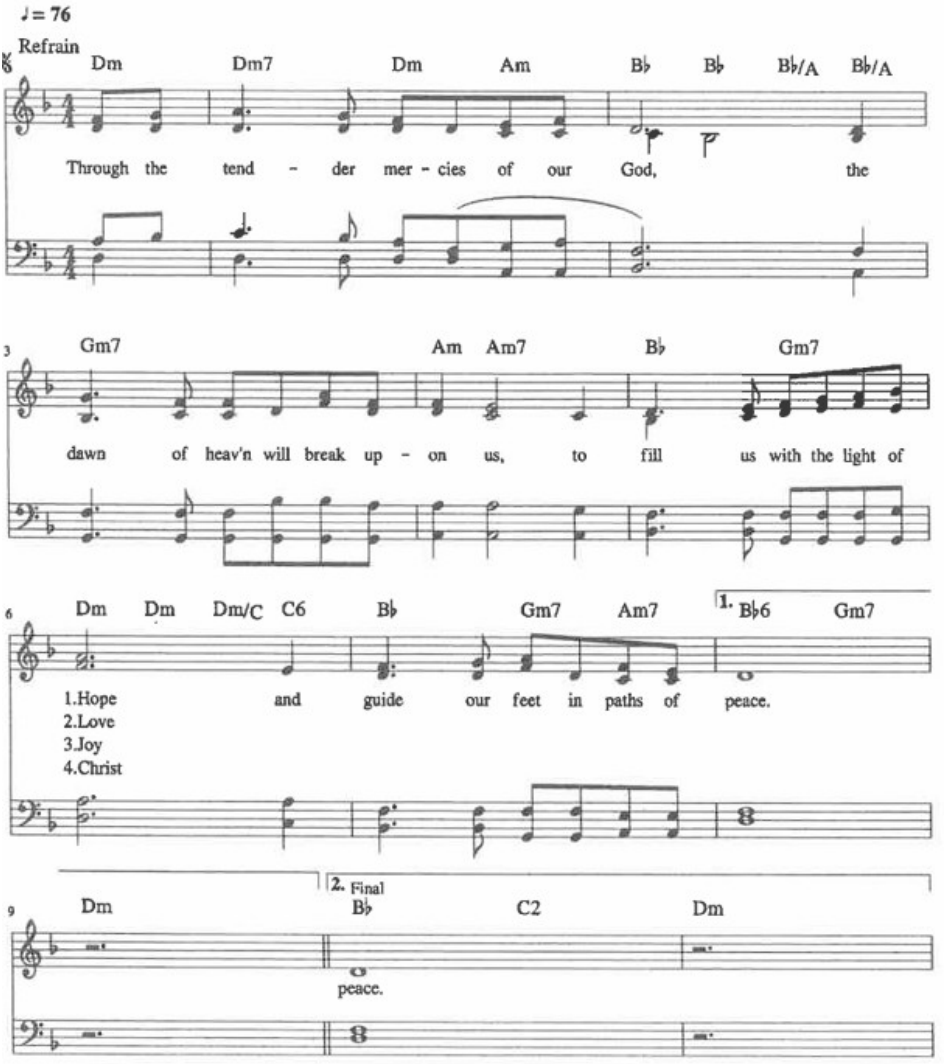
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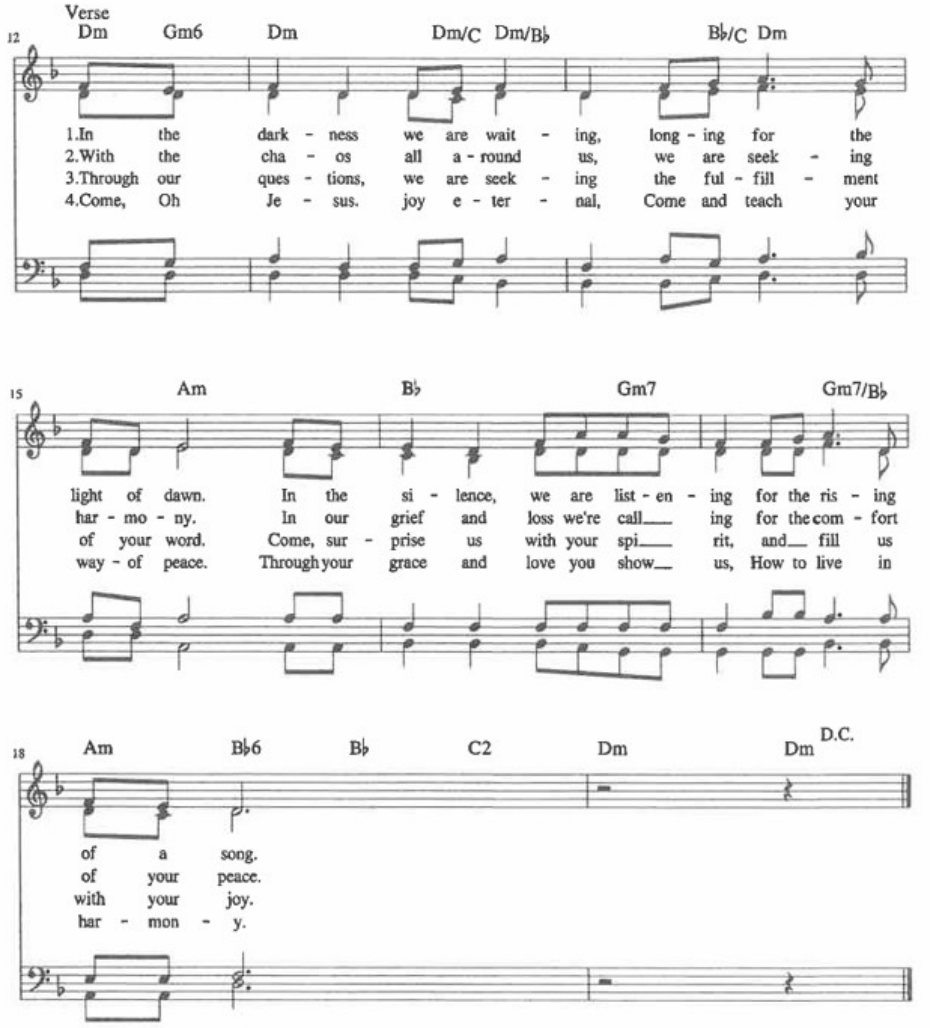
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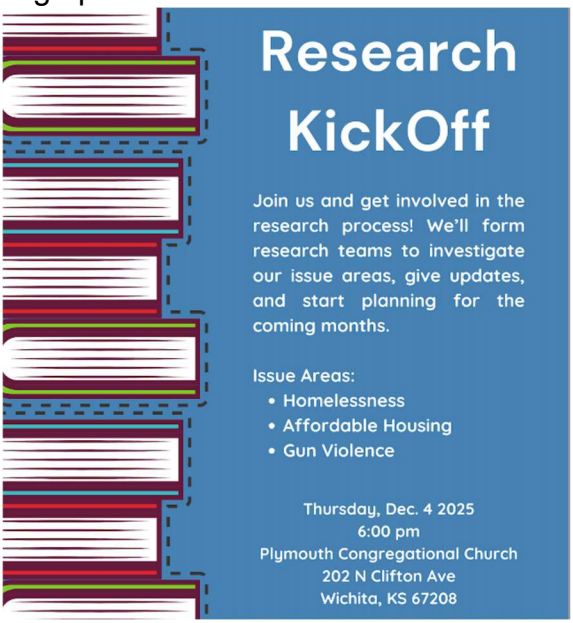

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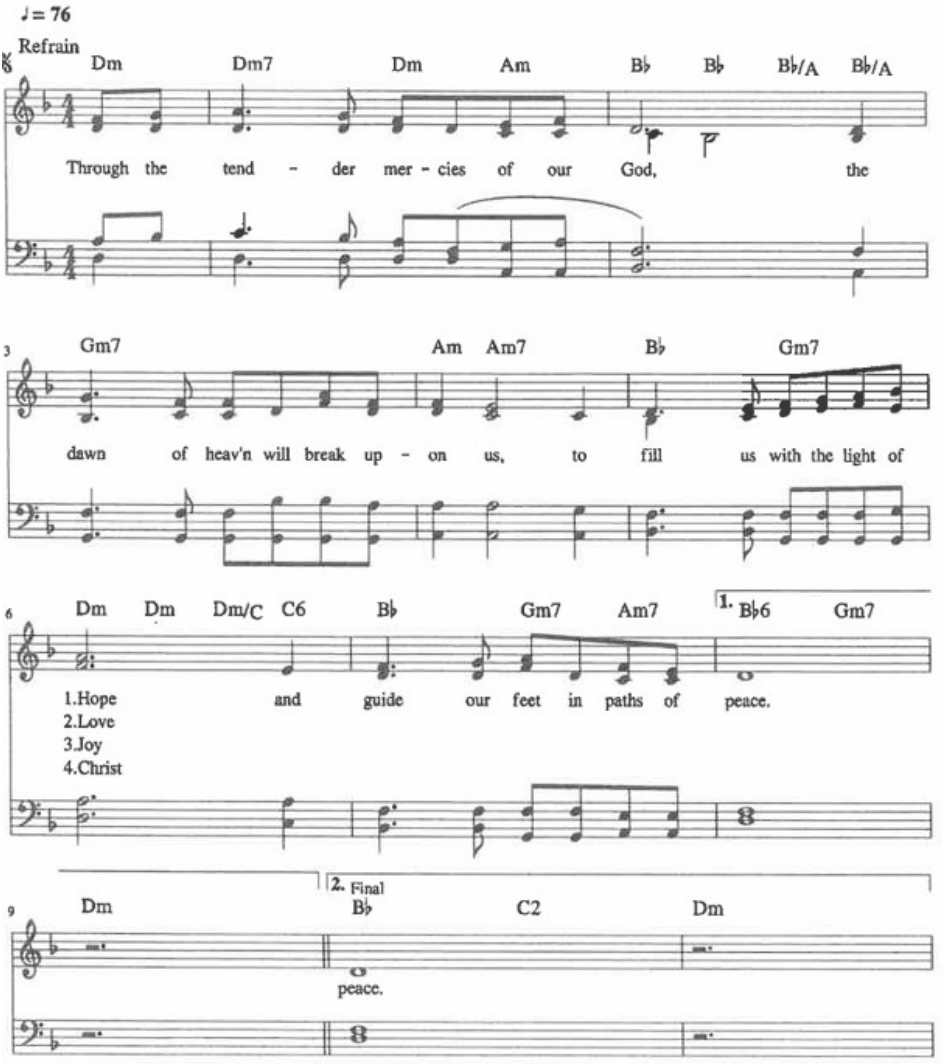
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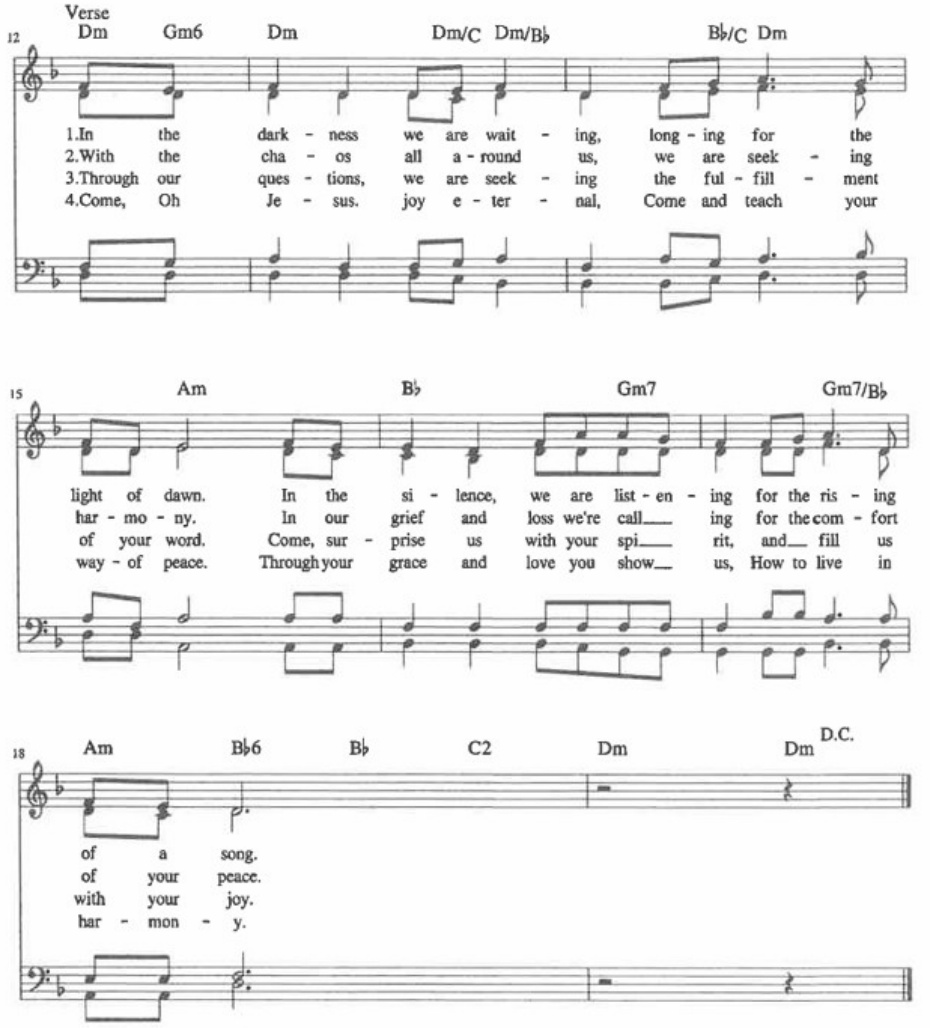
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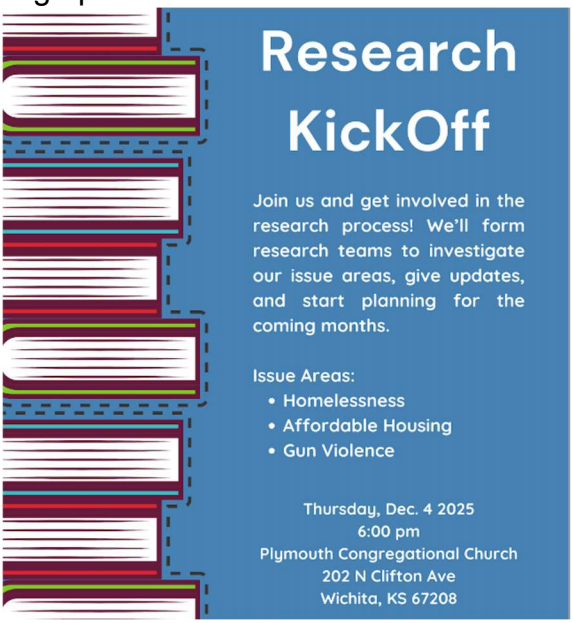

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Seeing and Seeking God
Work of the Church
Sharing our Praises and Concerns

Sung prayer of God's People
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus #218

Sending

**Light Dawns on a Weary World* #205

*Benediction

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
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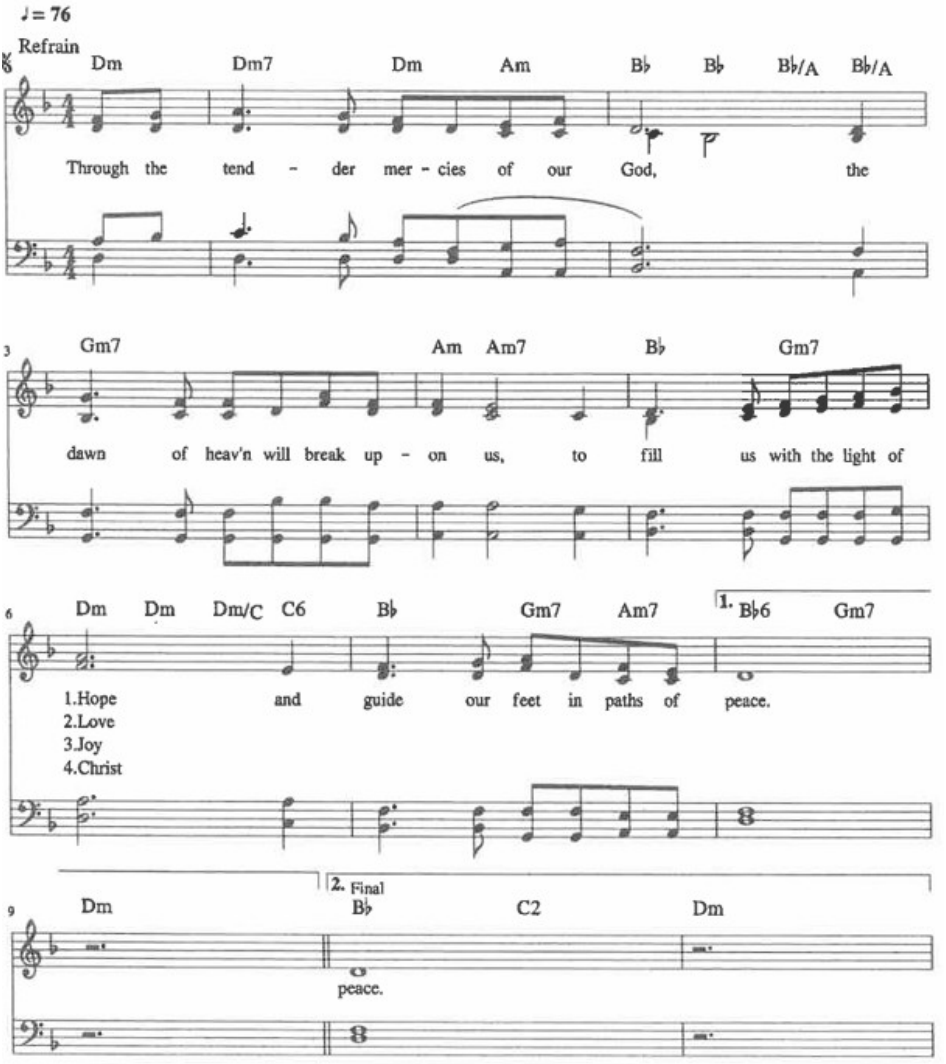
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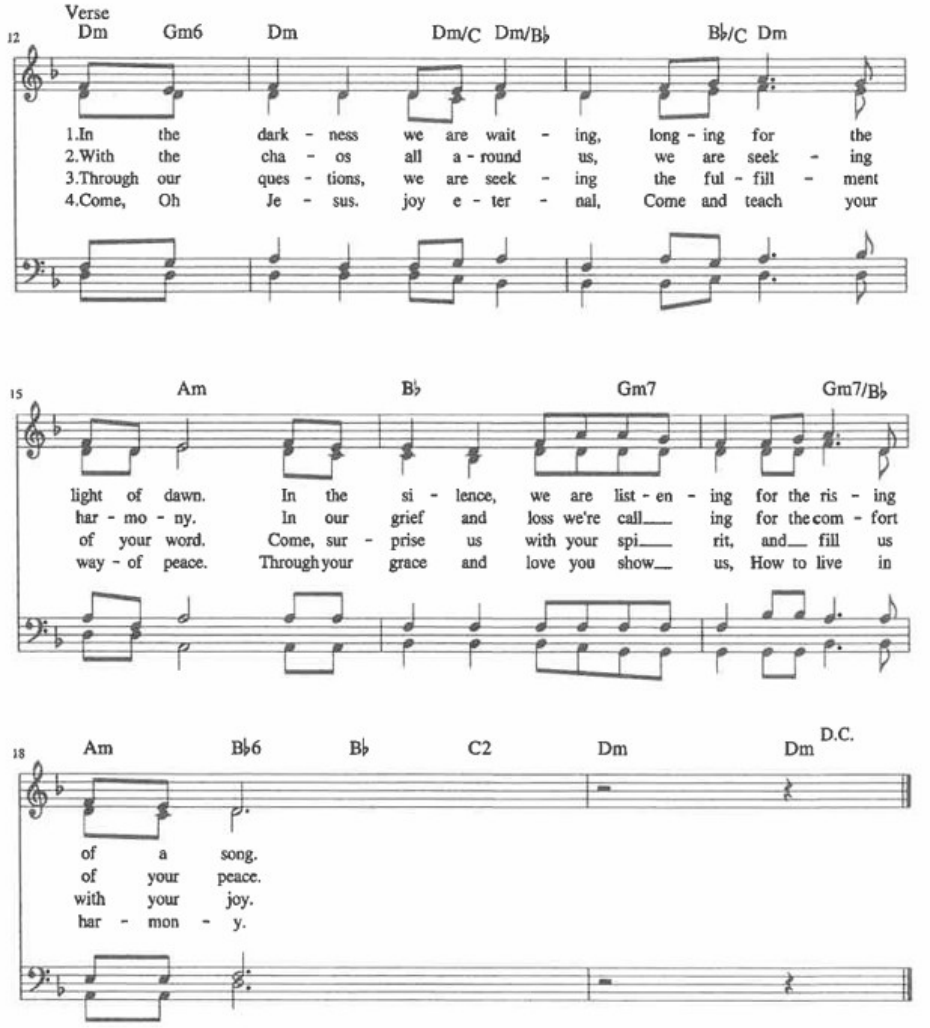
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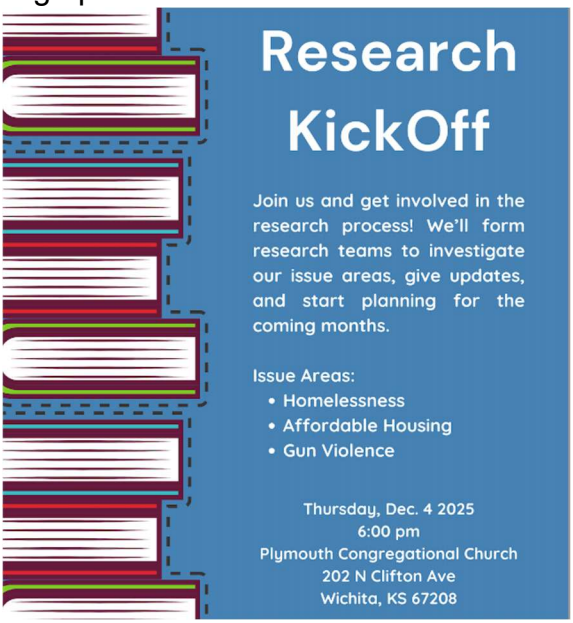

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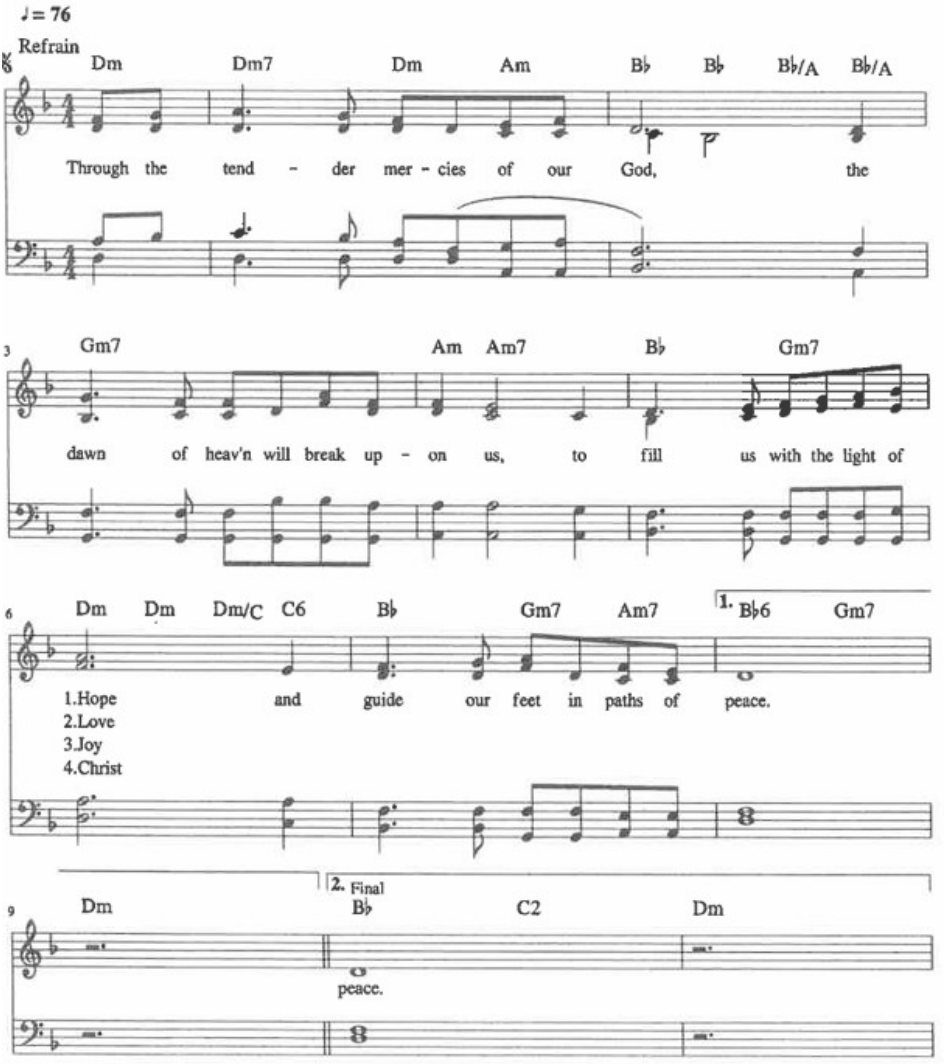
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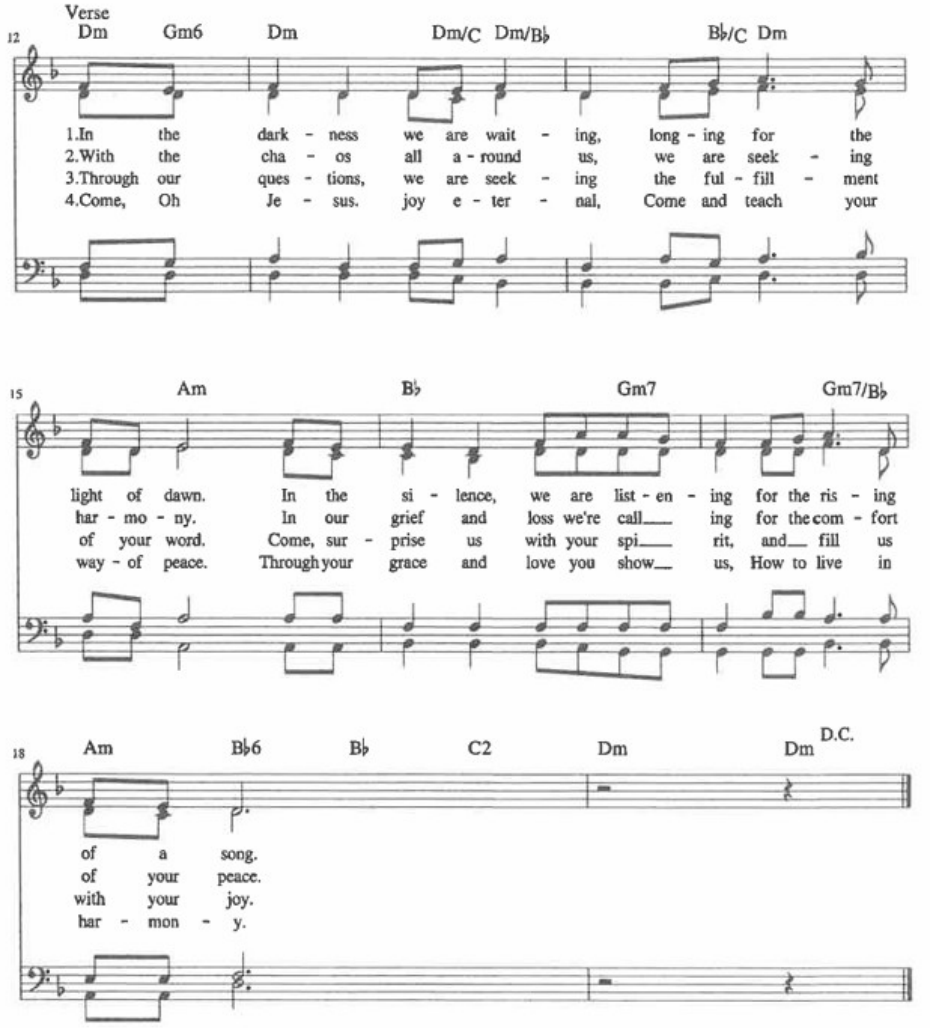
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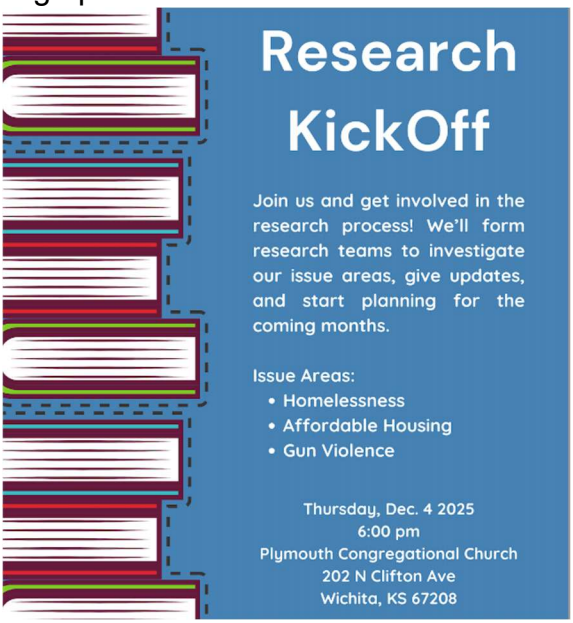

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to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
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walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
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We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
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"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
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cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
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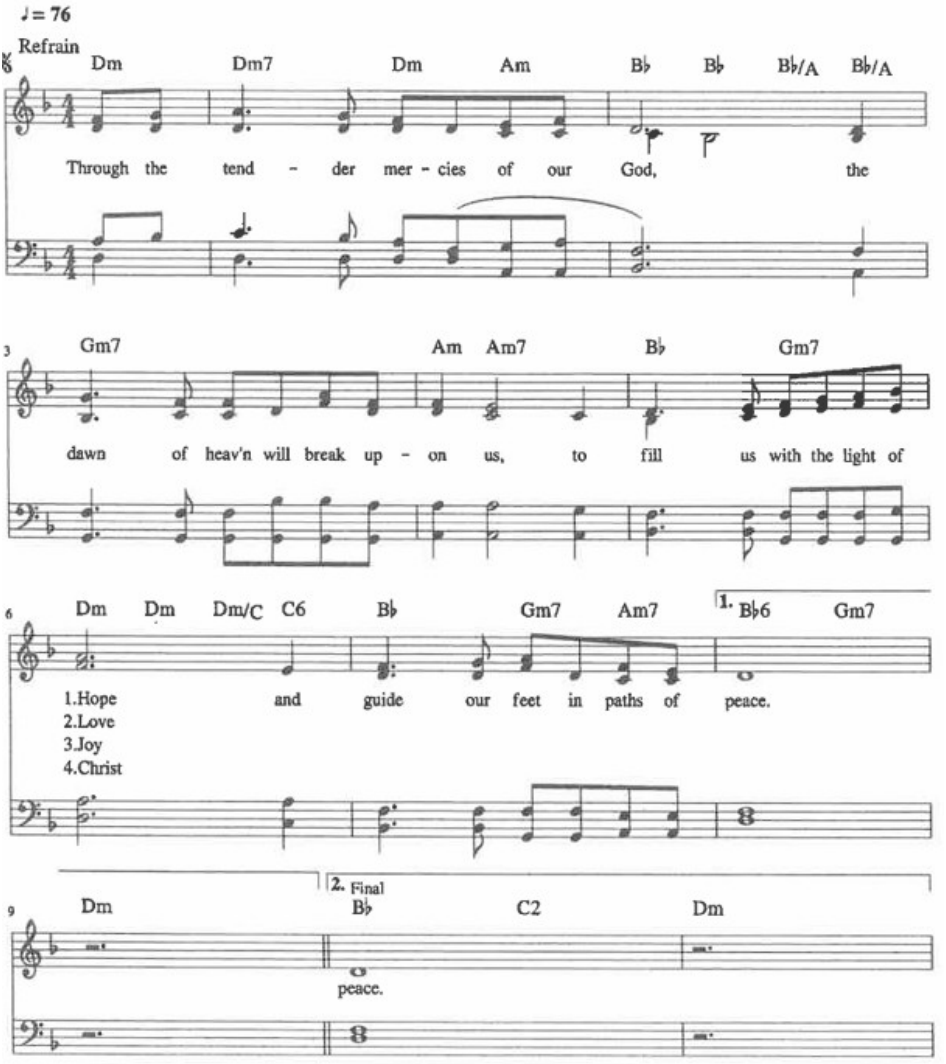
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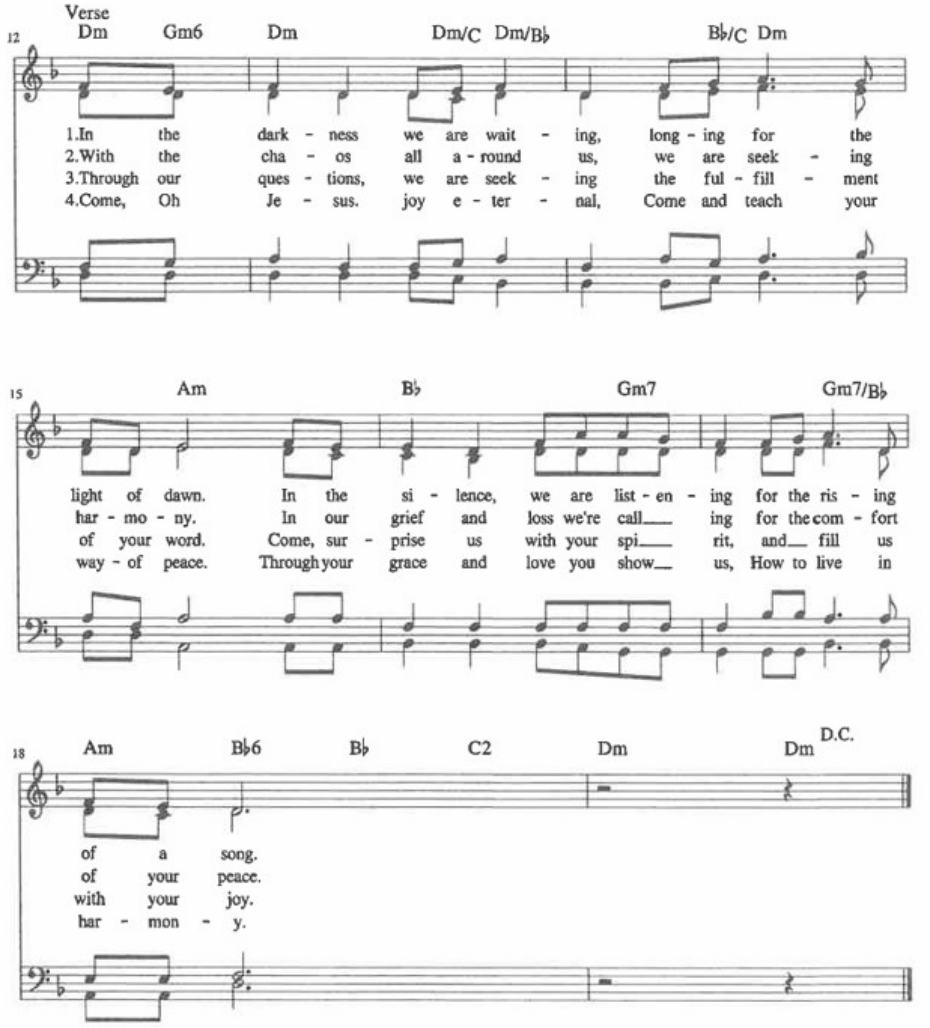
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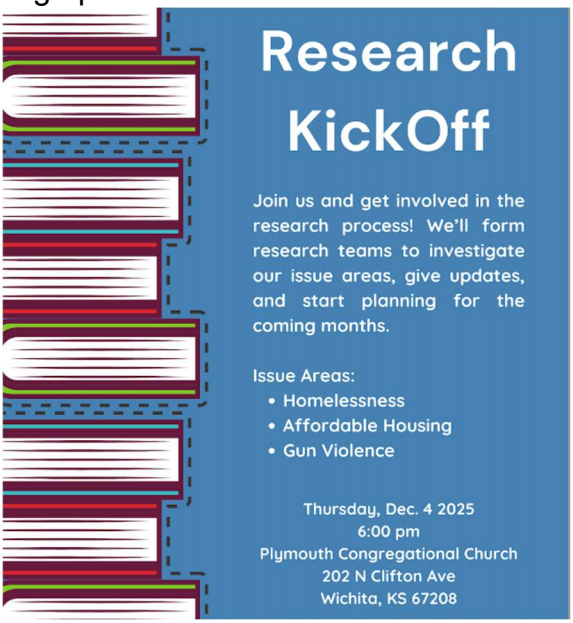

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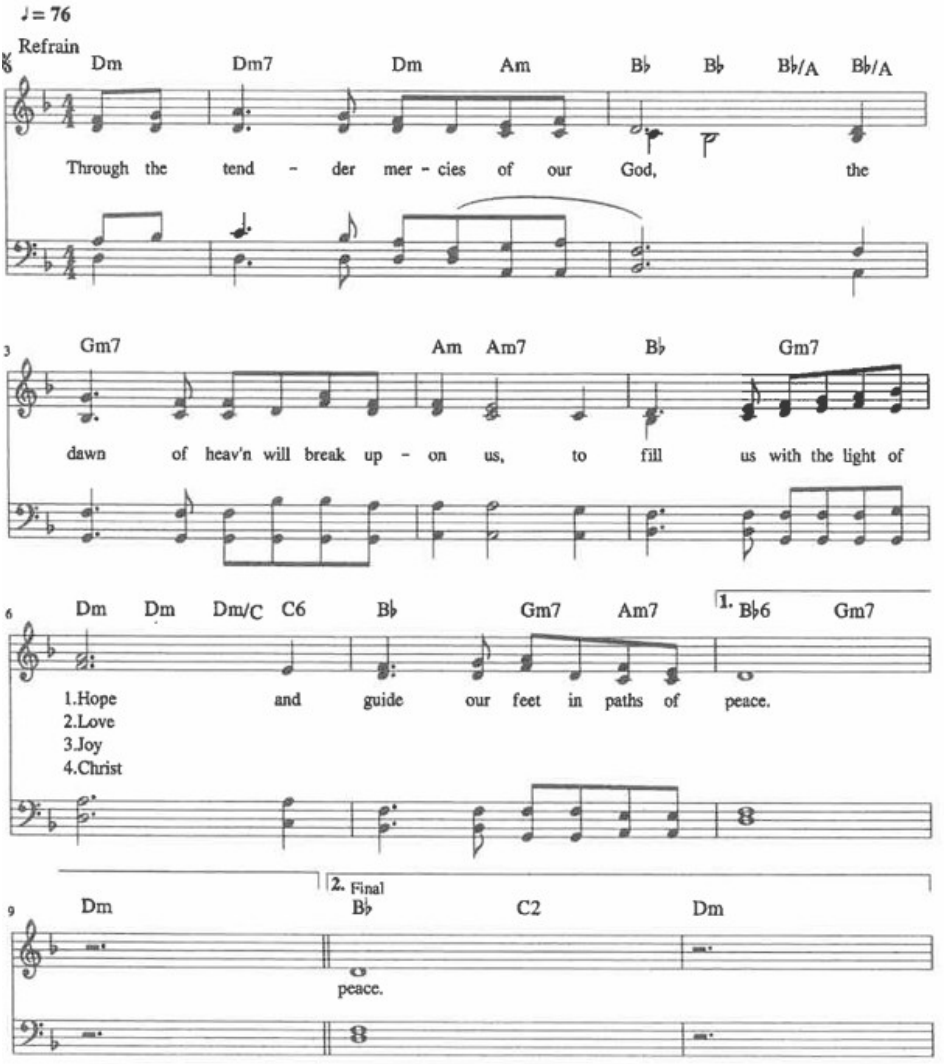
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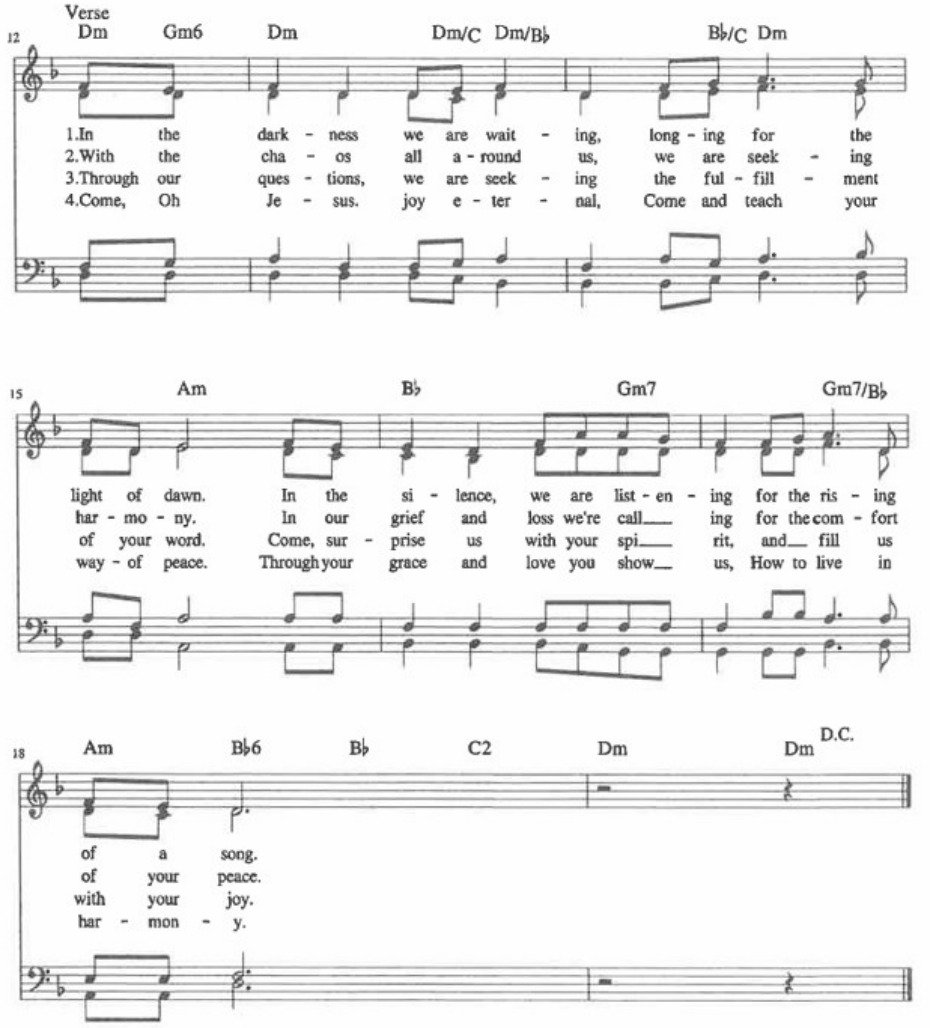
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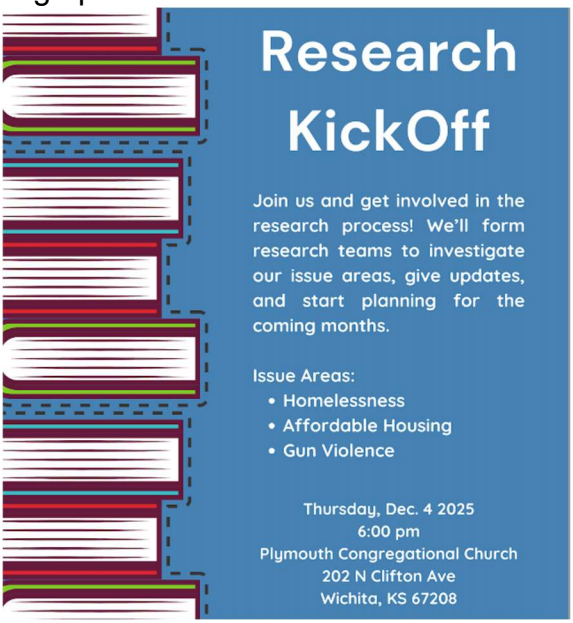

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even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
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No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
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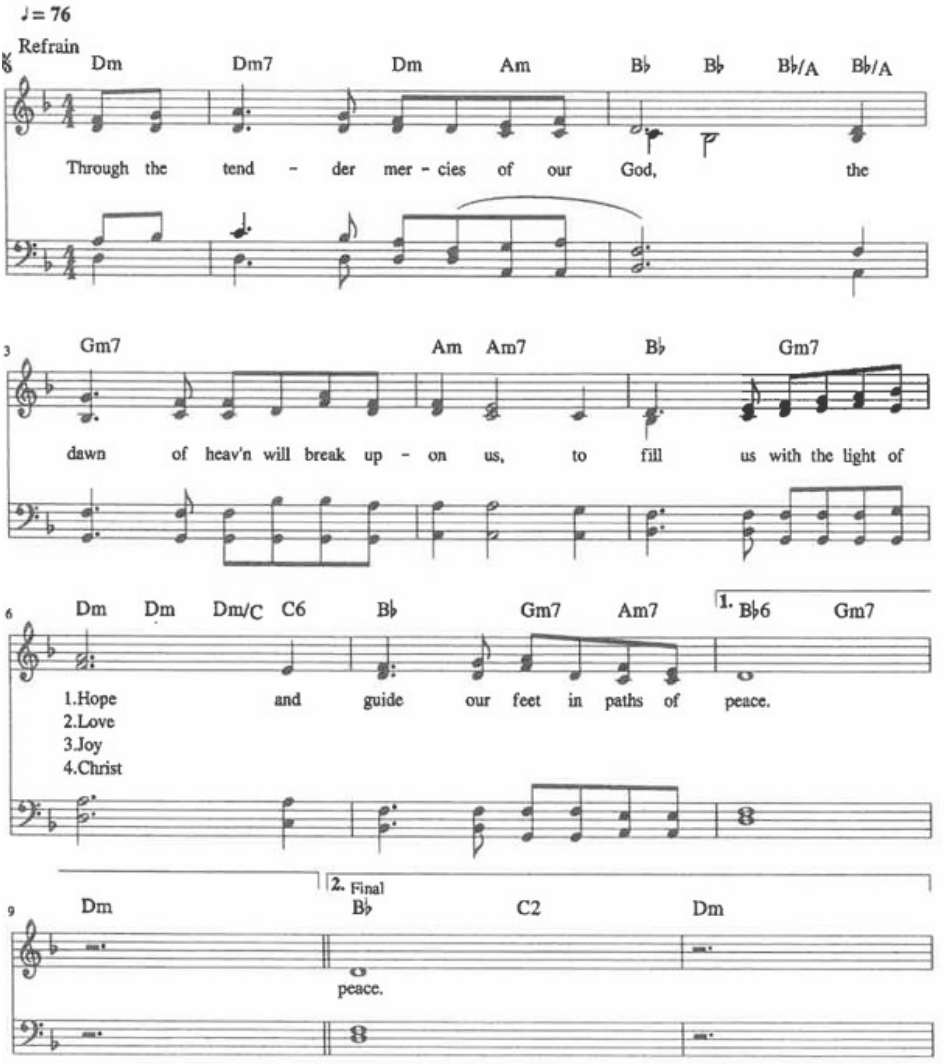
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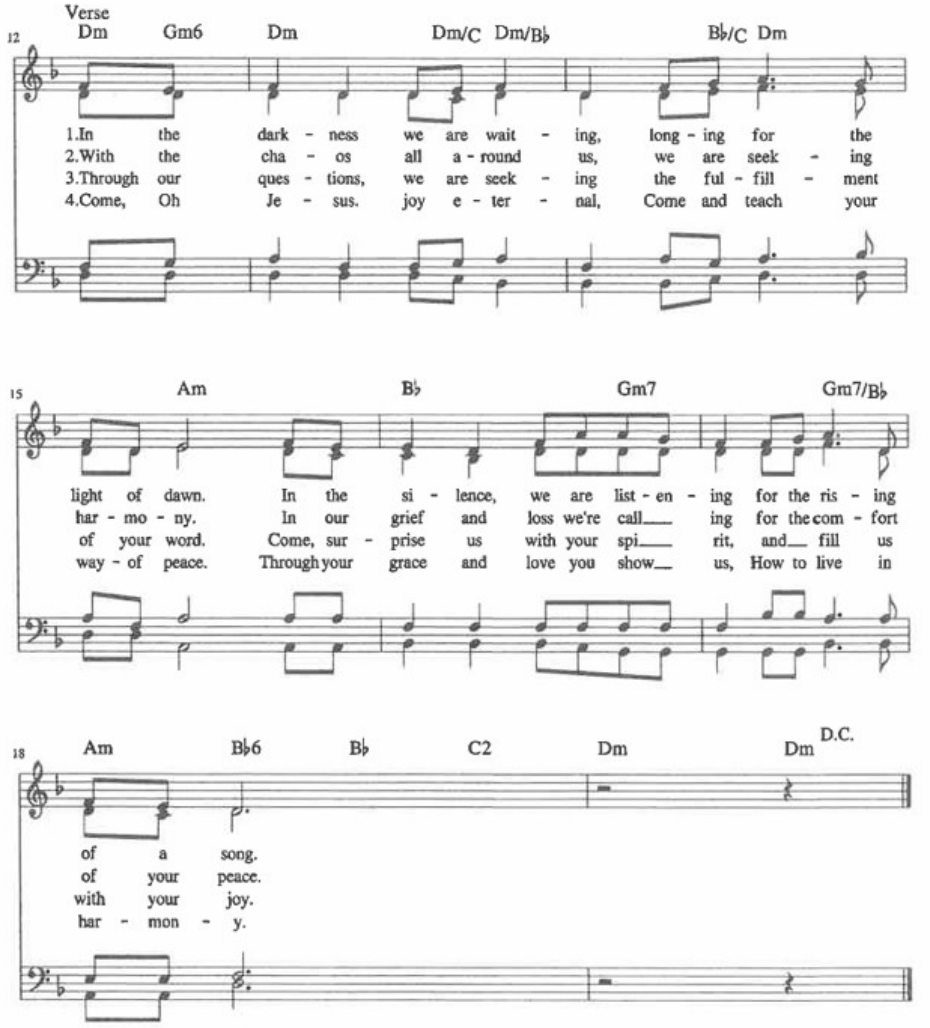
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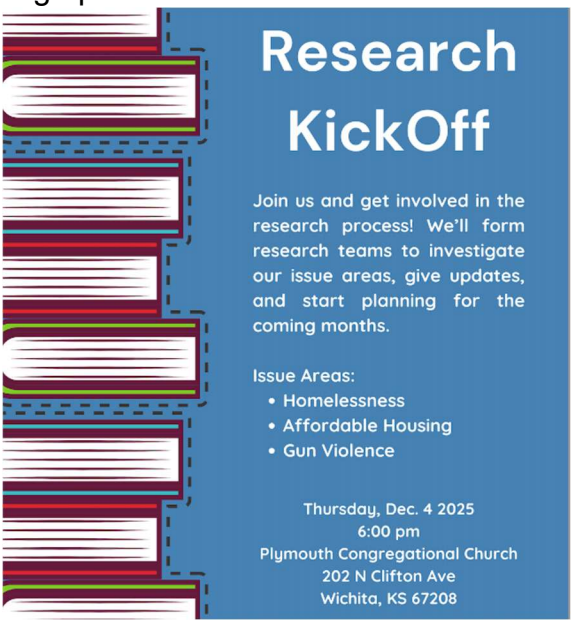

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
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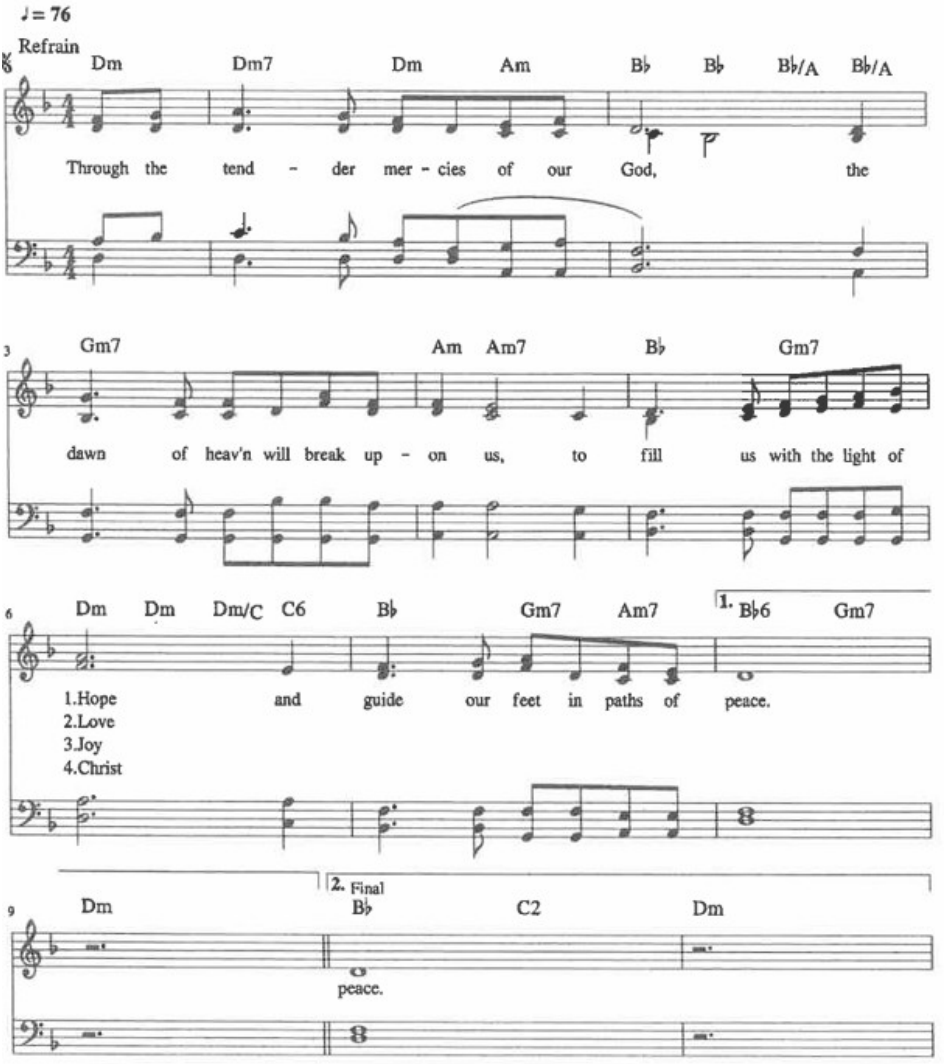
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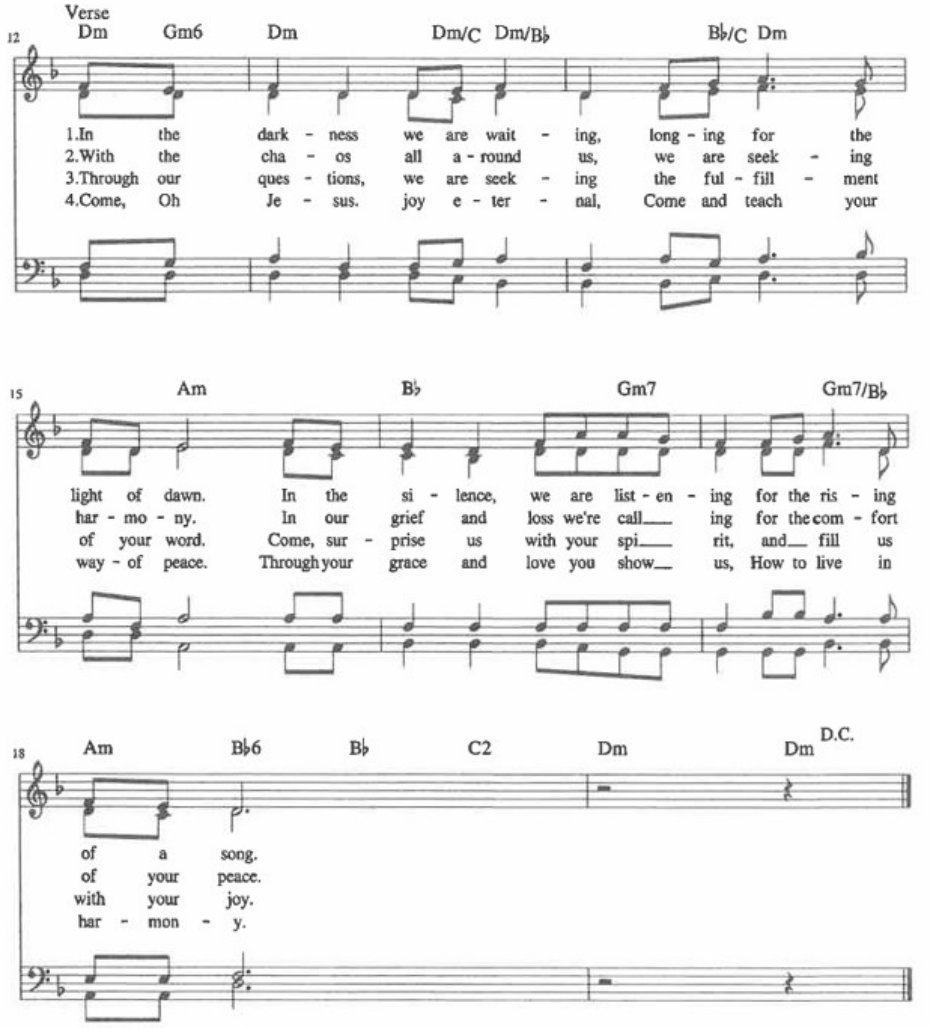
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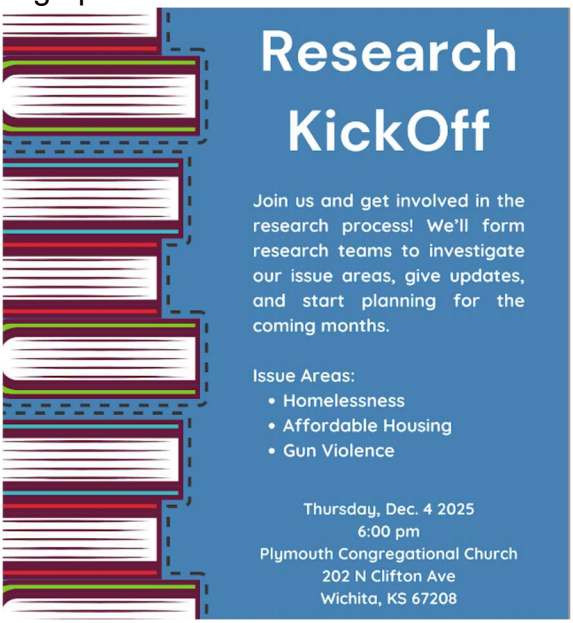

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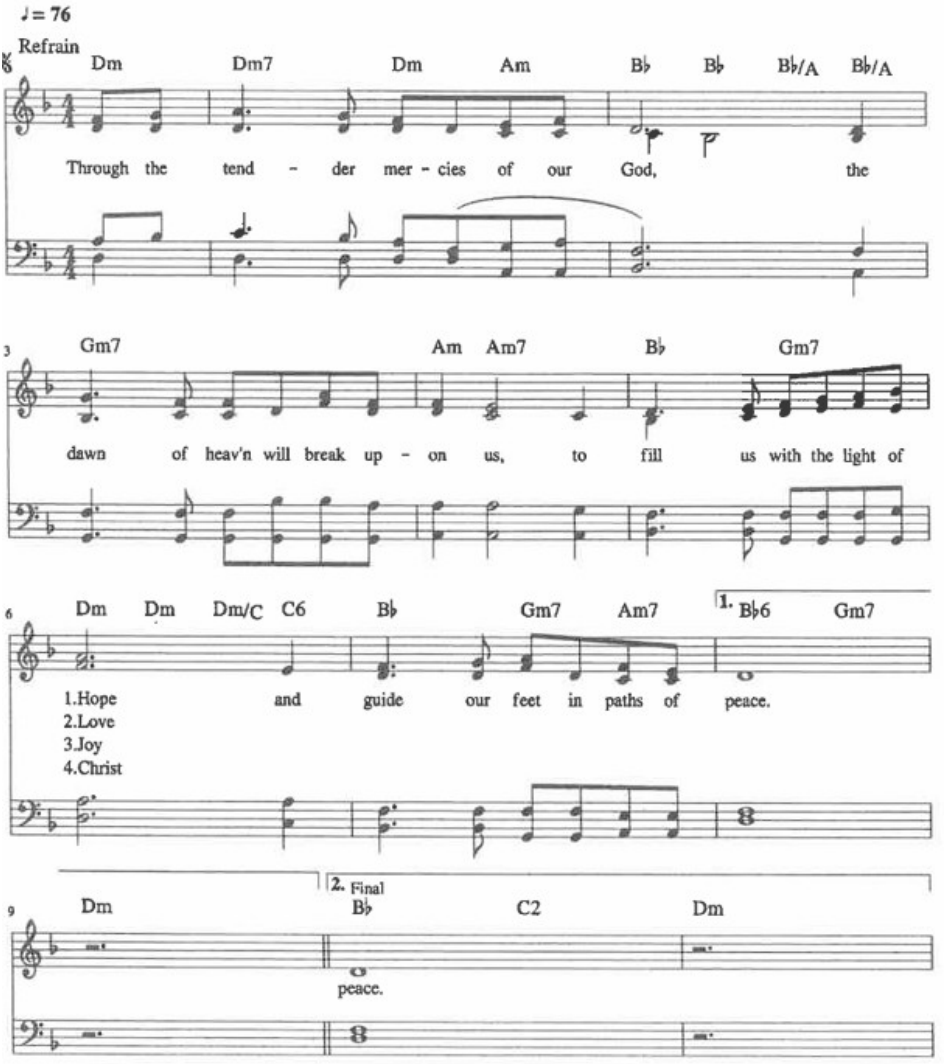
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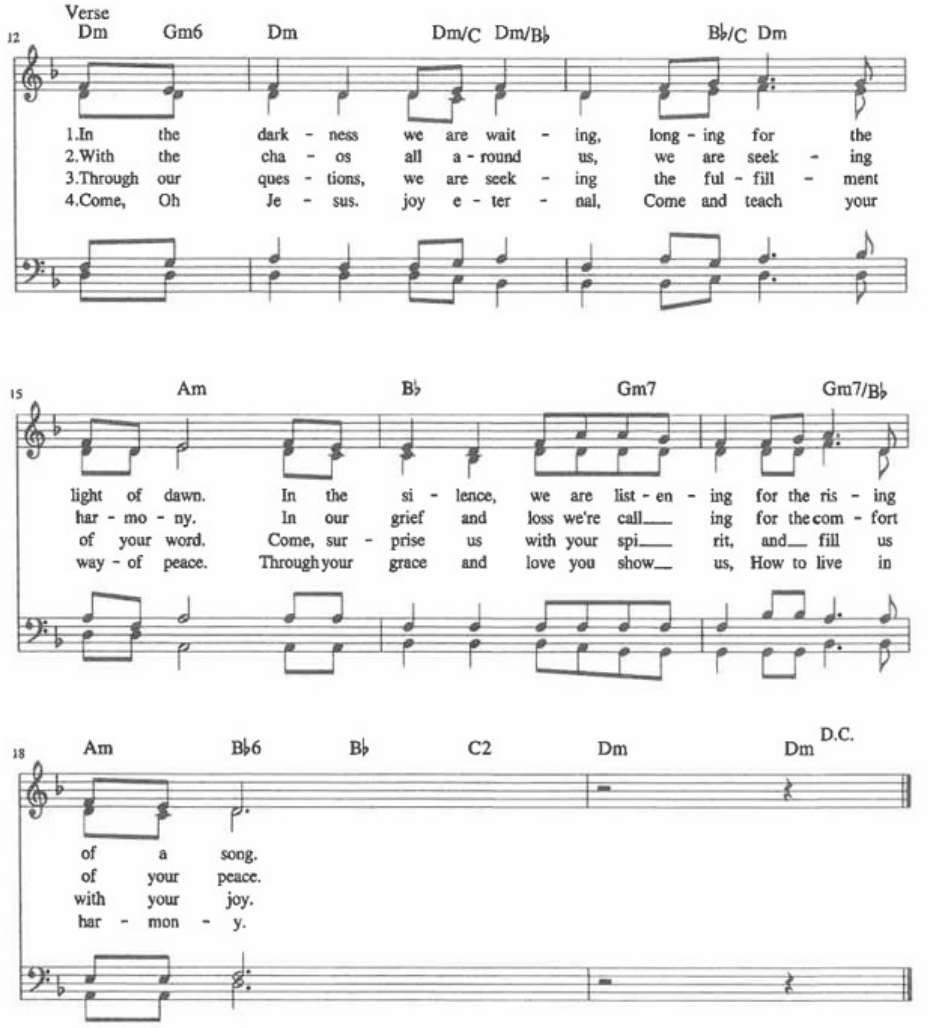
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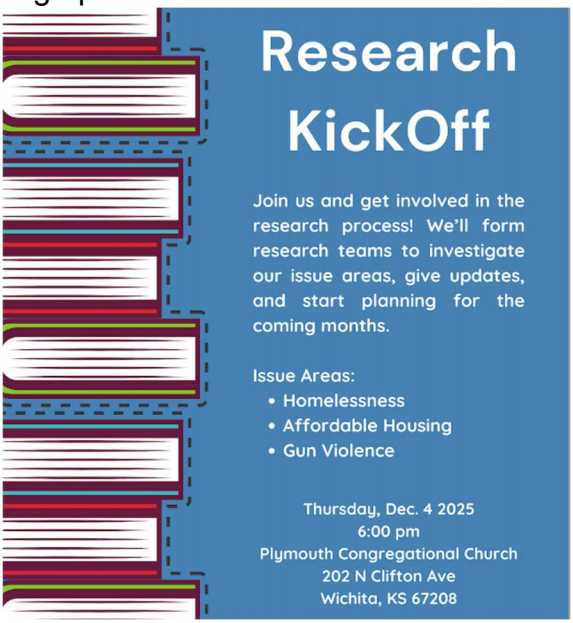

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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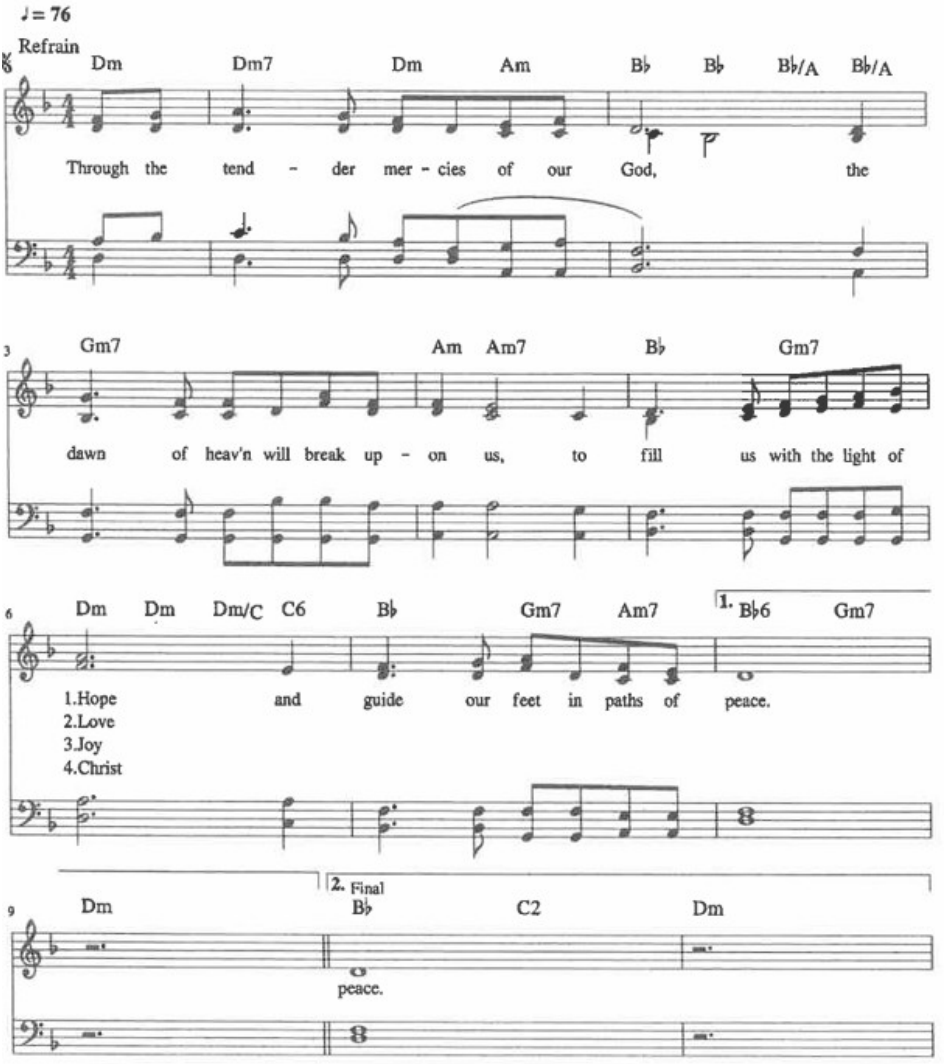
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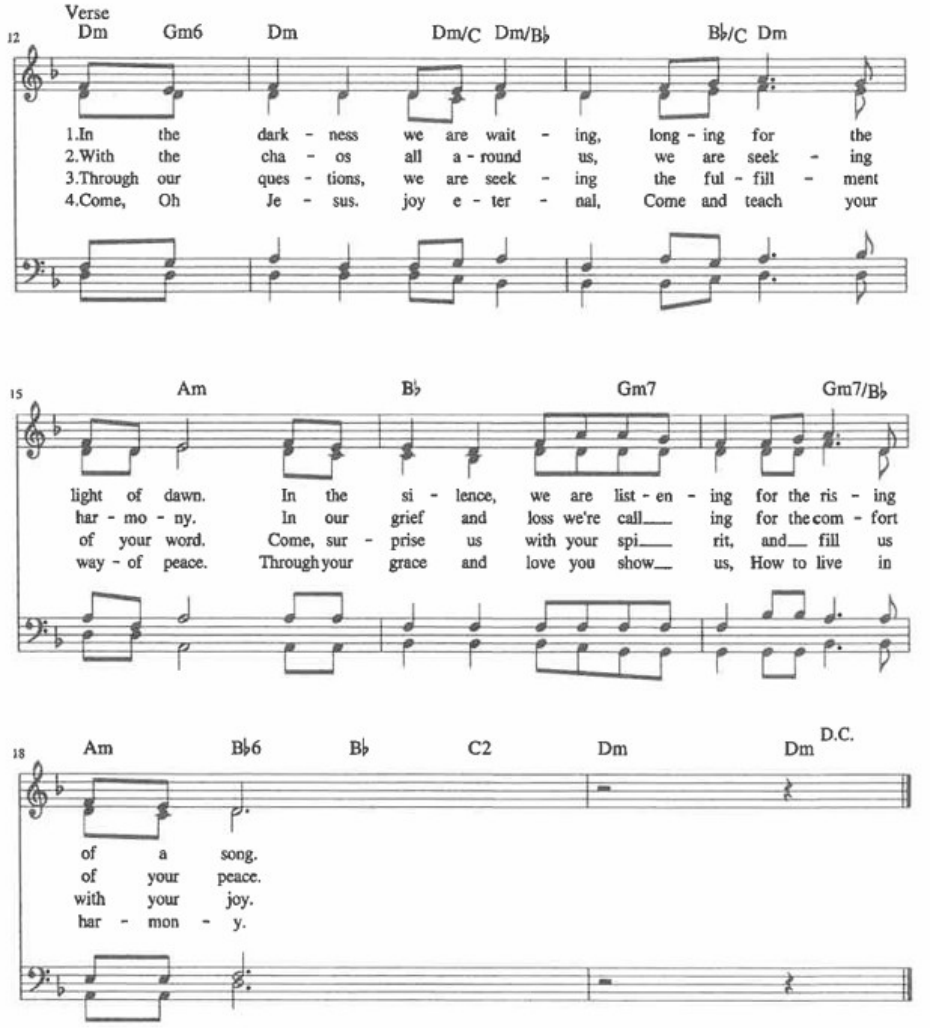
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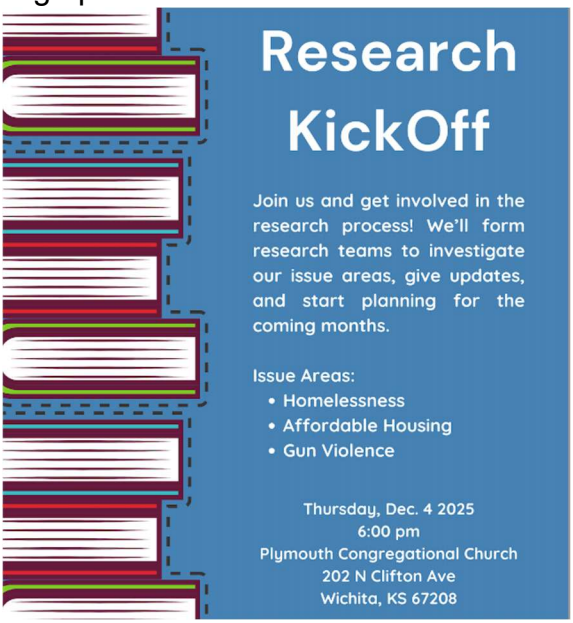

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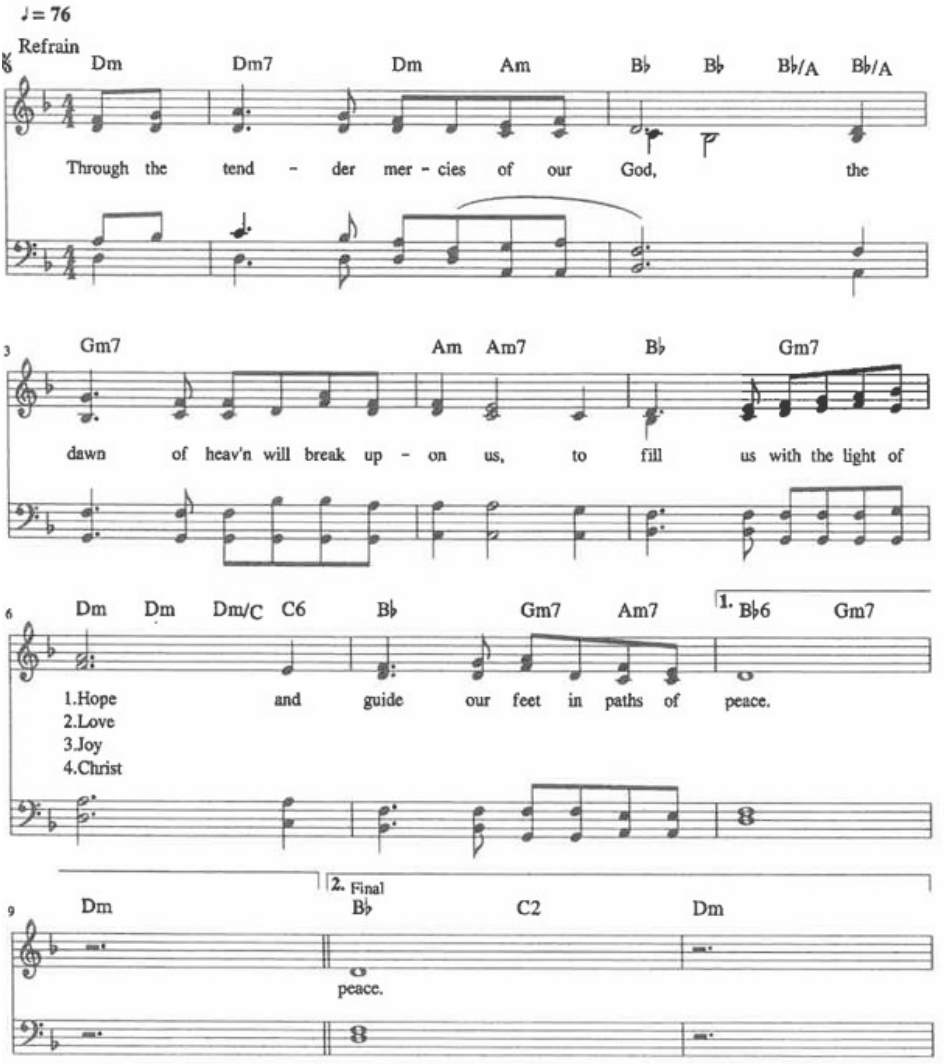
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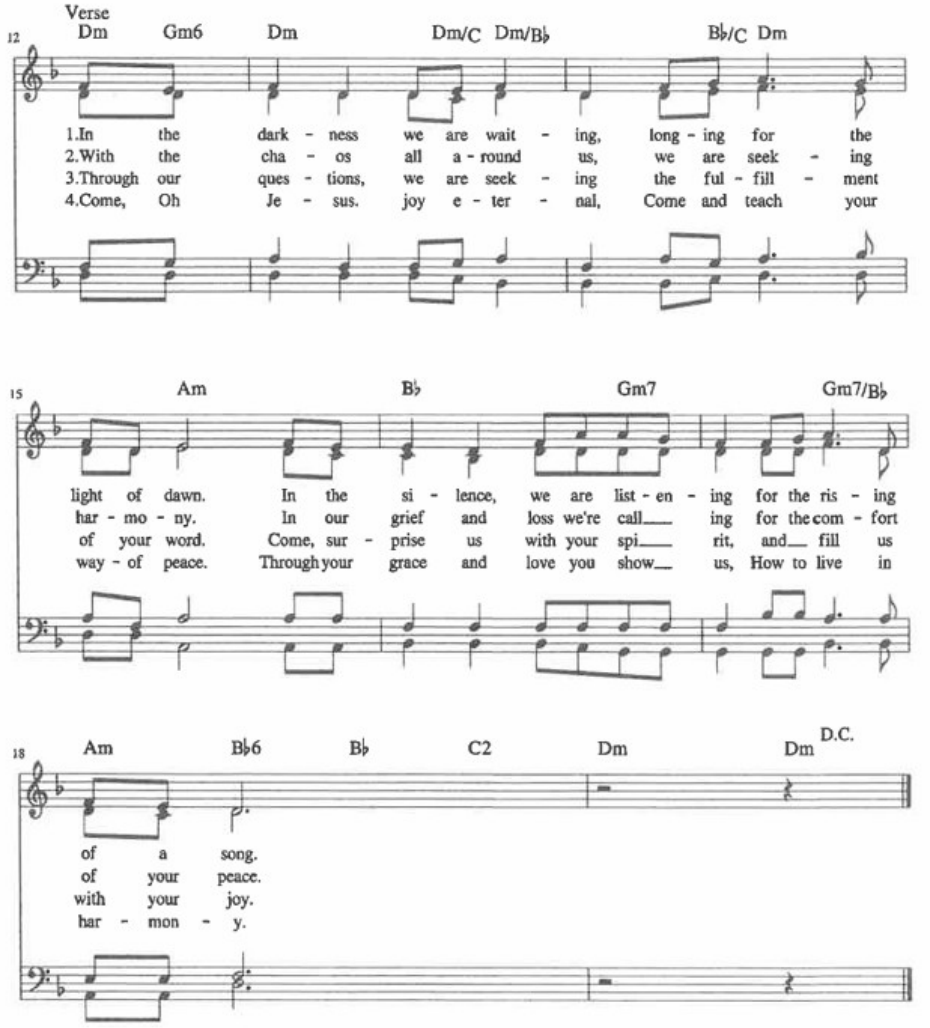
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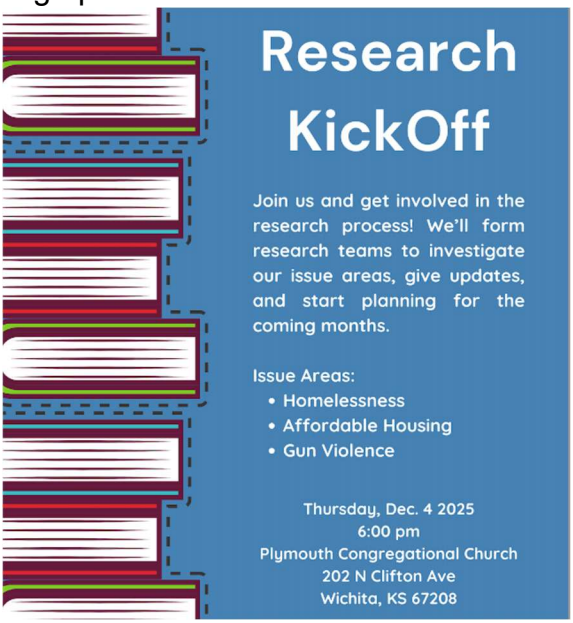

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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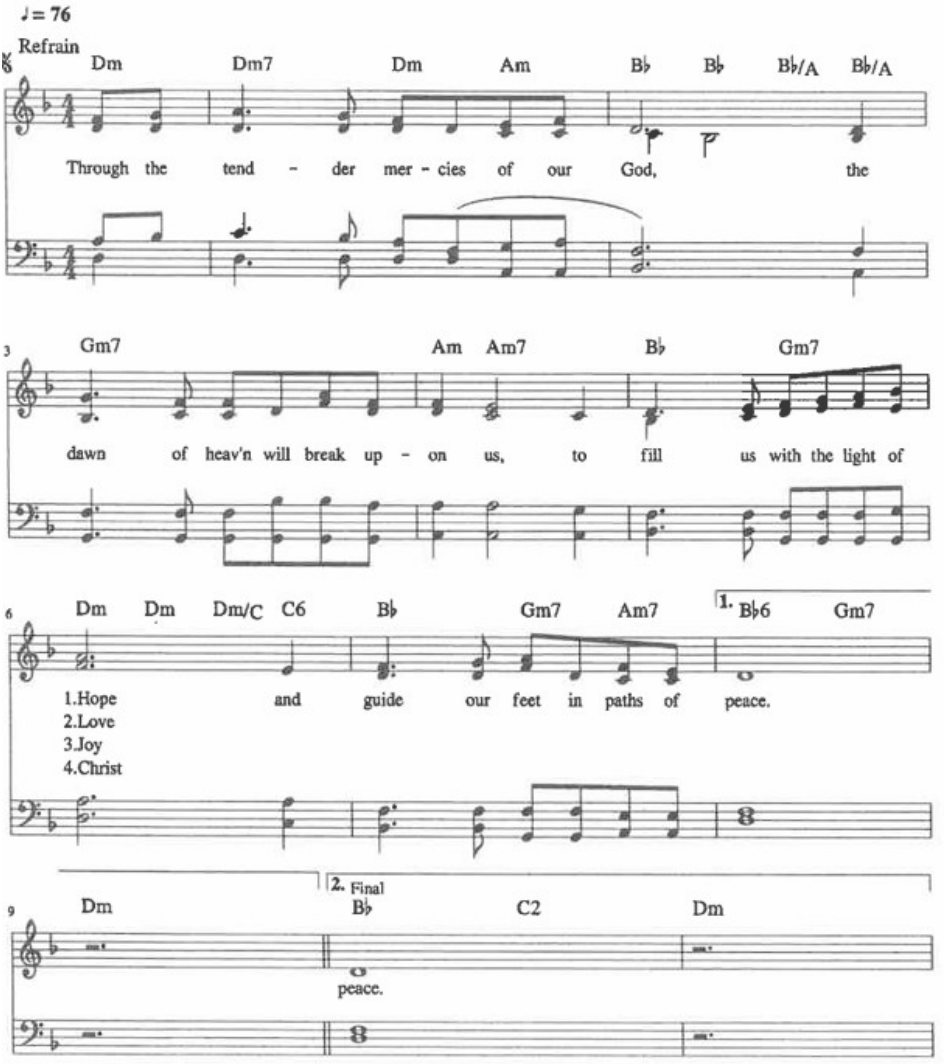
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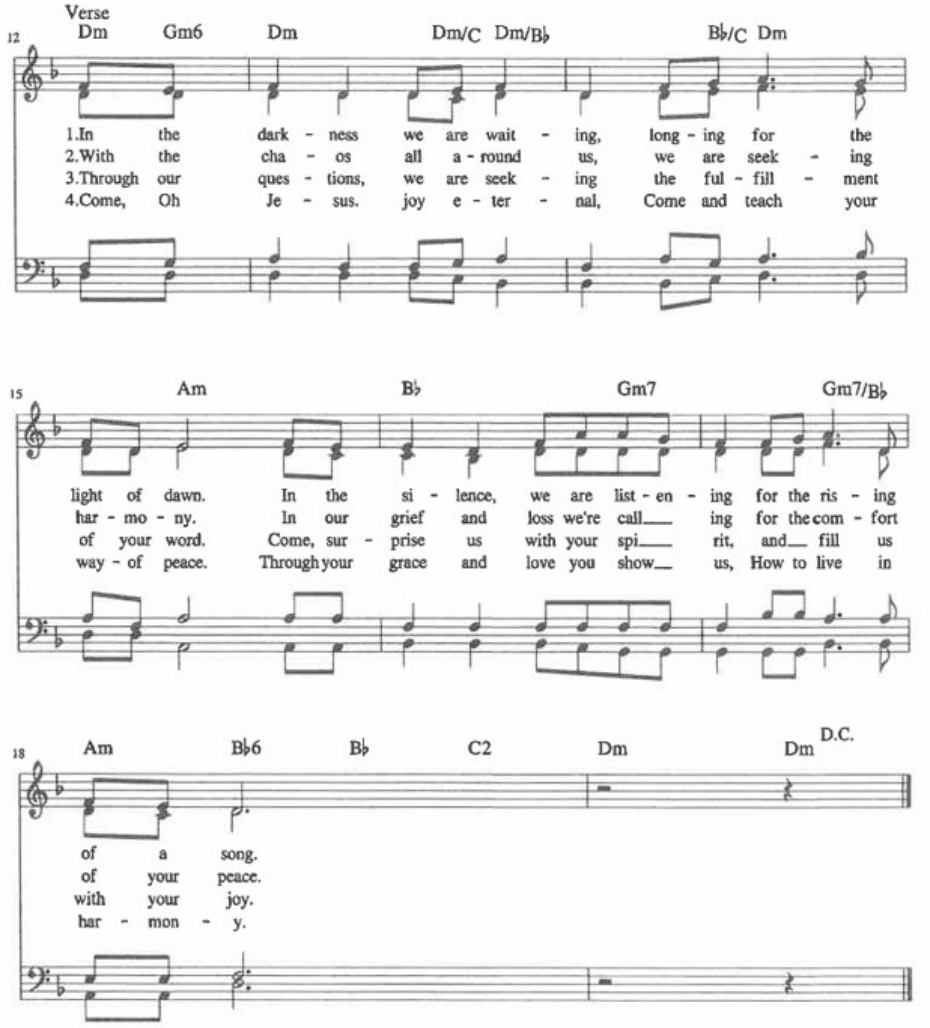
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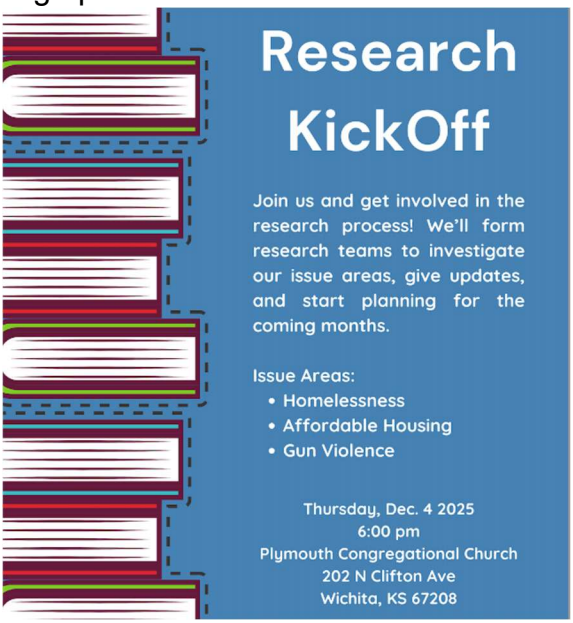

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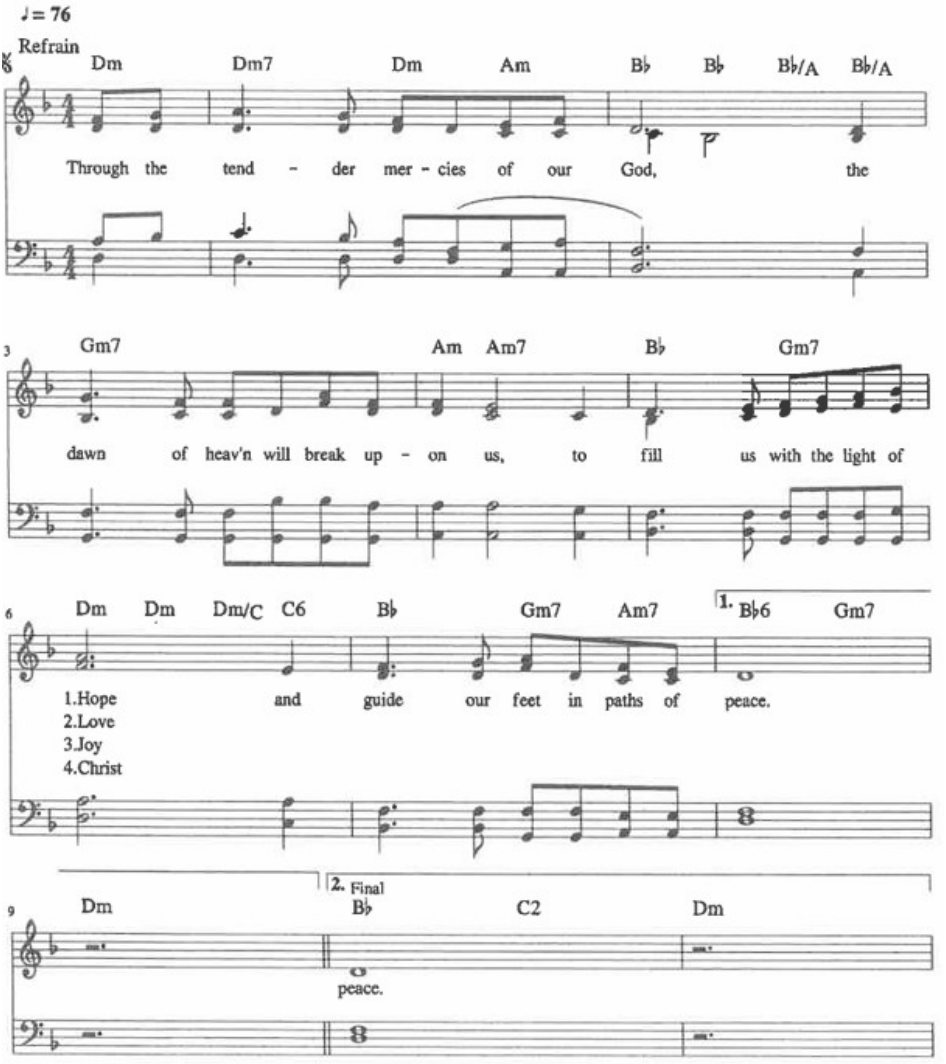
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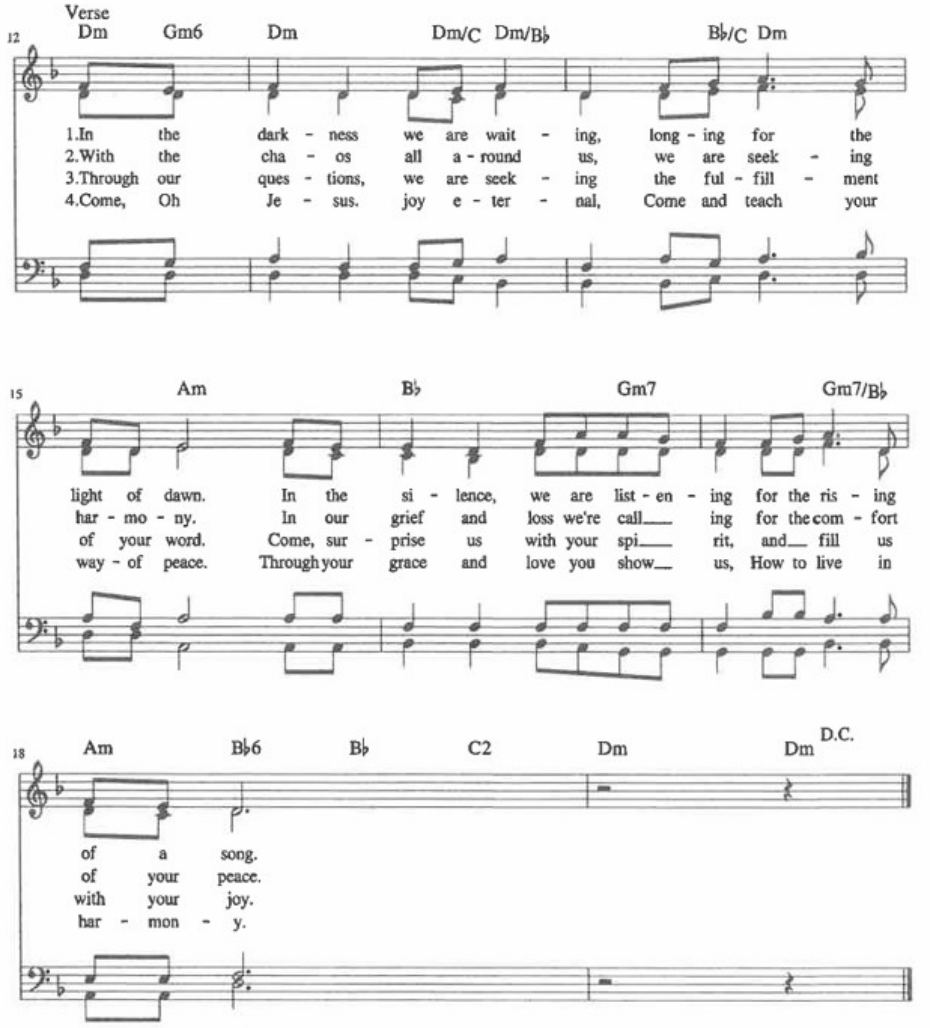
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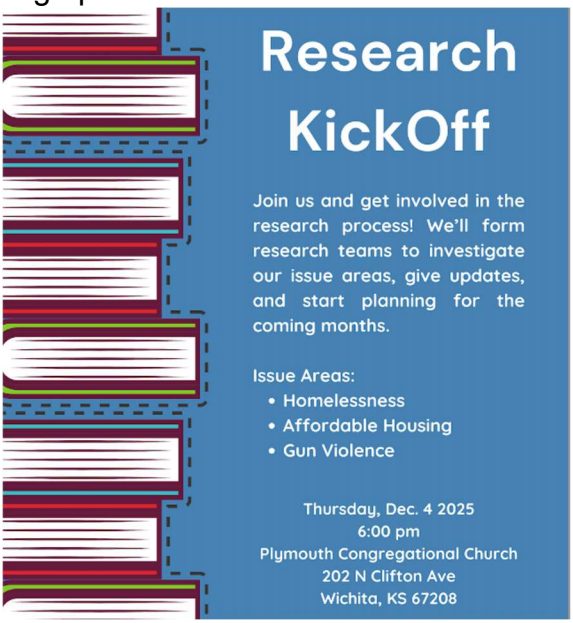

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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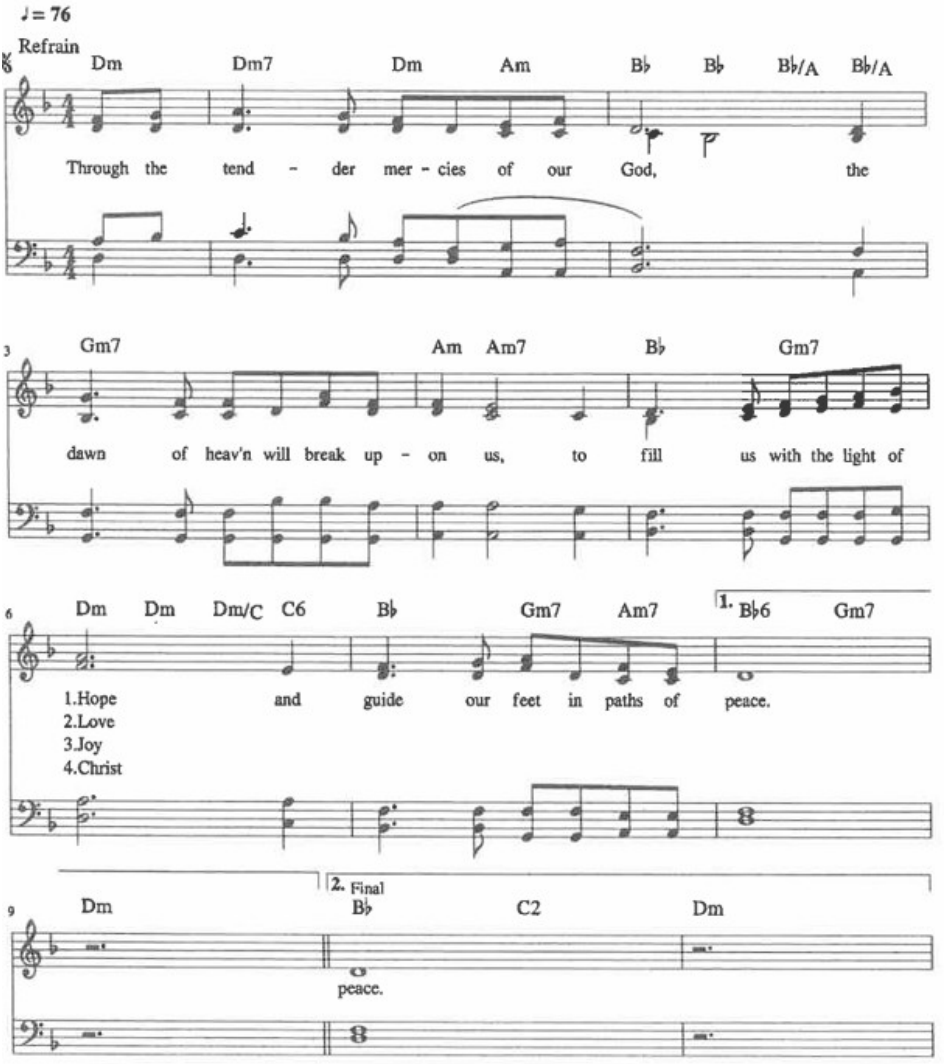
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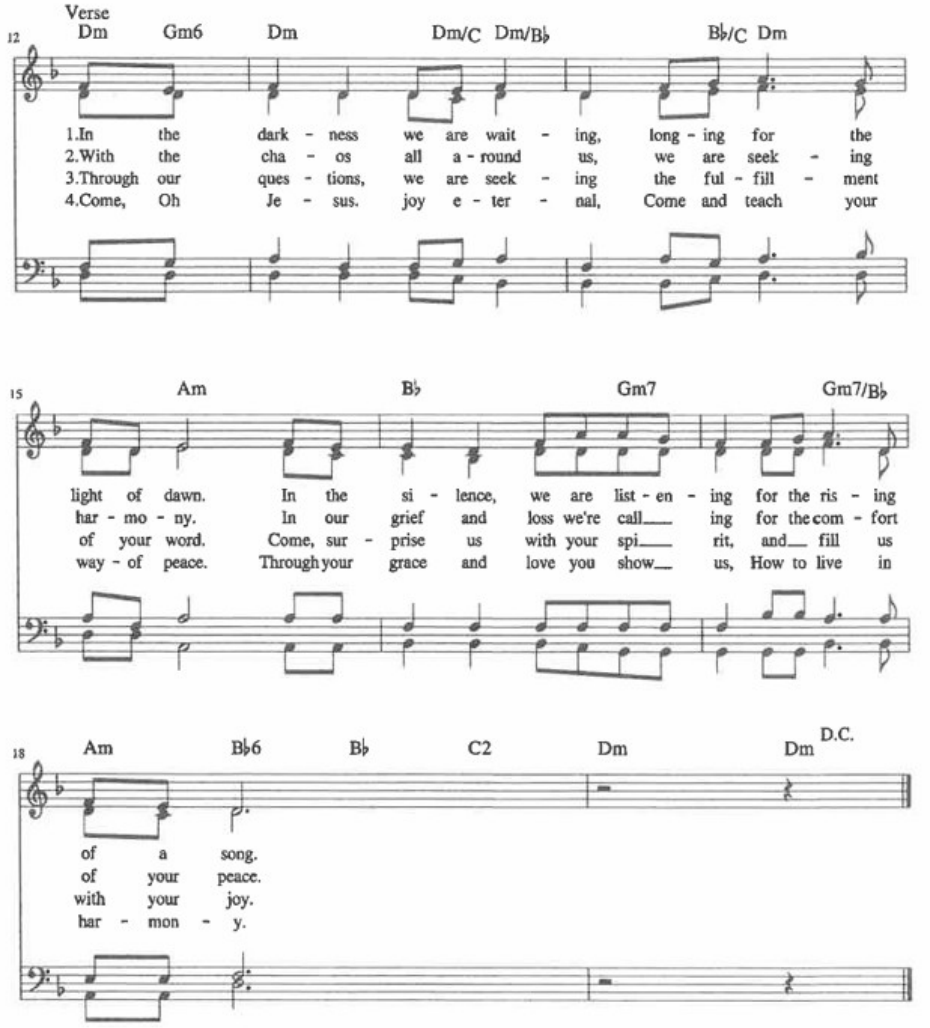
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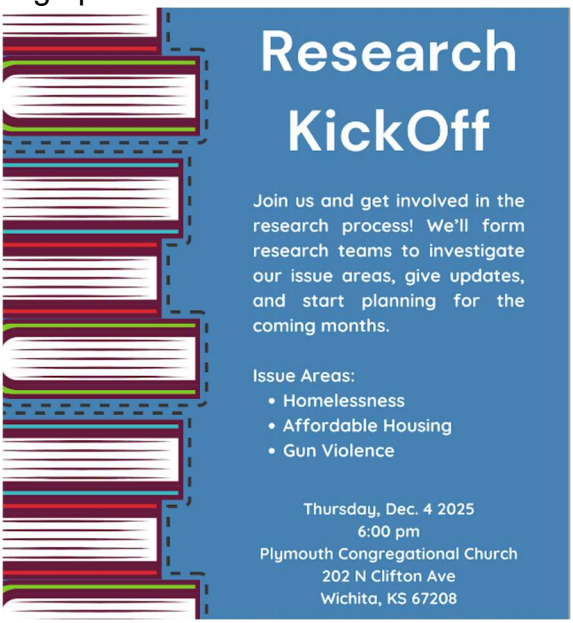

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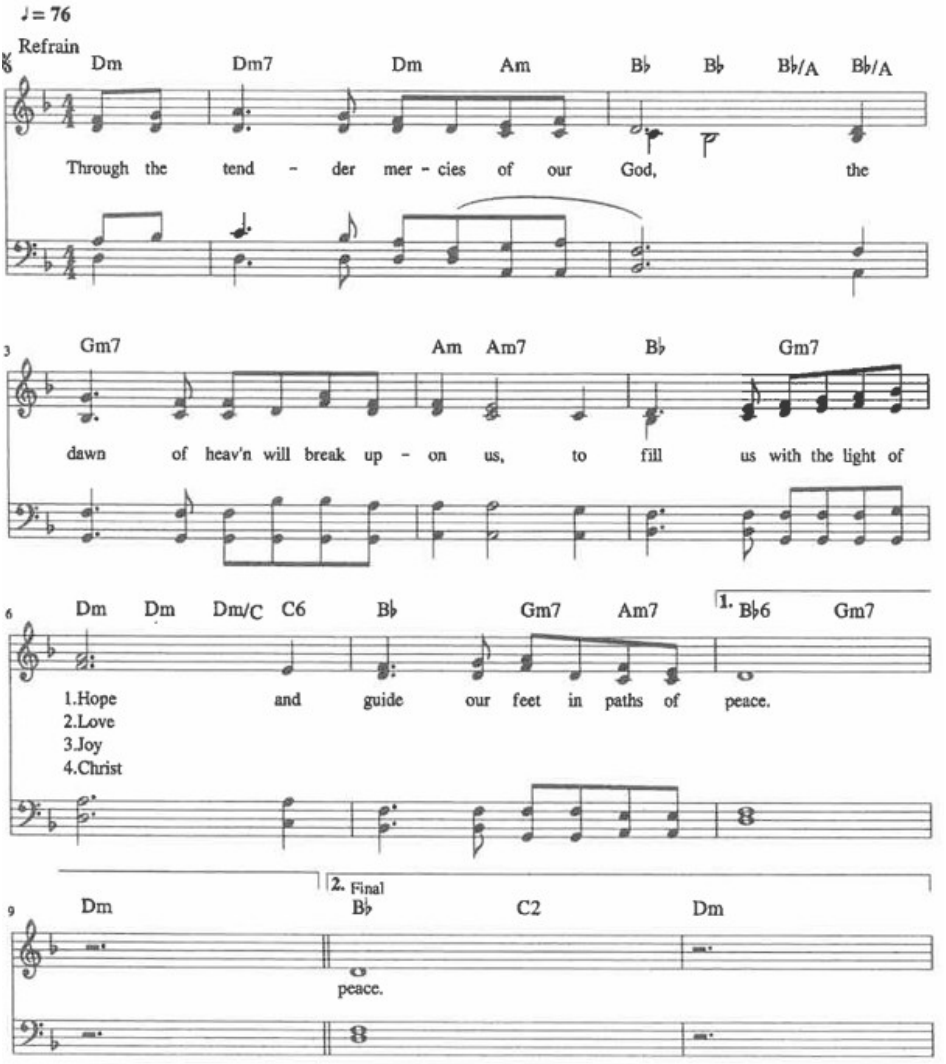
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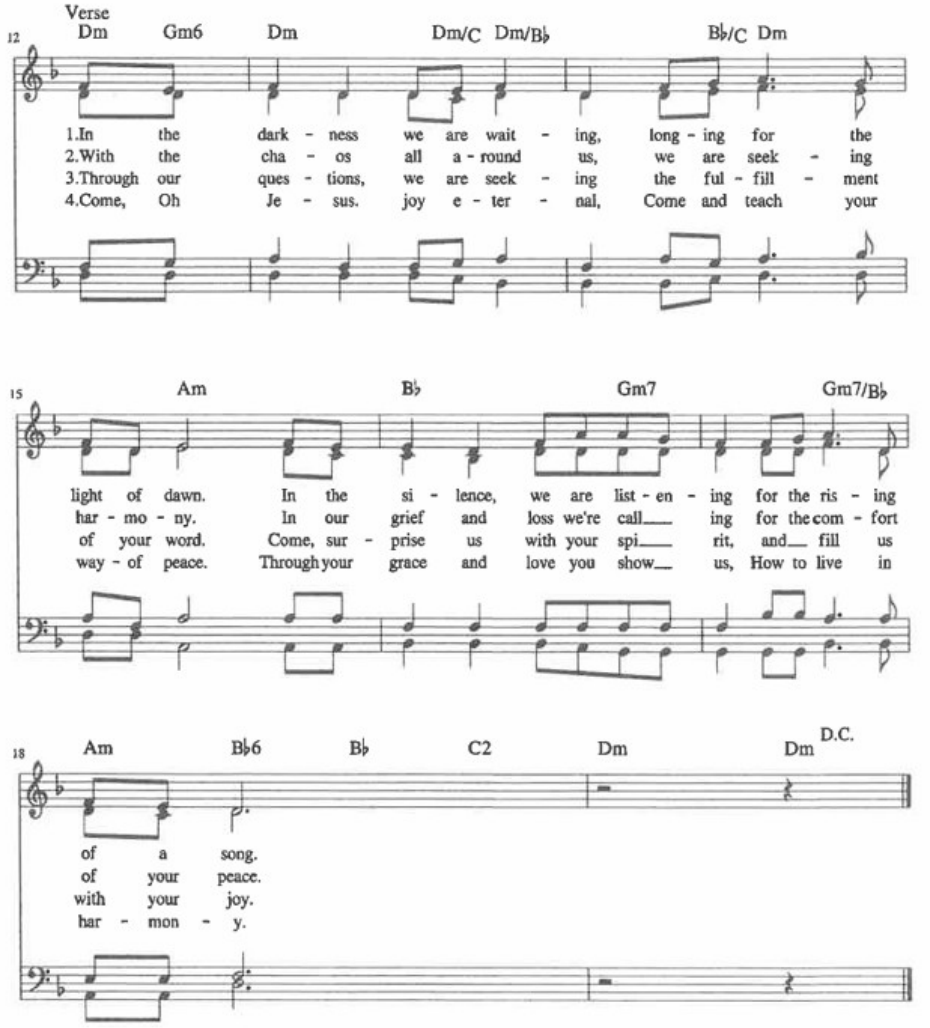
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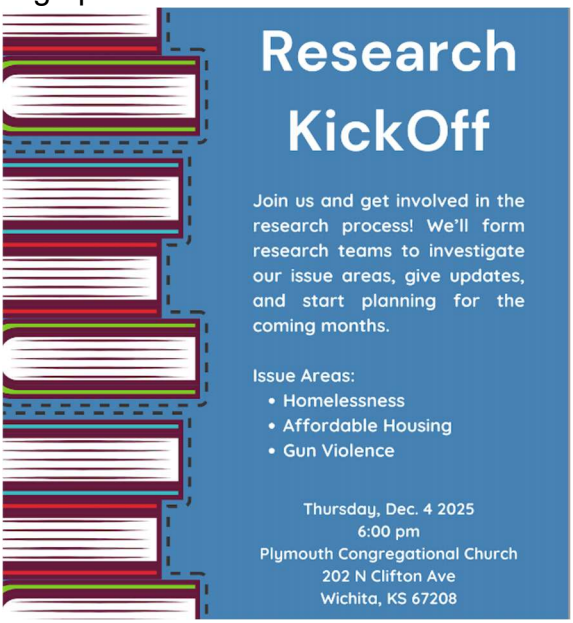

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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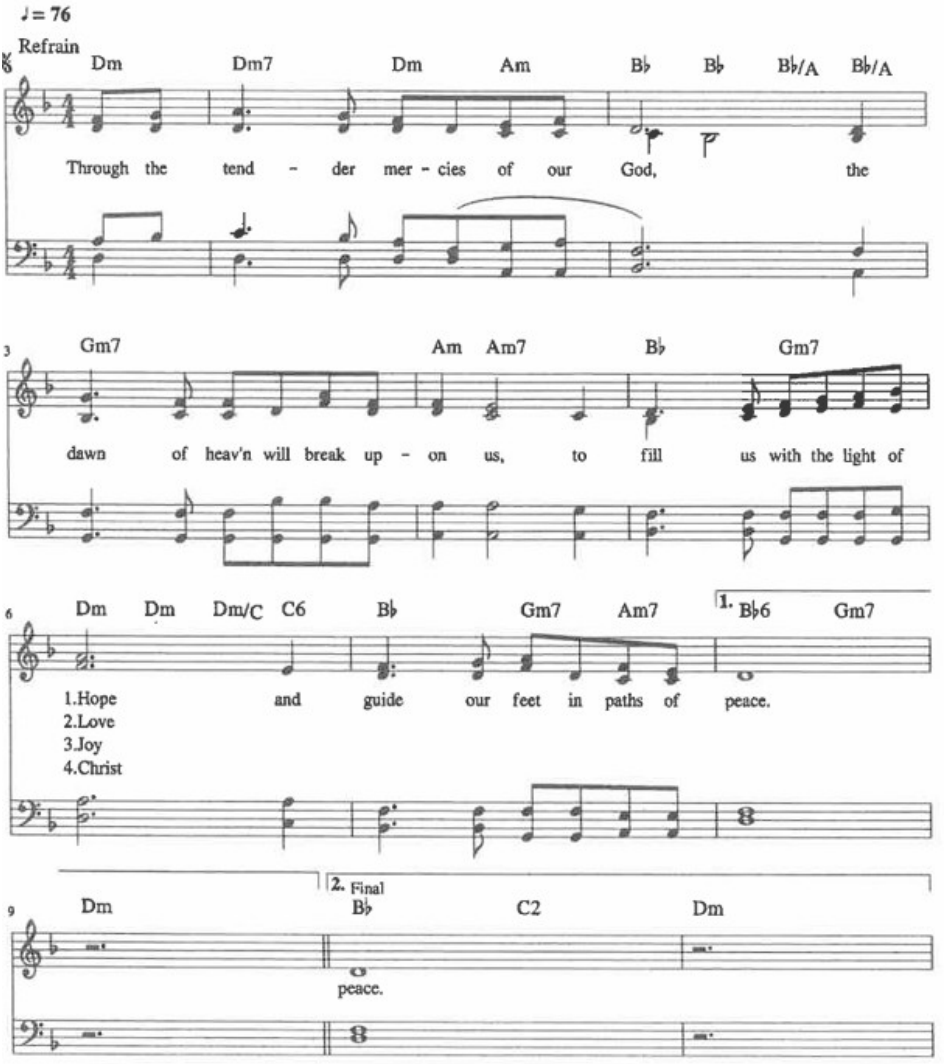
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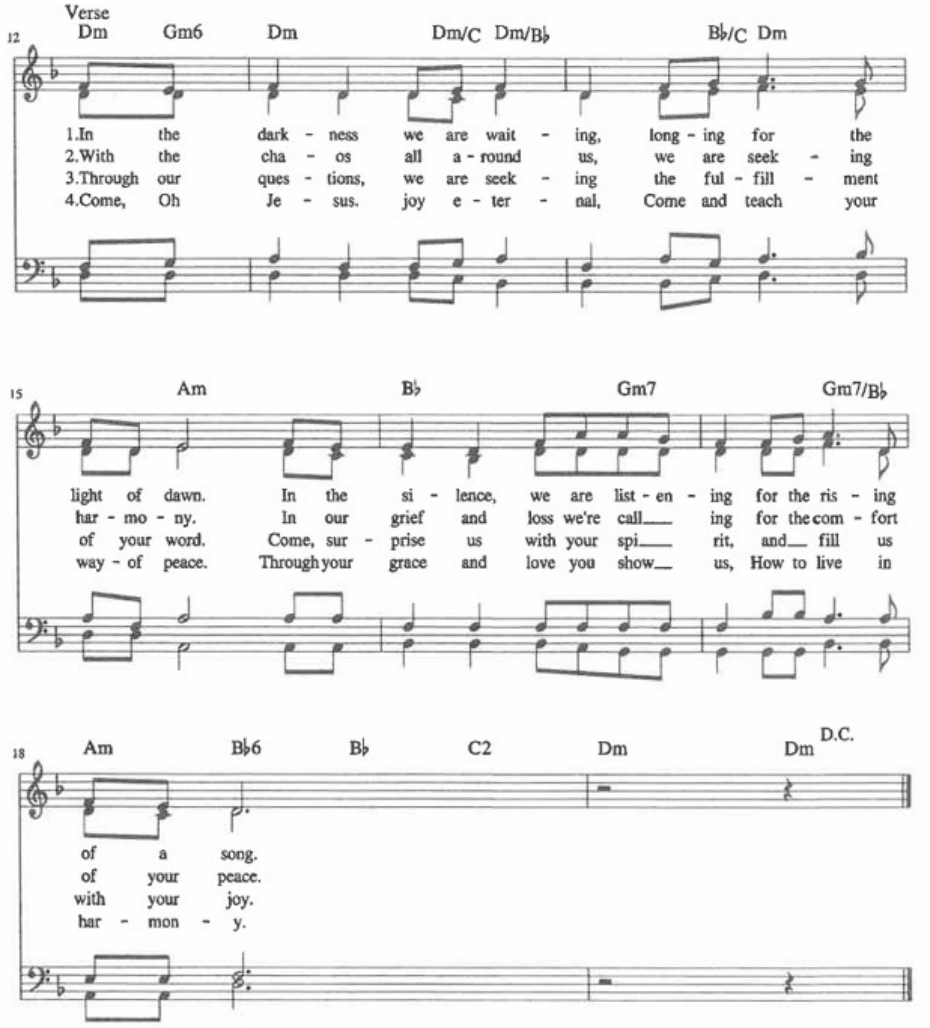
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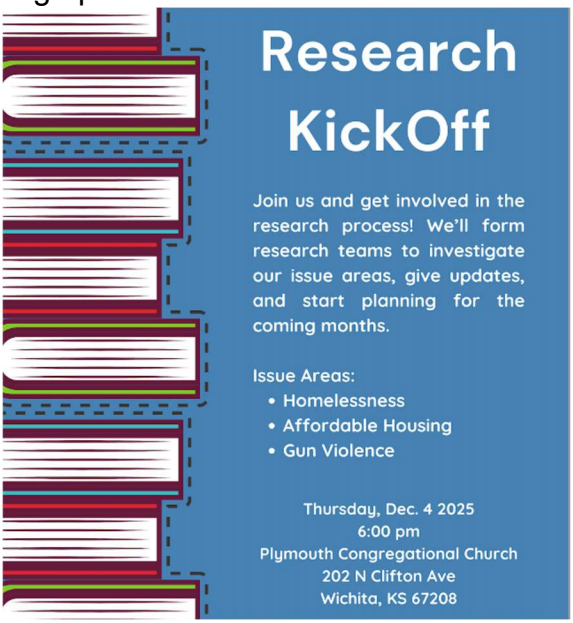

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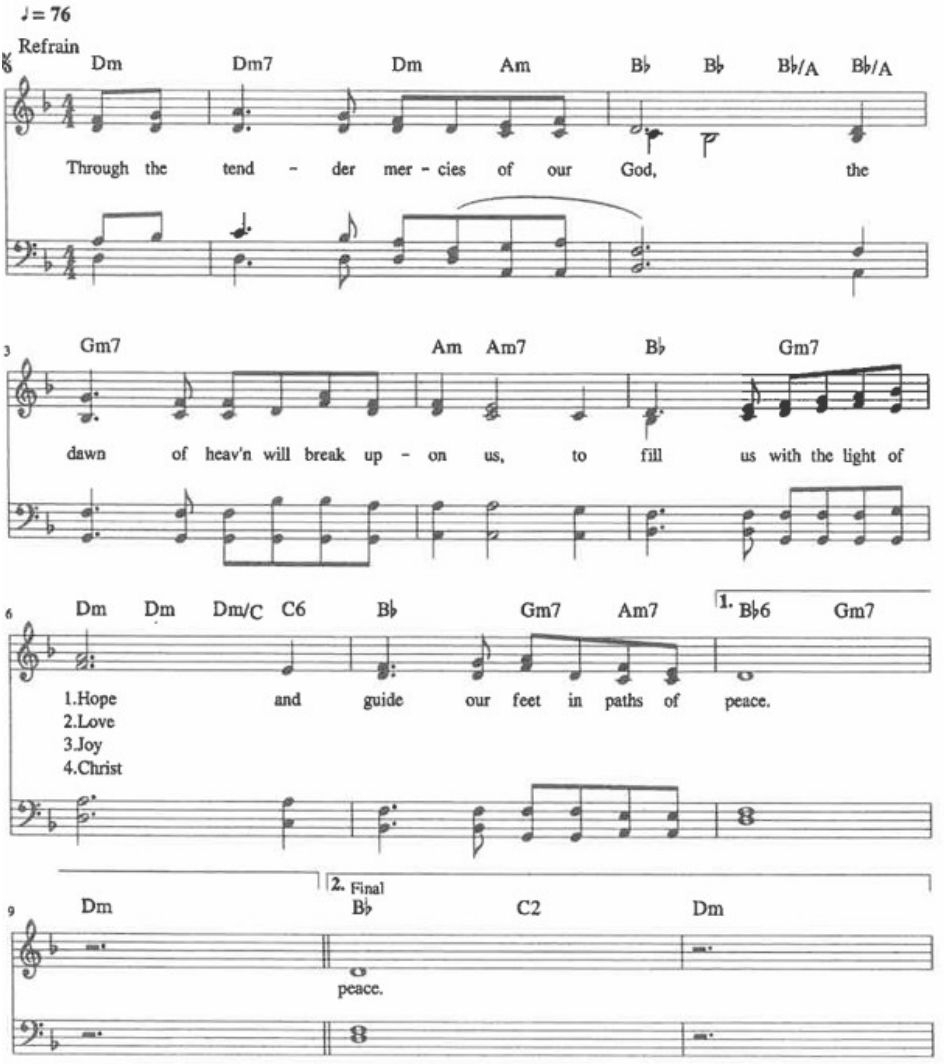
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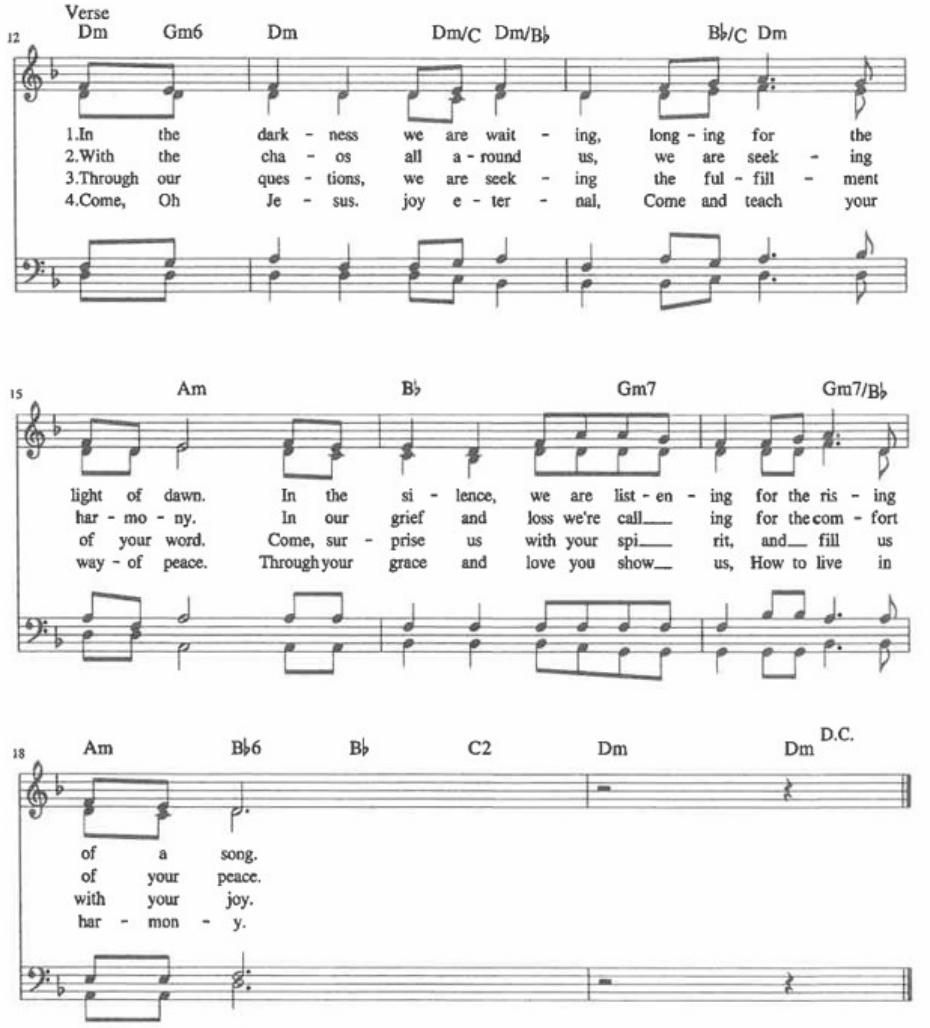
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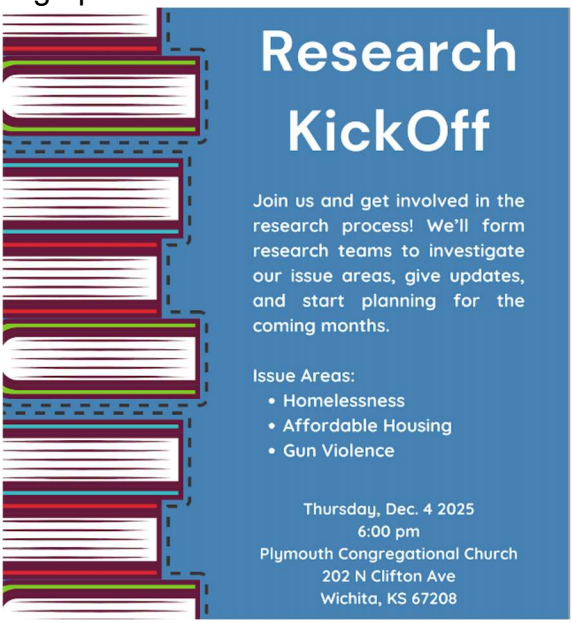

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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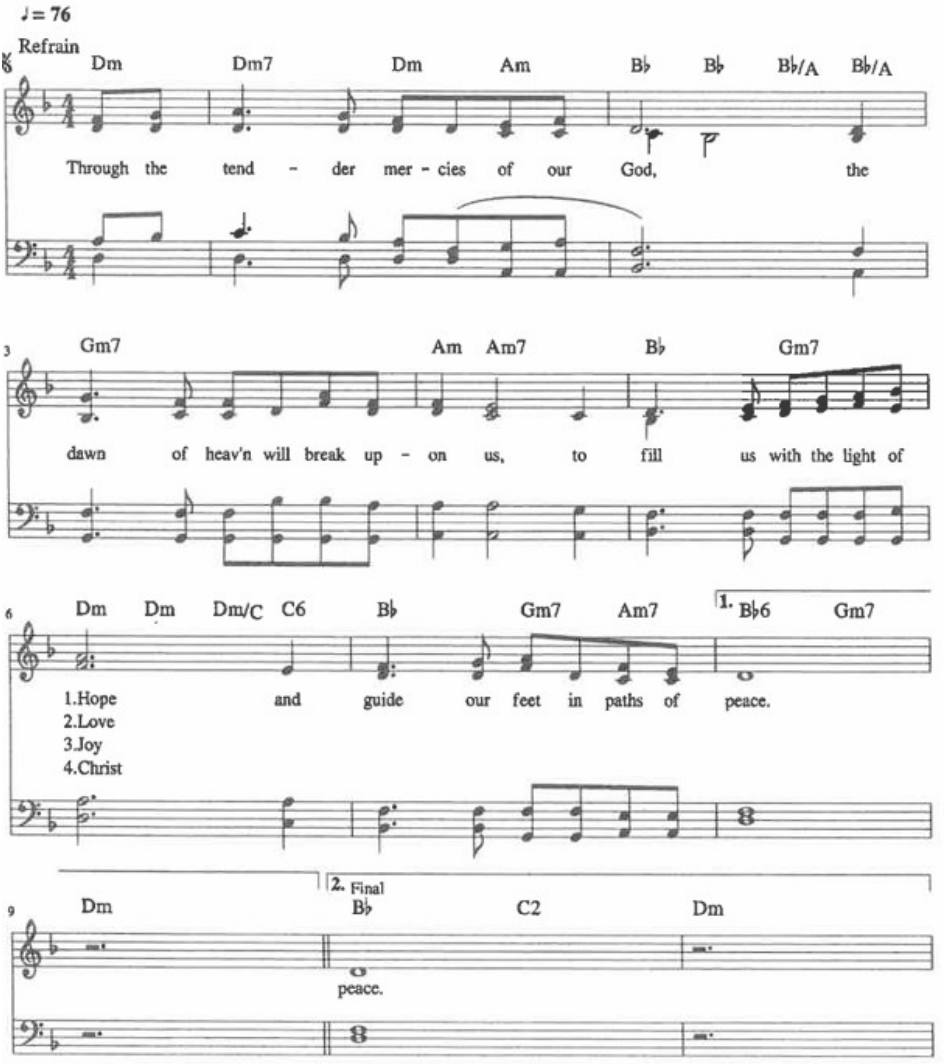
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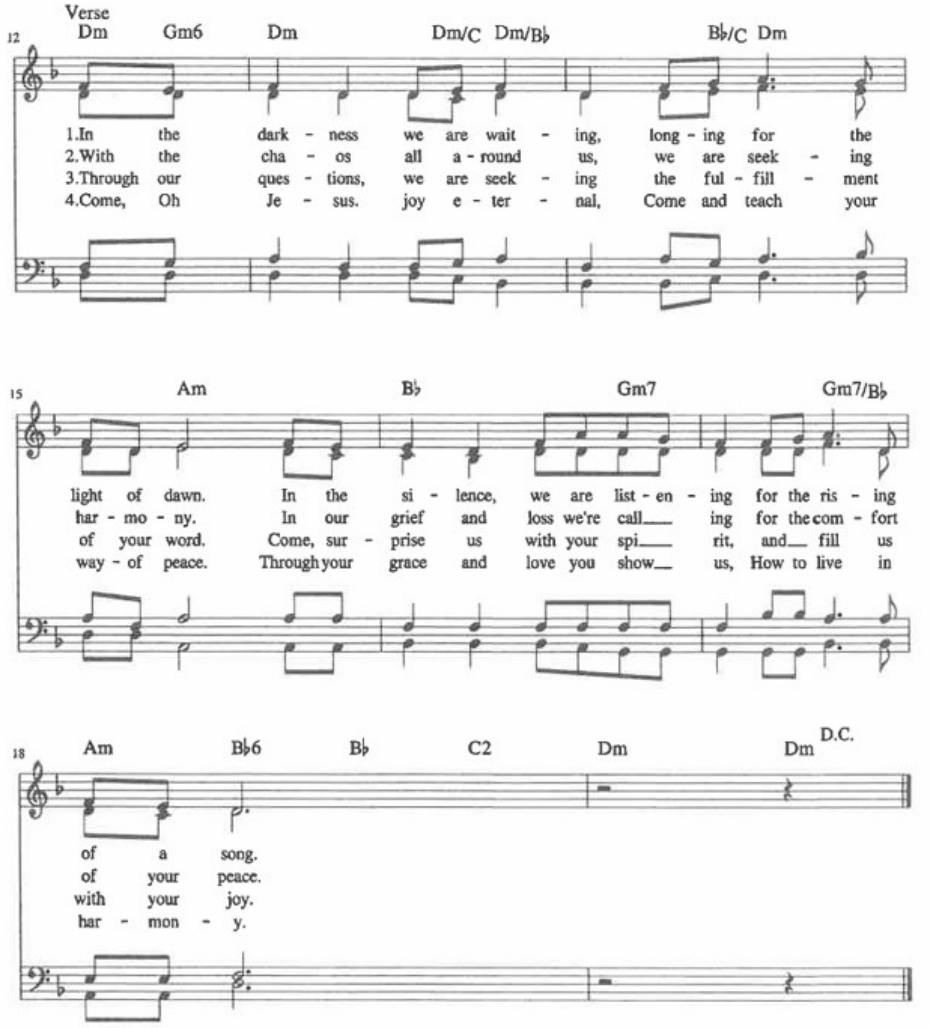
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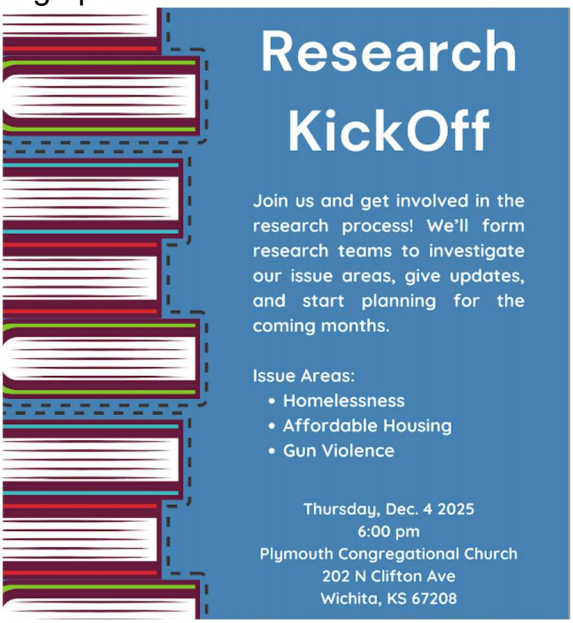

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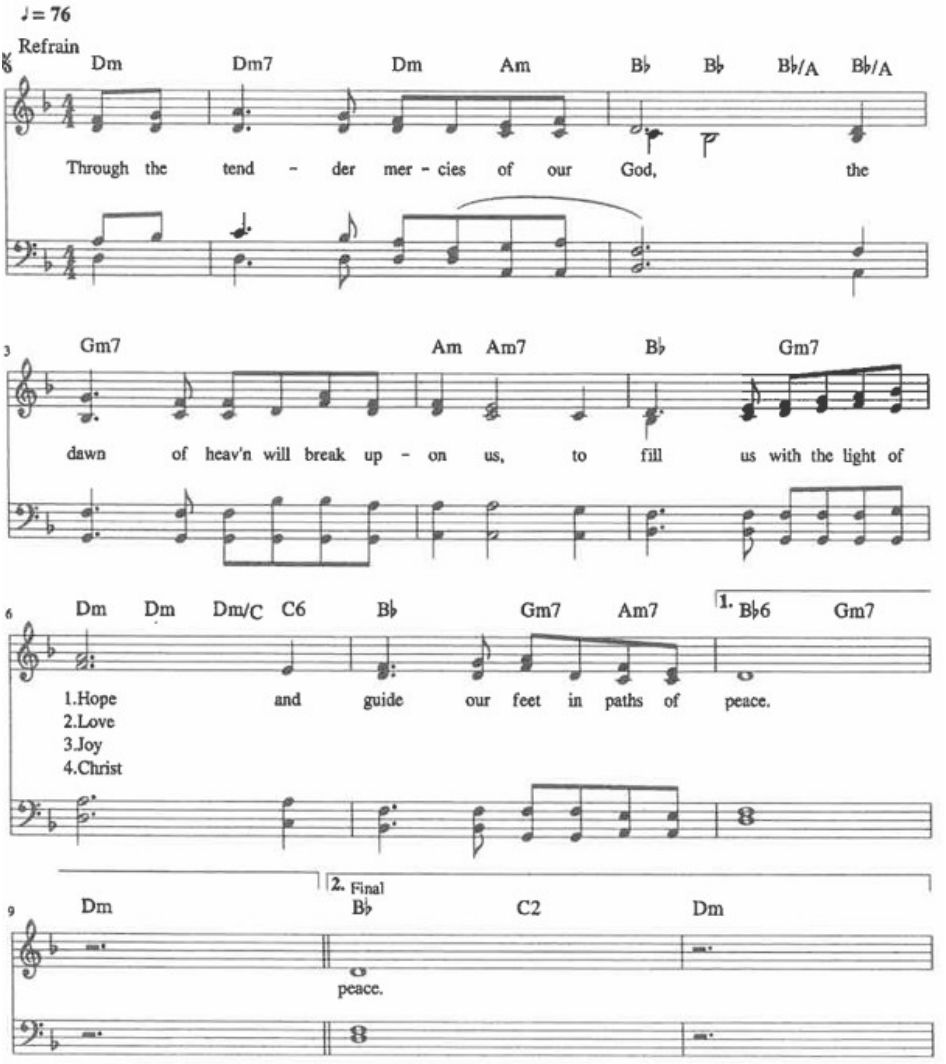
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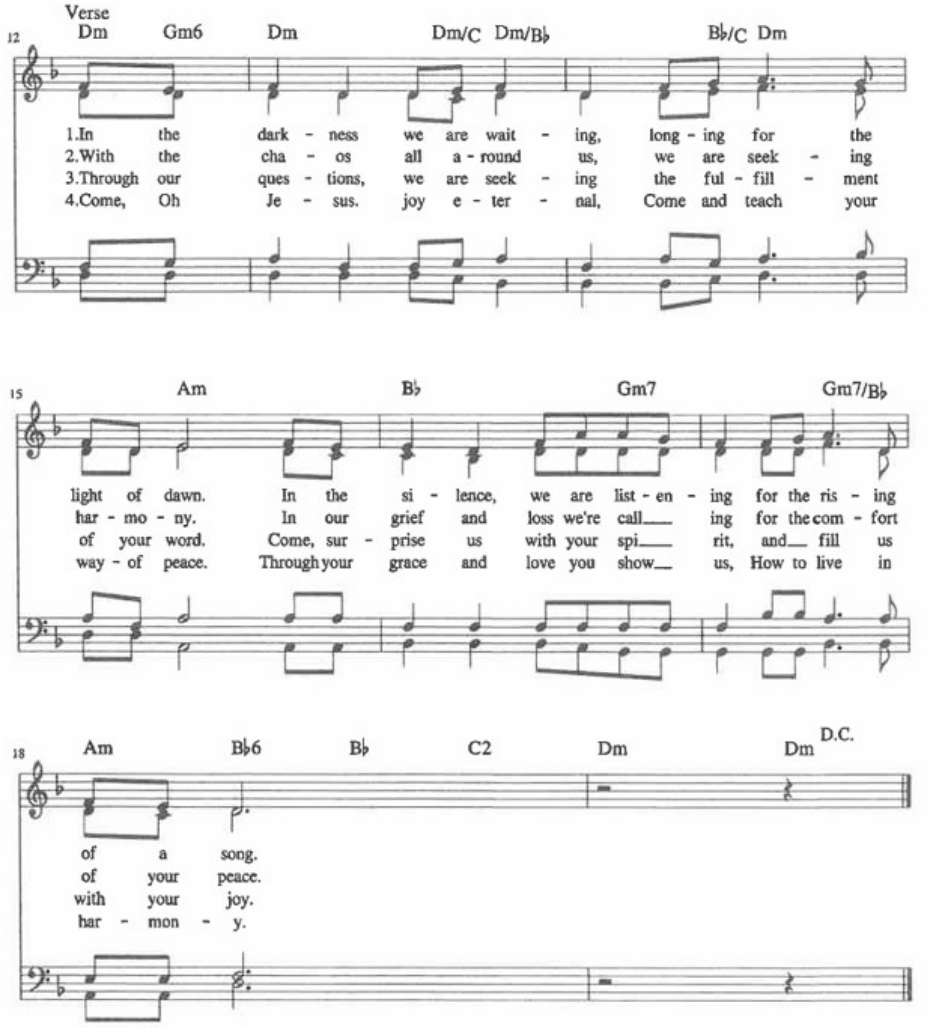
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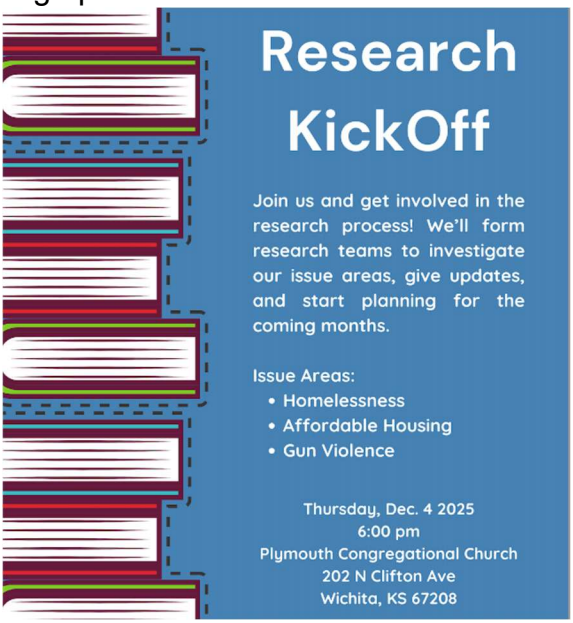

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
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O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
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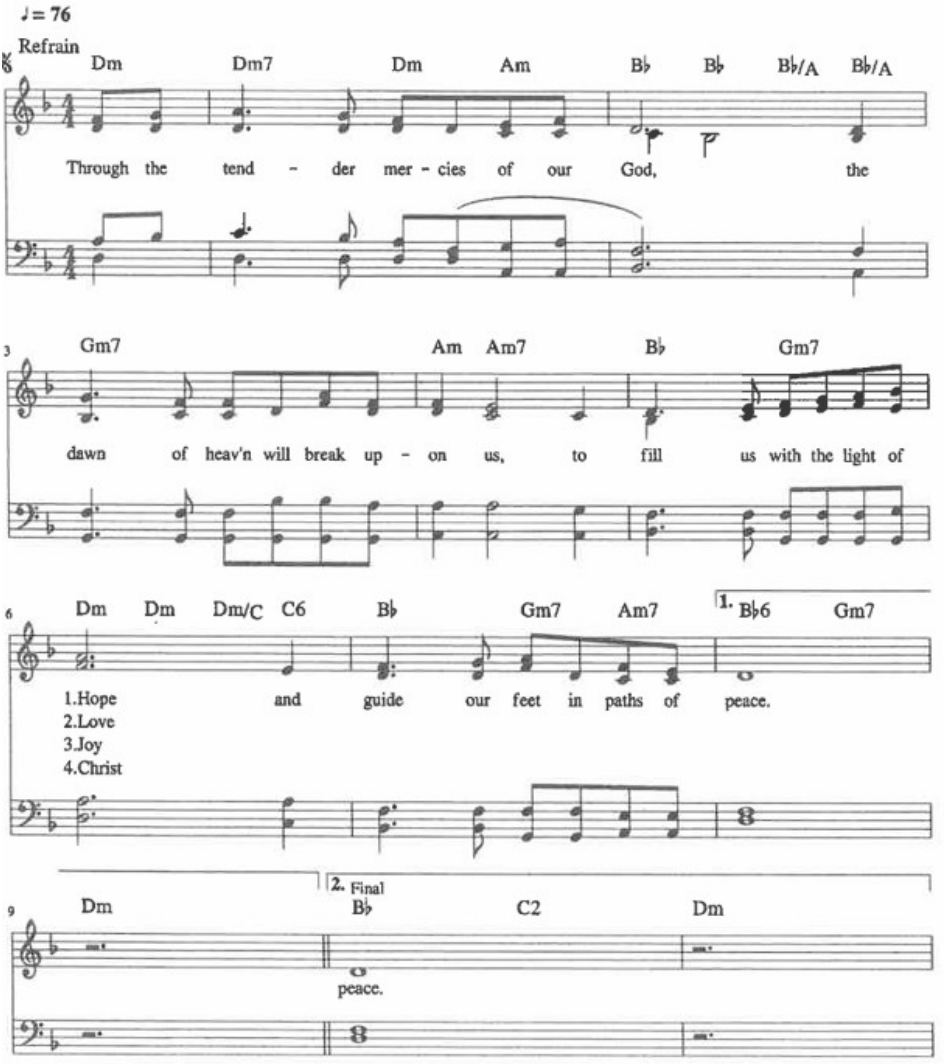
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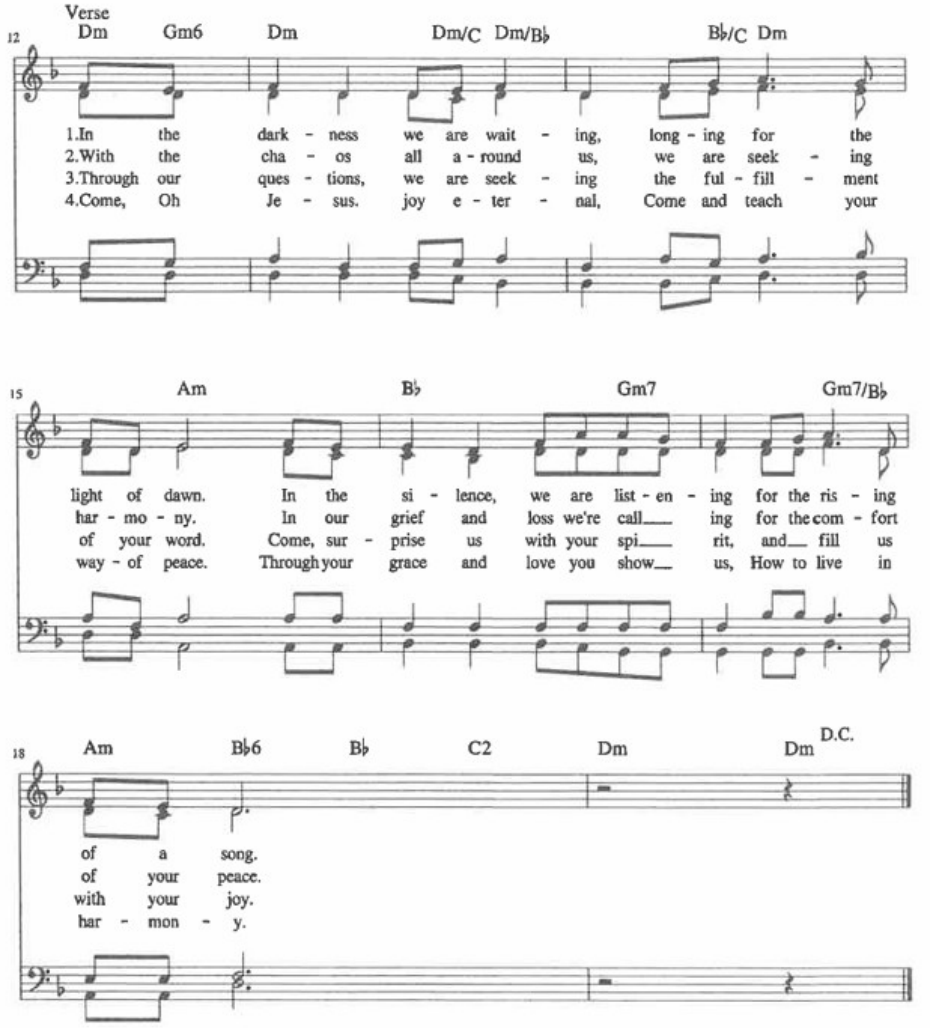
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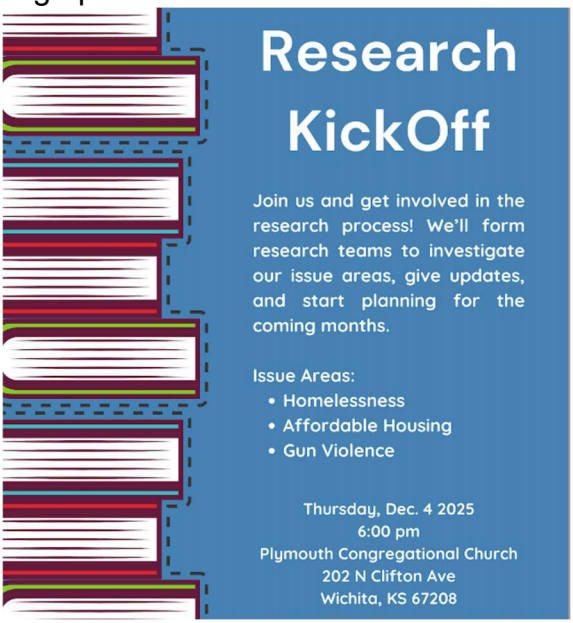

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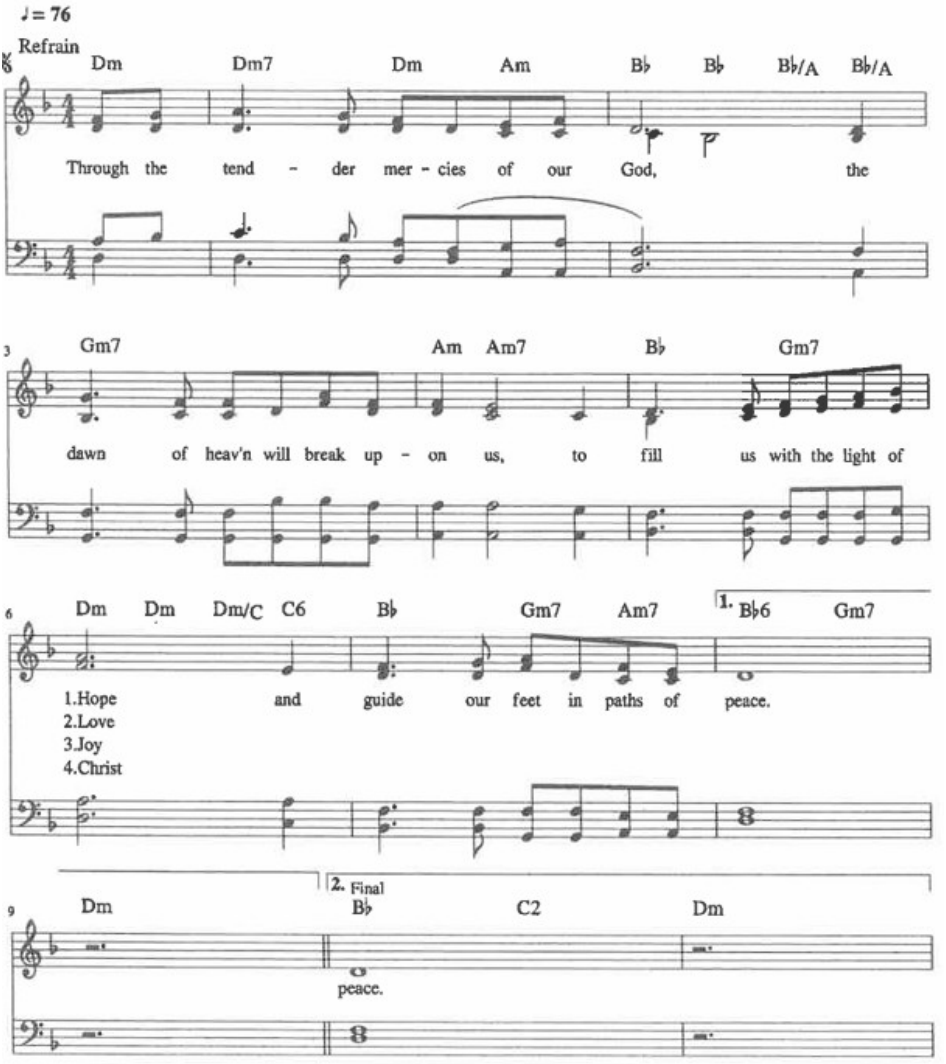
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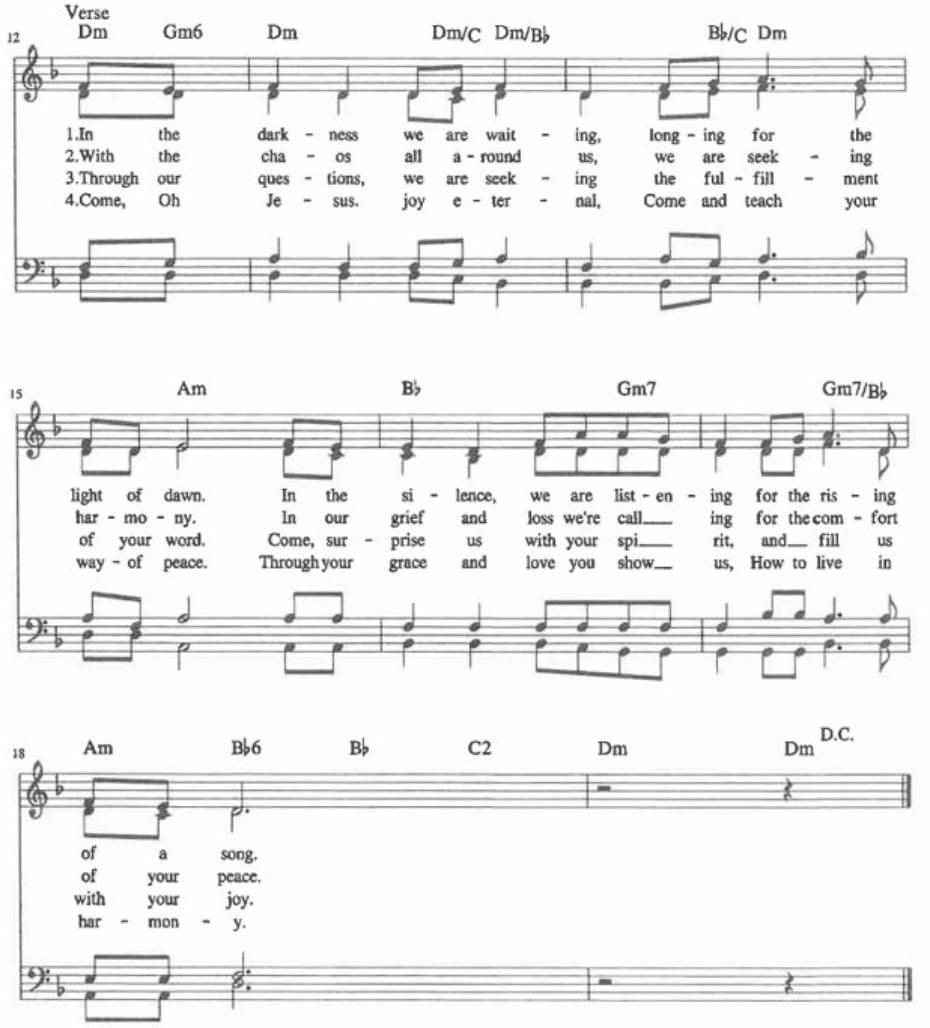
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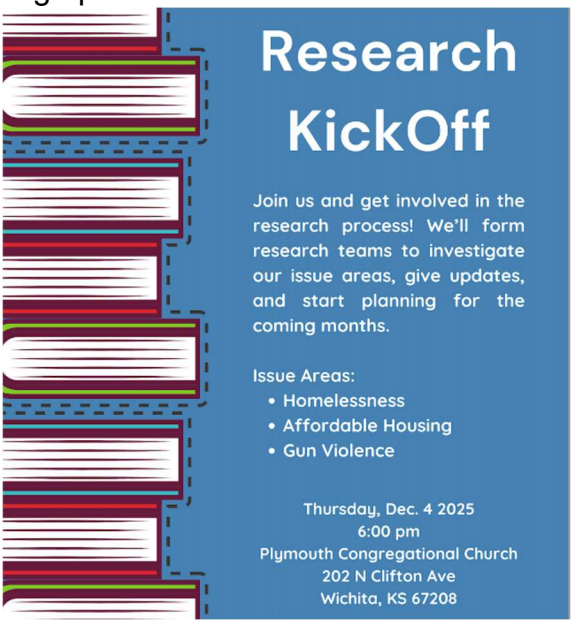

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Greeting our Guests (Please pass the welcome registers)

Seeing and Seeking God
Work of the Church
Sharing our Praises and Concerns

Sung prayer of God's People
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus #218

Sending

**Light Dawns on a Weary World* #205

*Benediction

* * * * *

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
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"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
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O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
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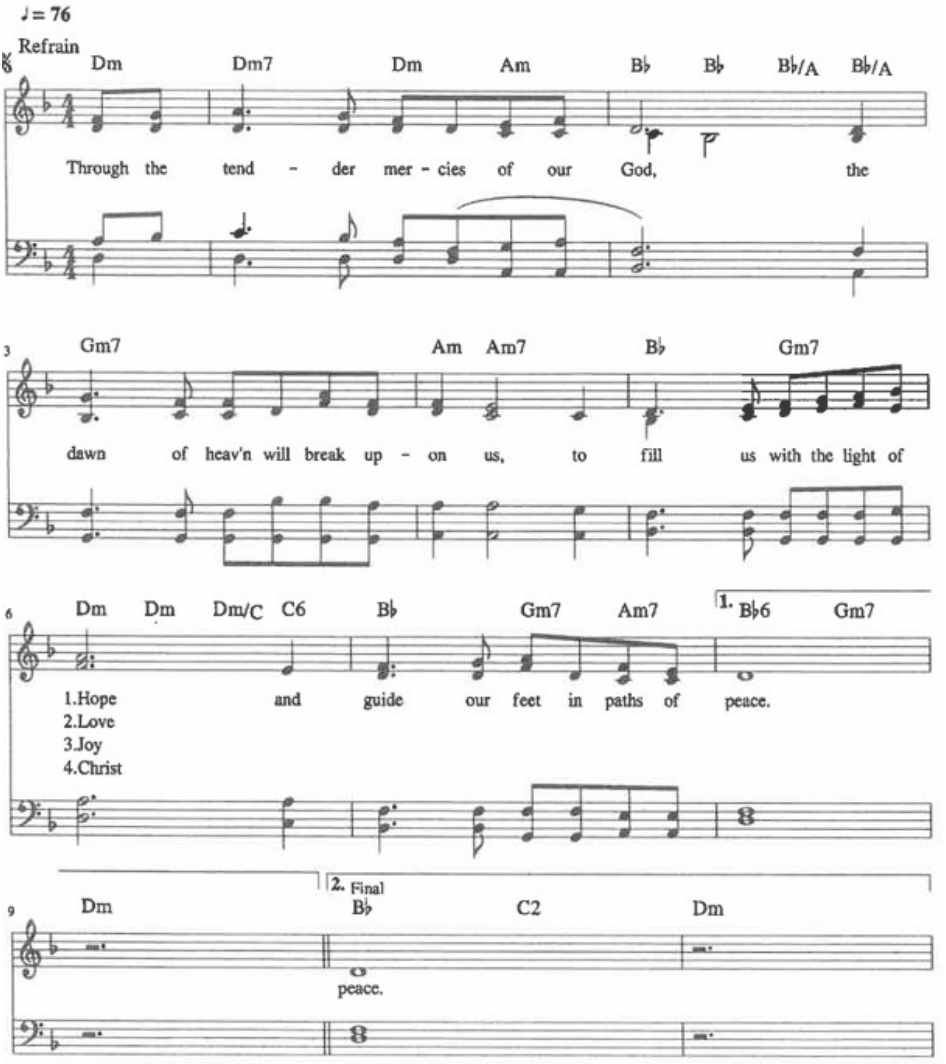
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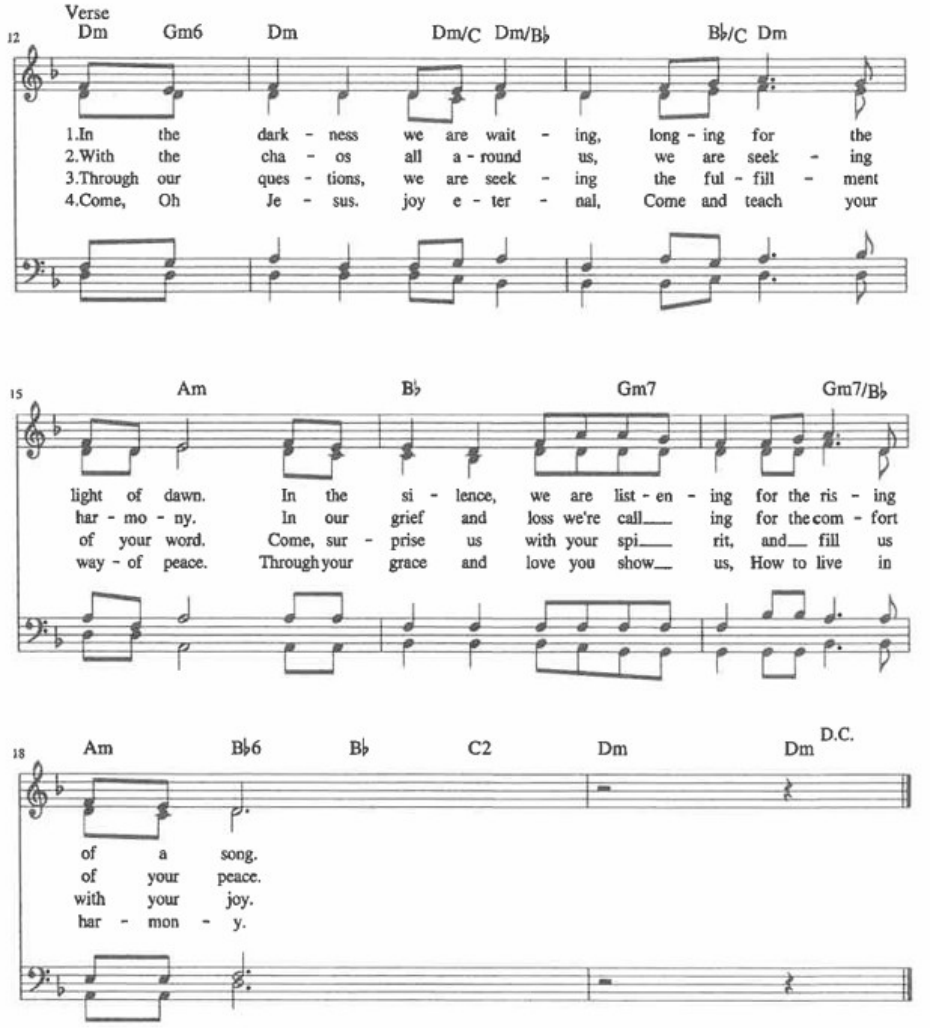
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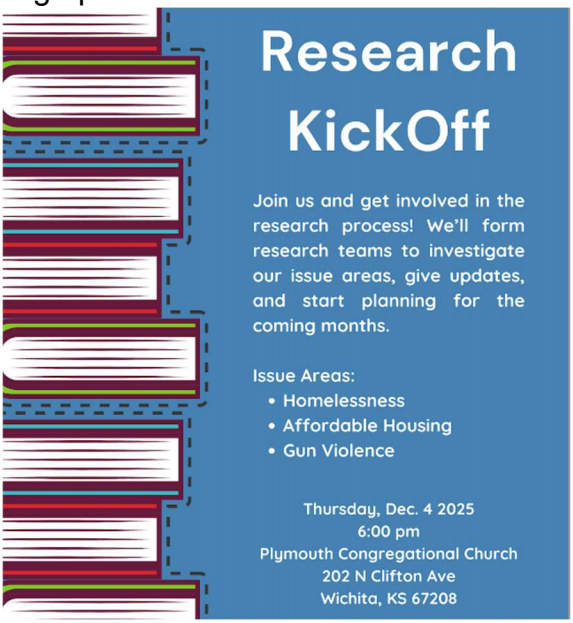

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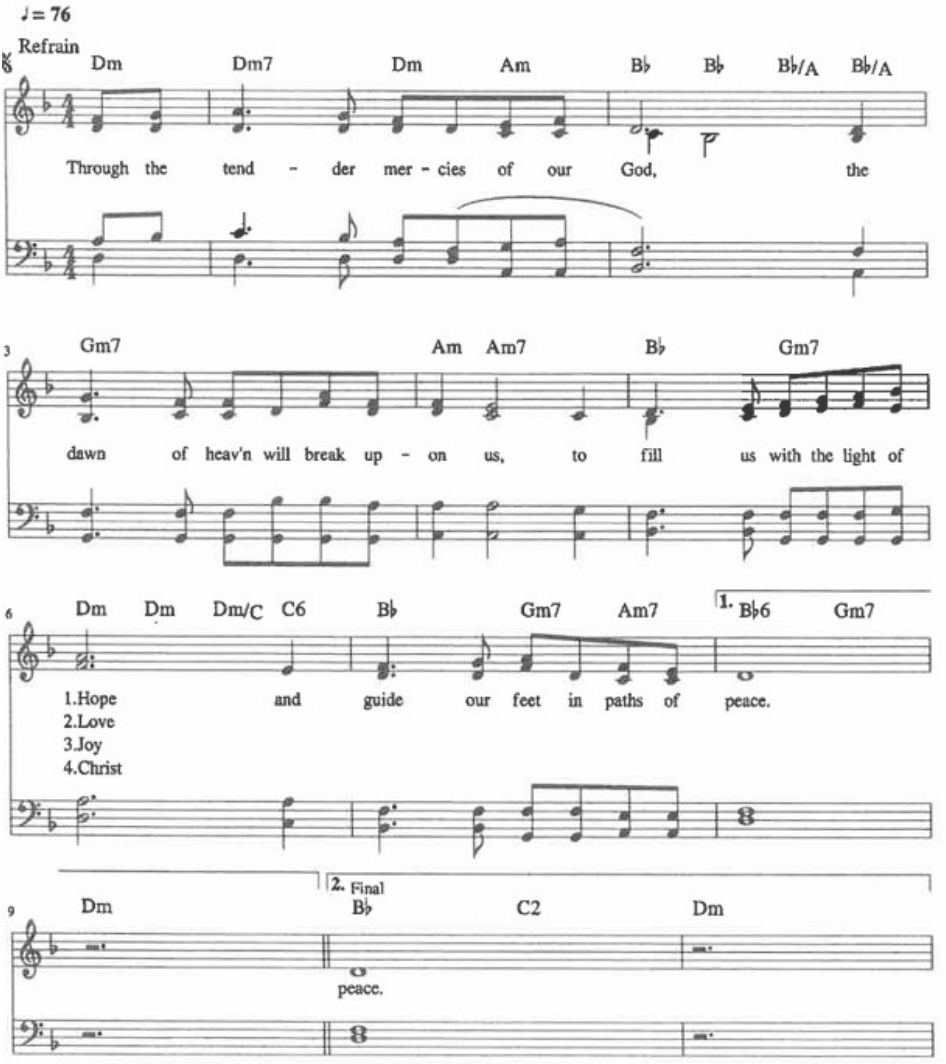
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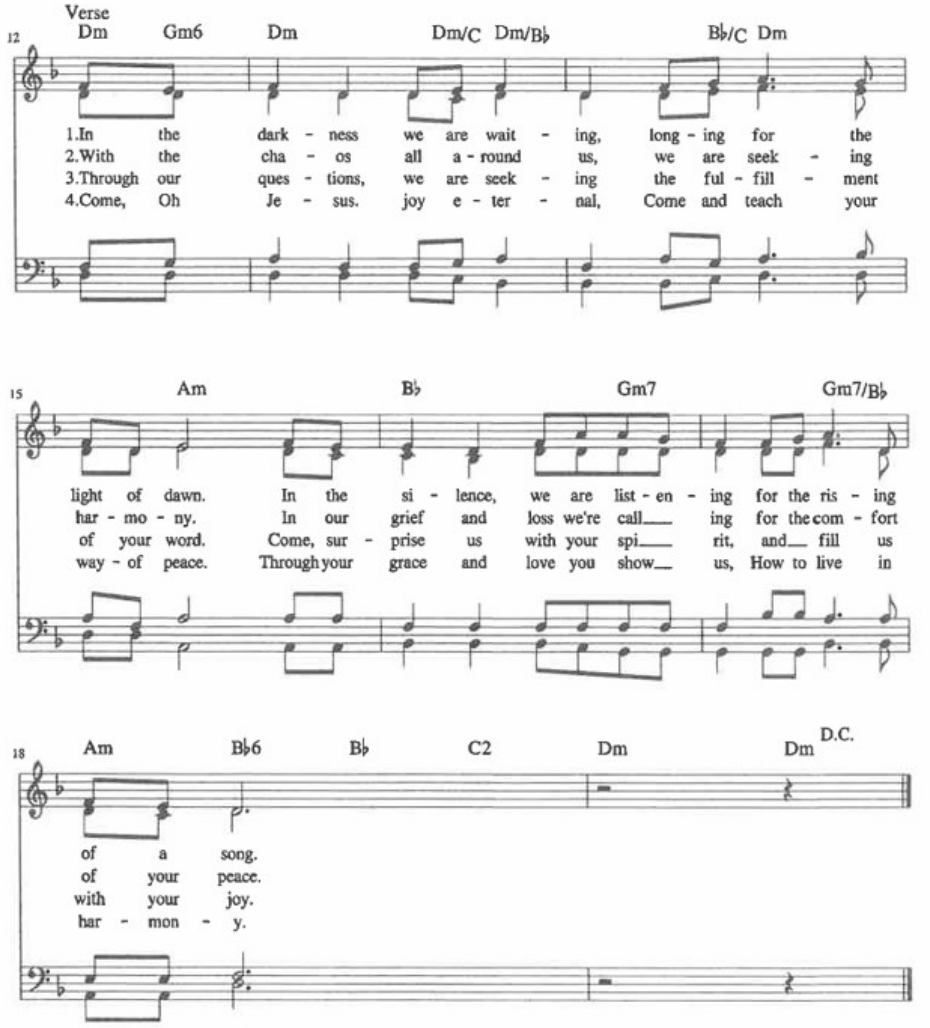
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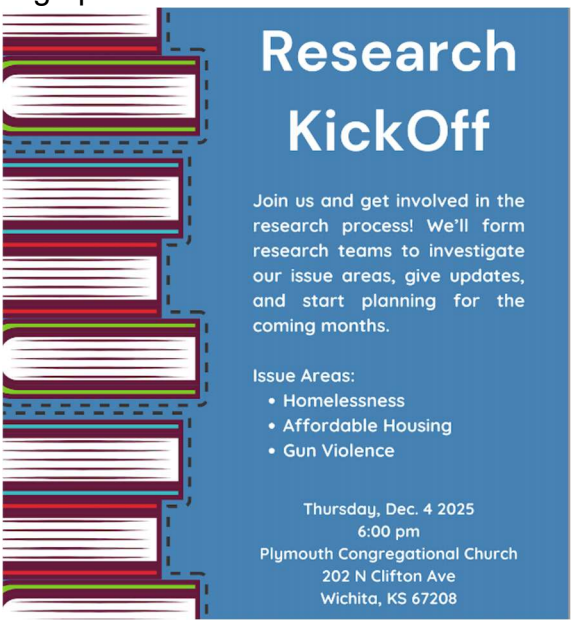

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walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
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We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
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"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
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cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
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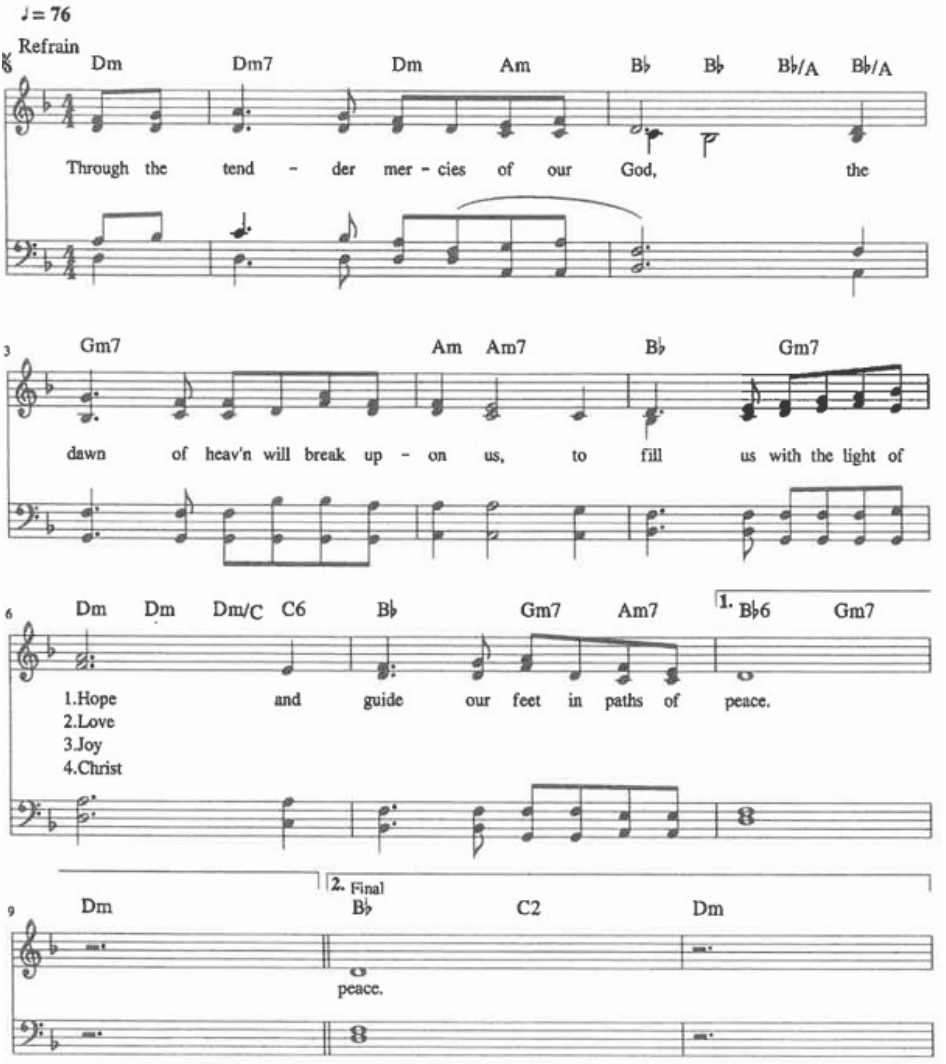
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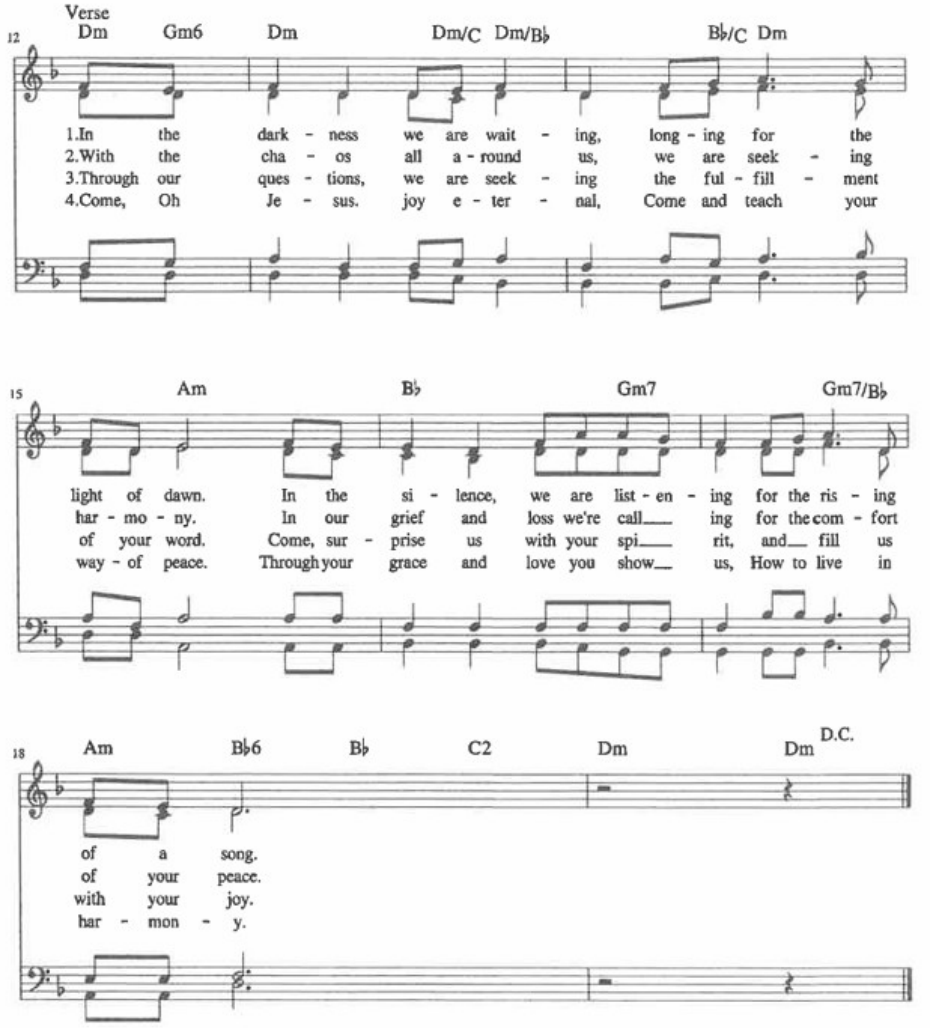
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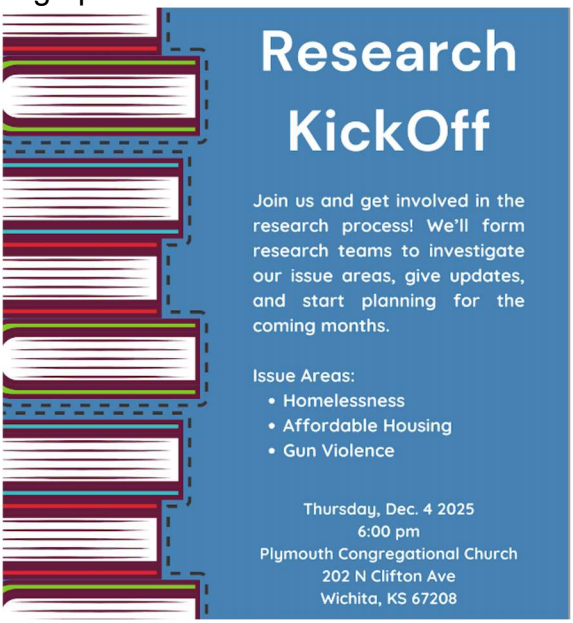

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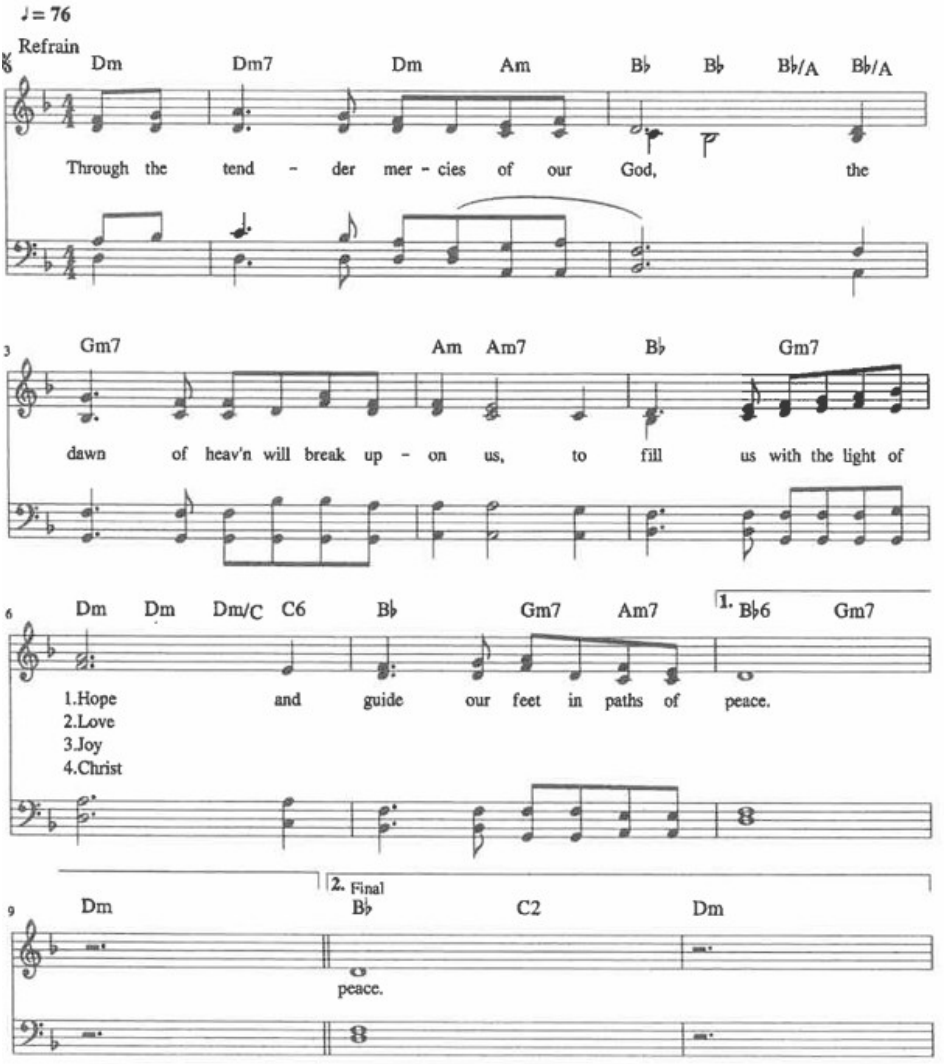
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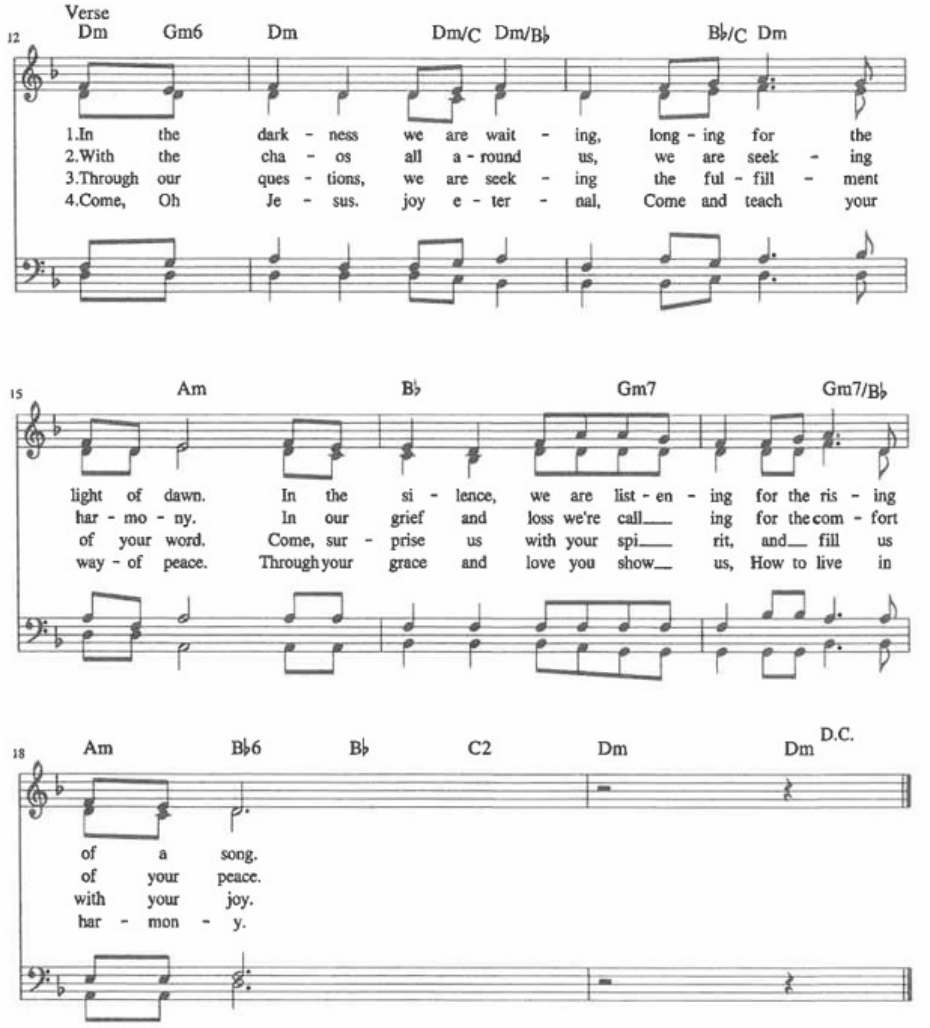
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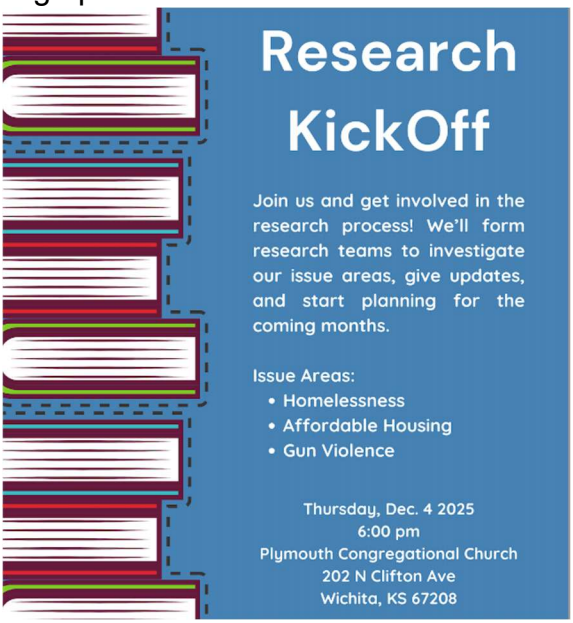

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We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
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Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
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"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
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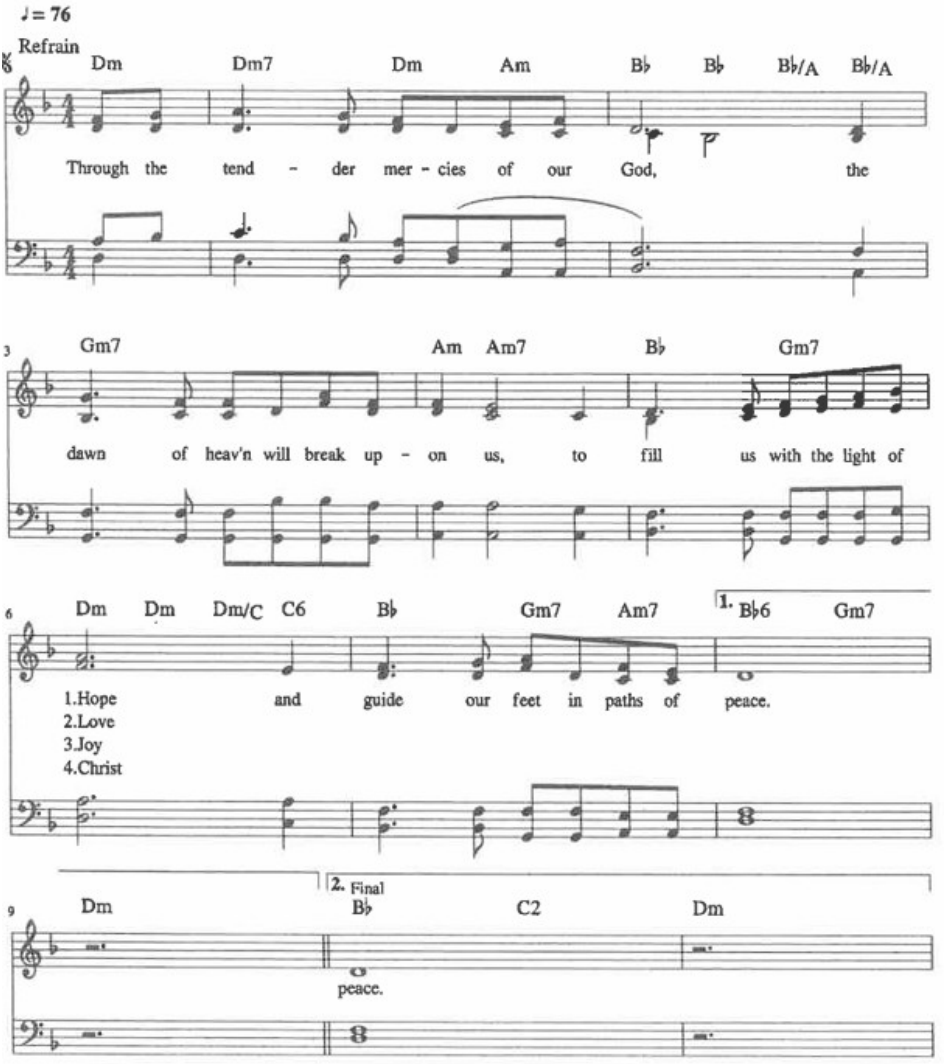
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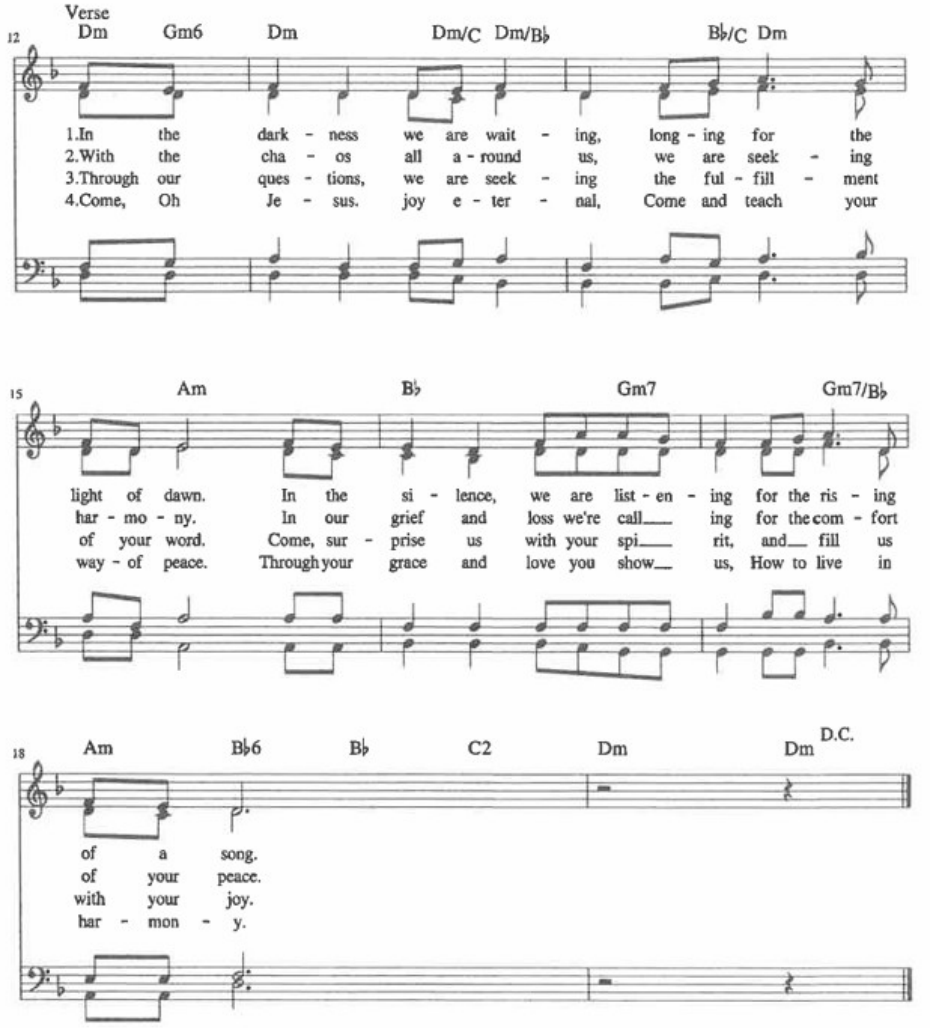
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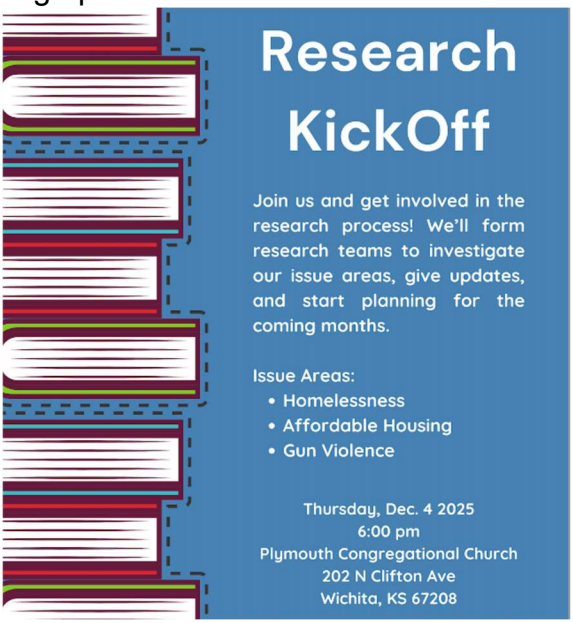

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
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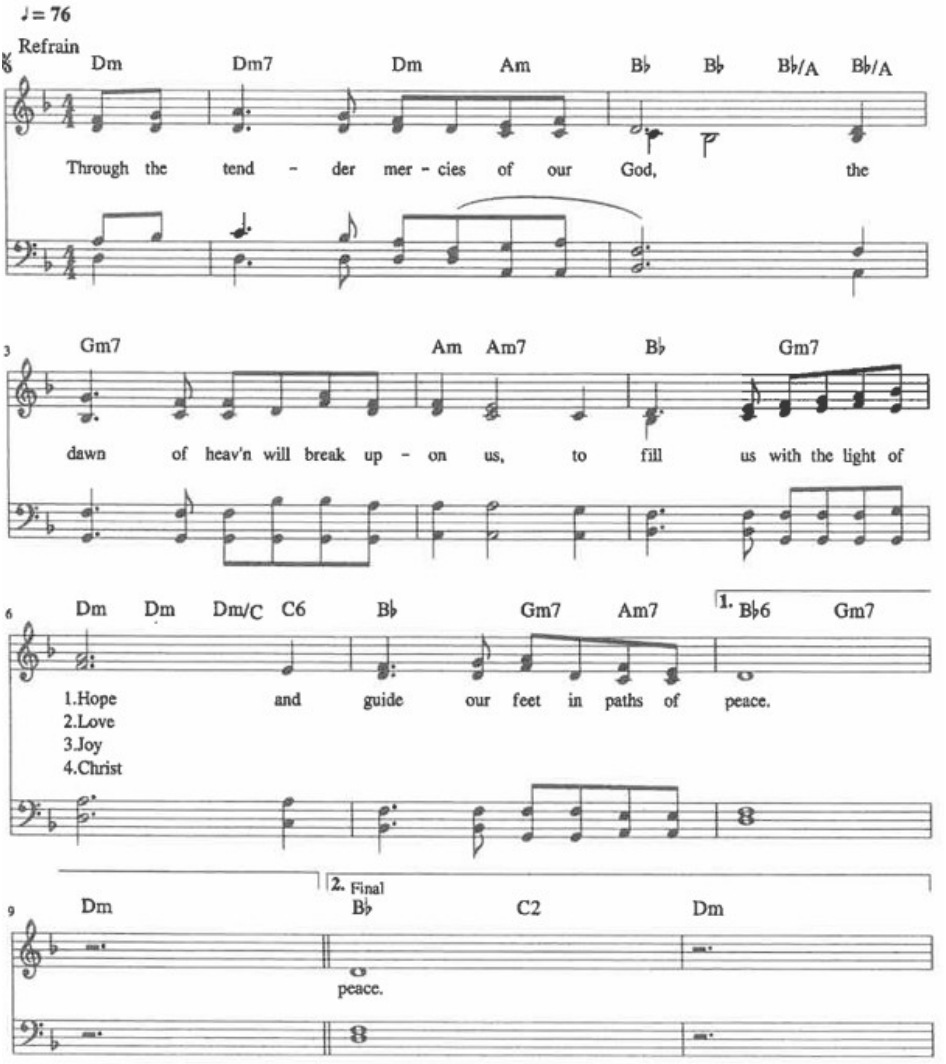
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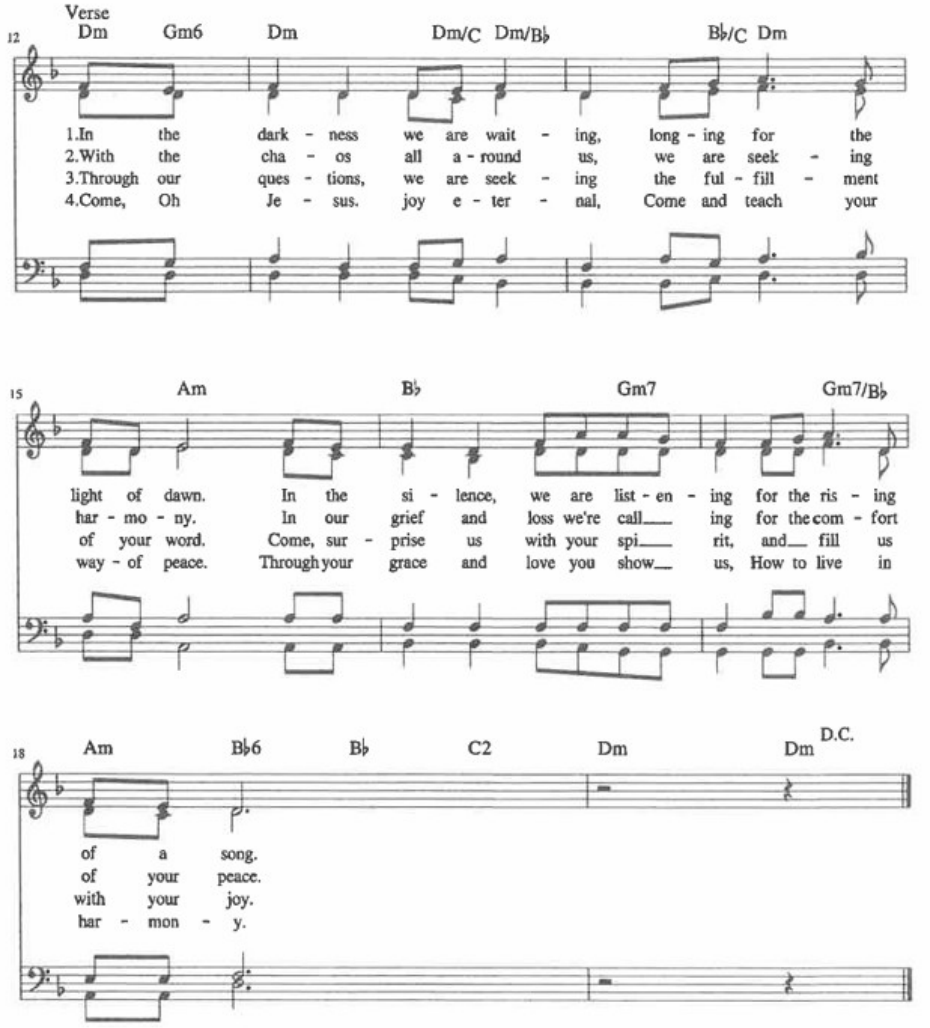
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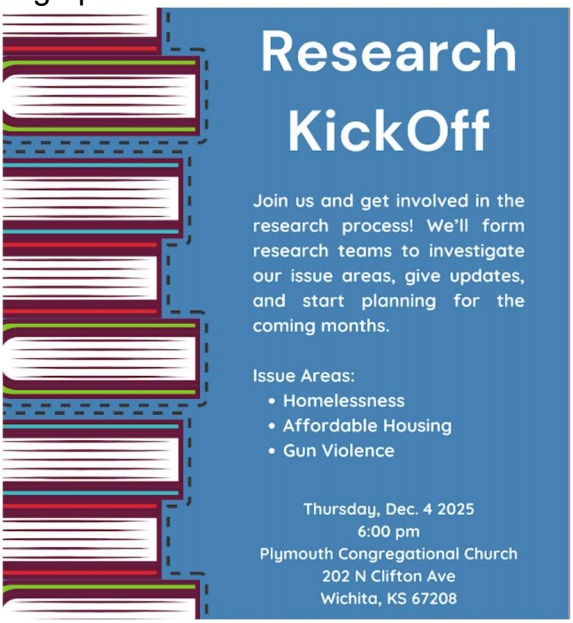

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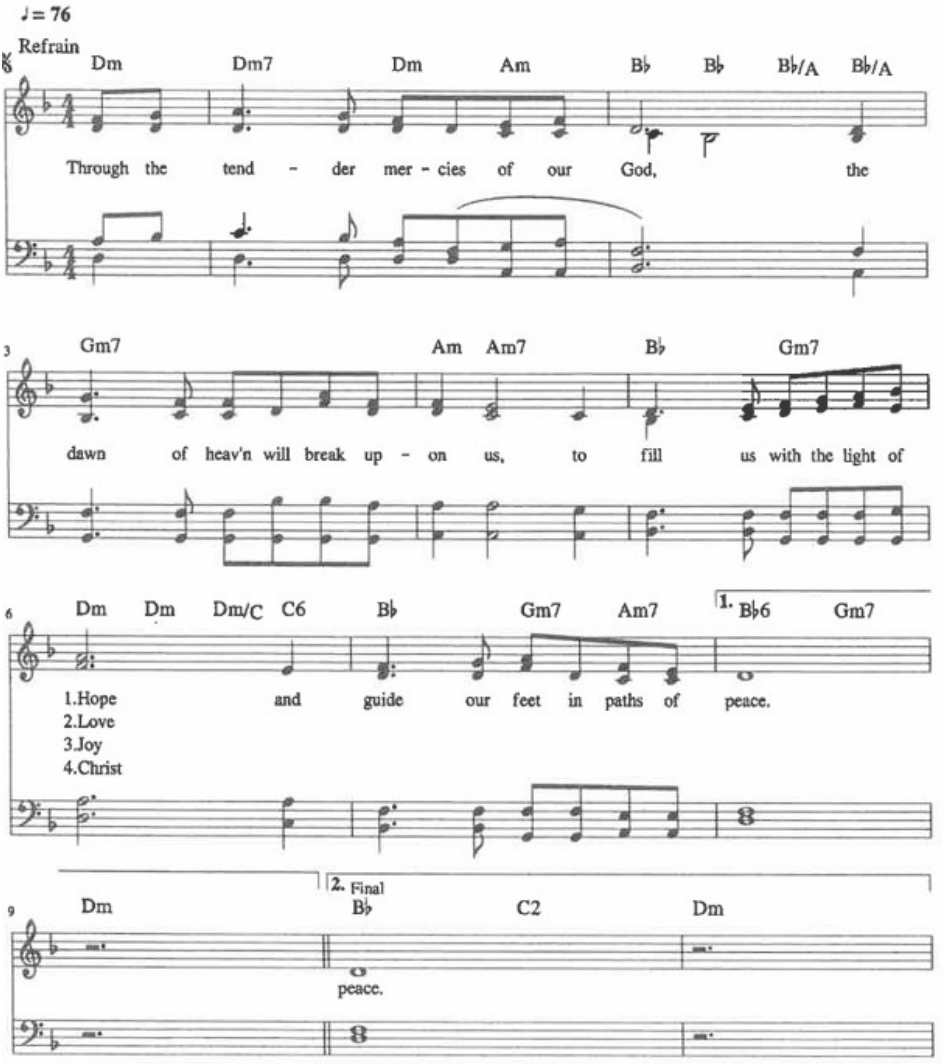
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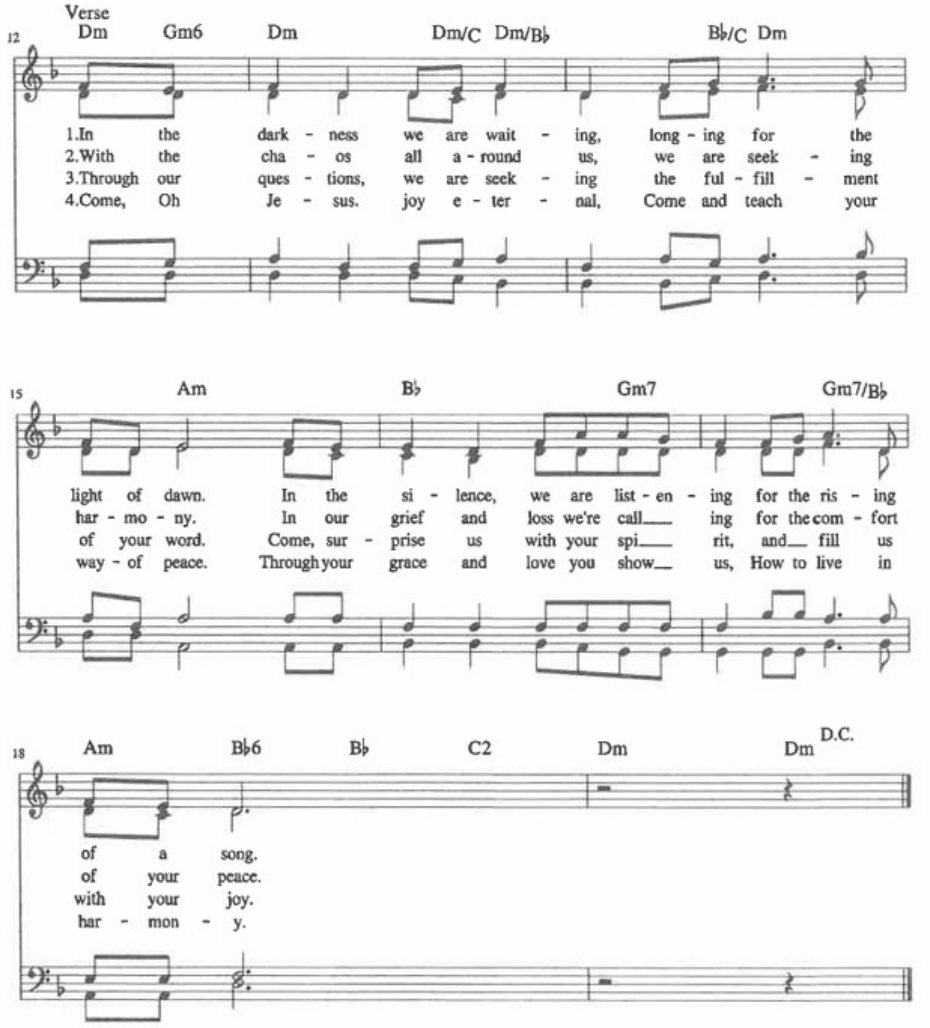
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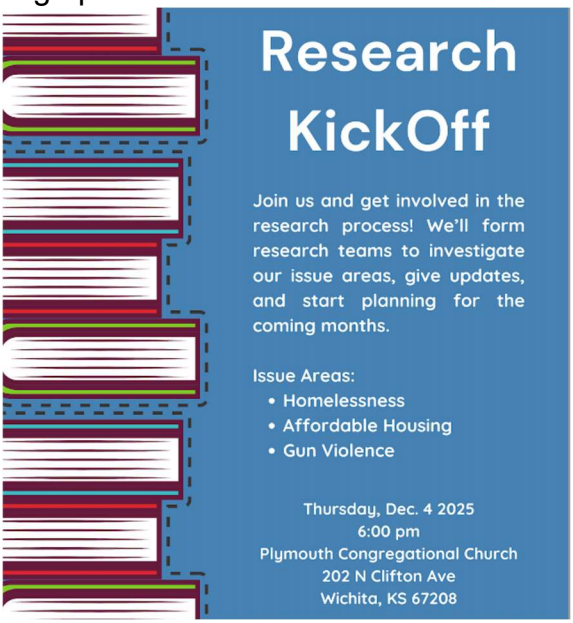

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
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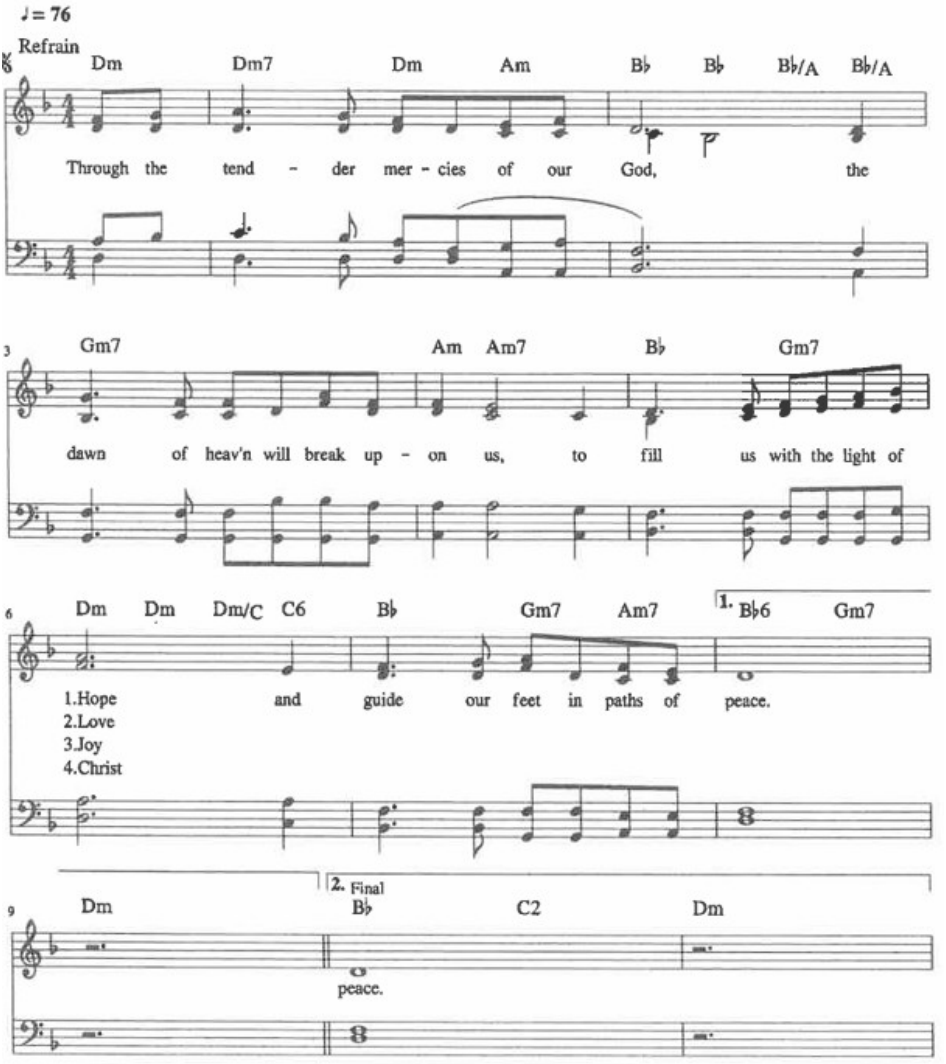
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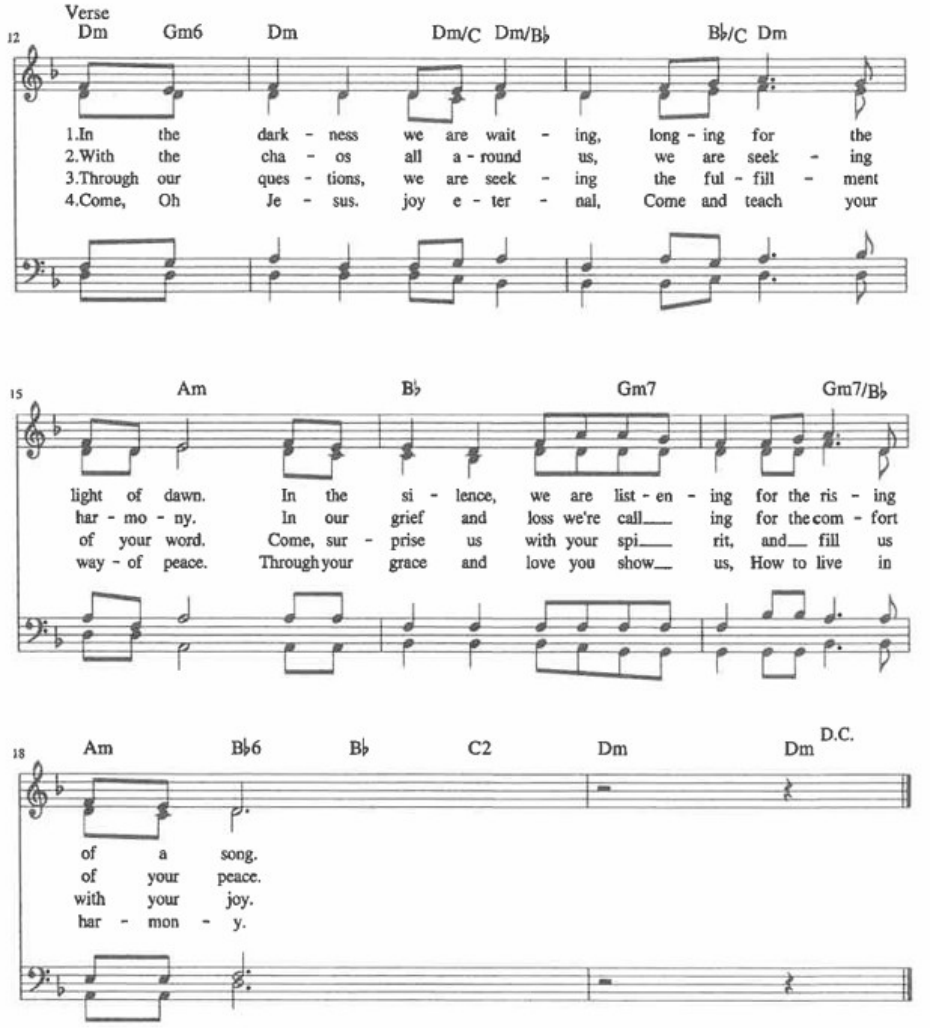
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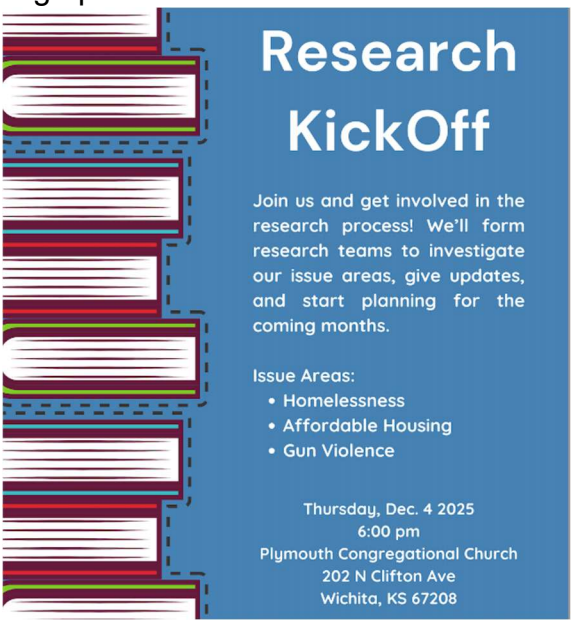

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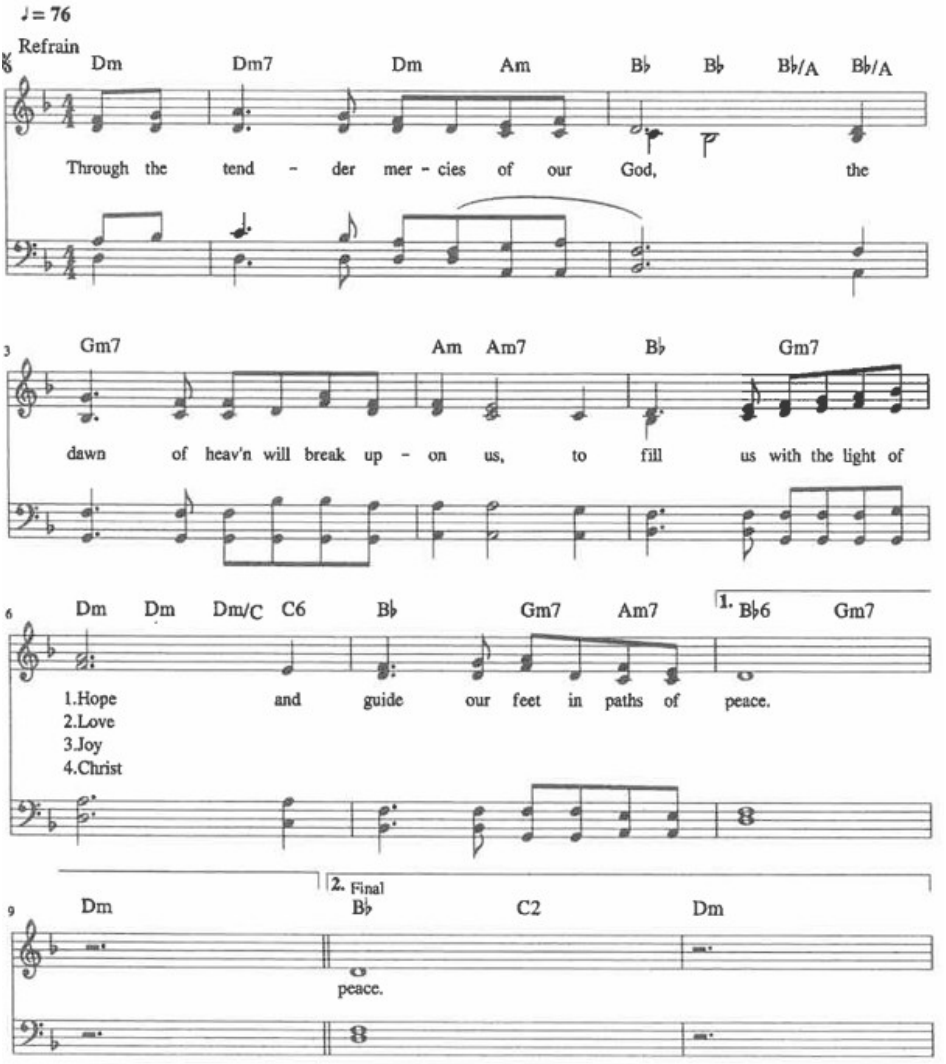
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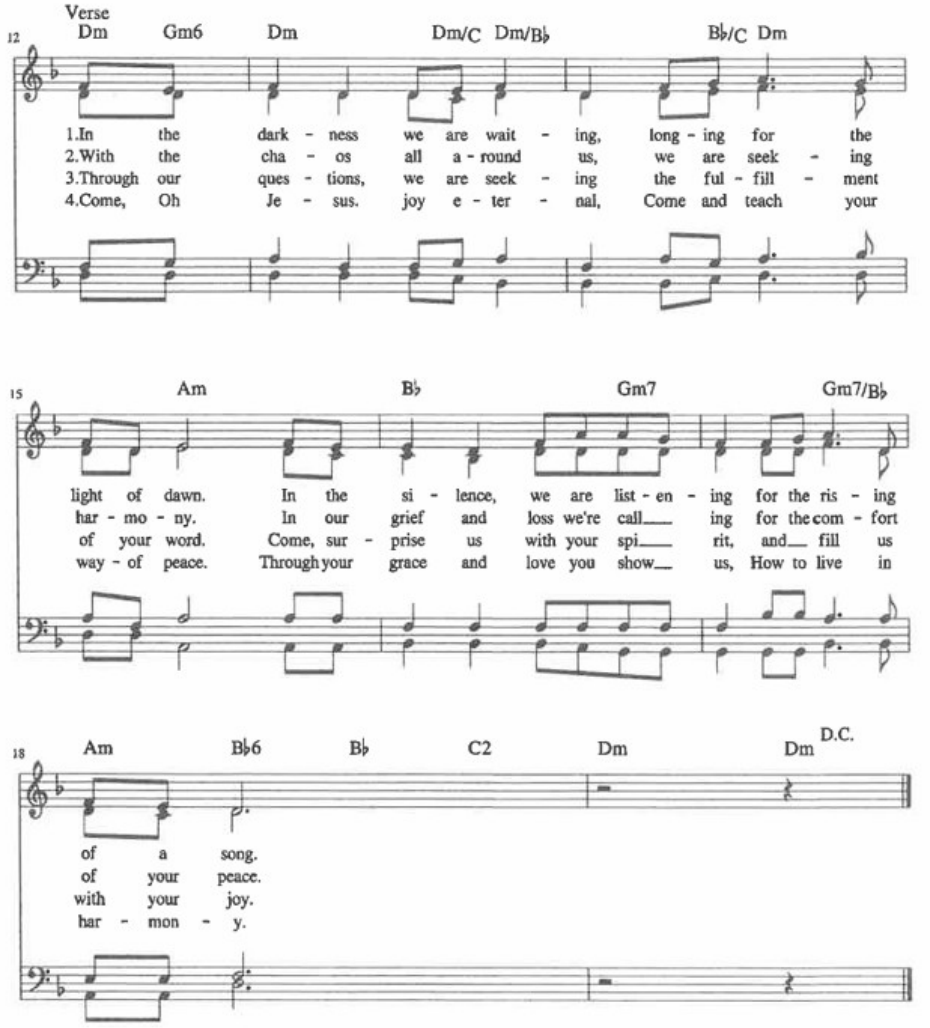
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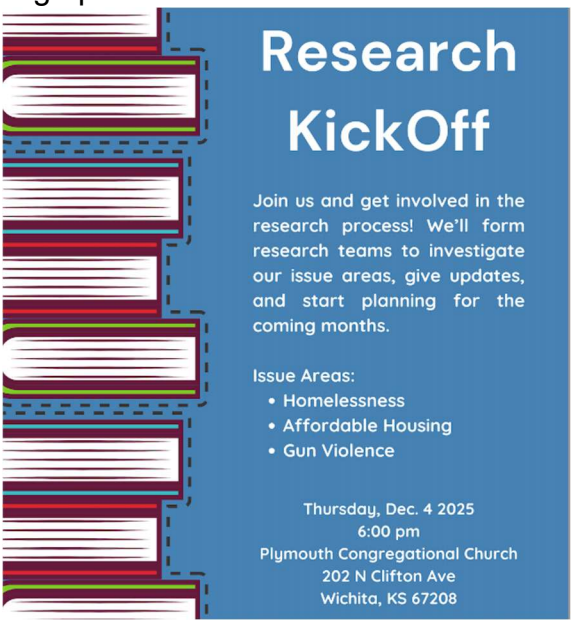

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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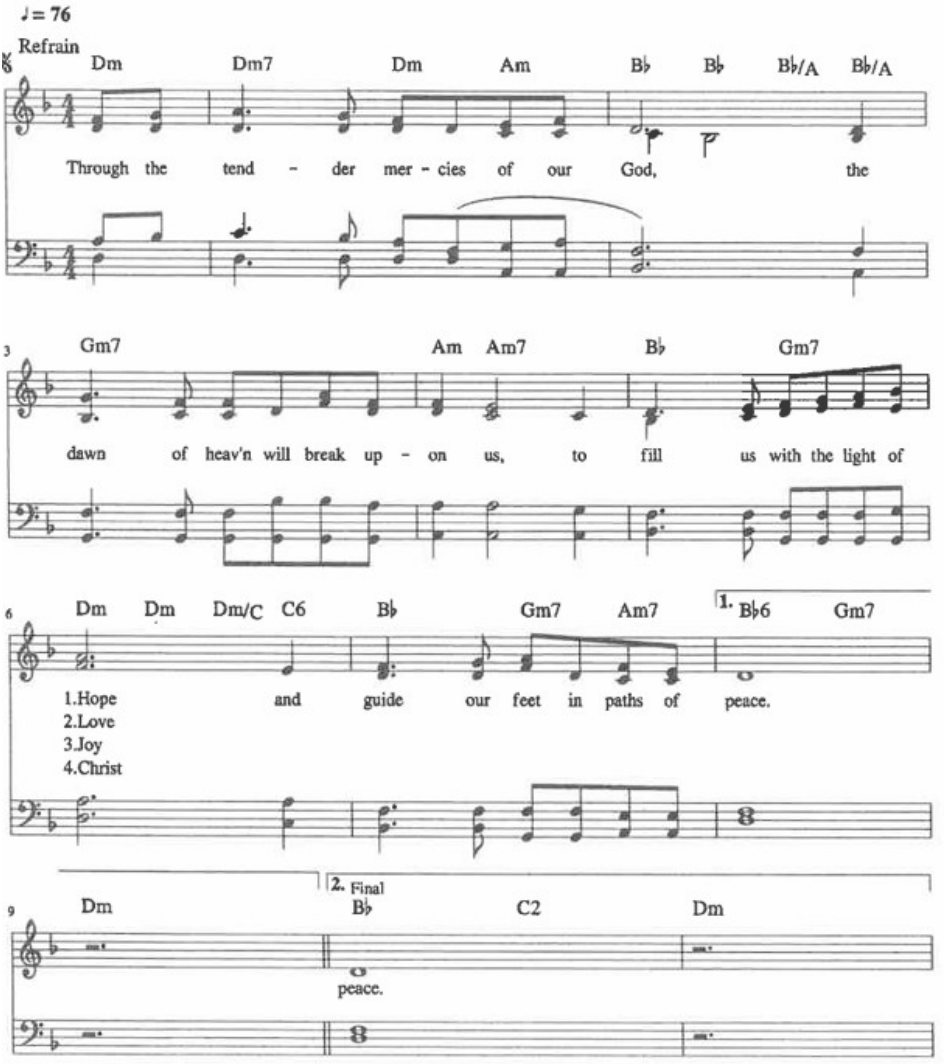
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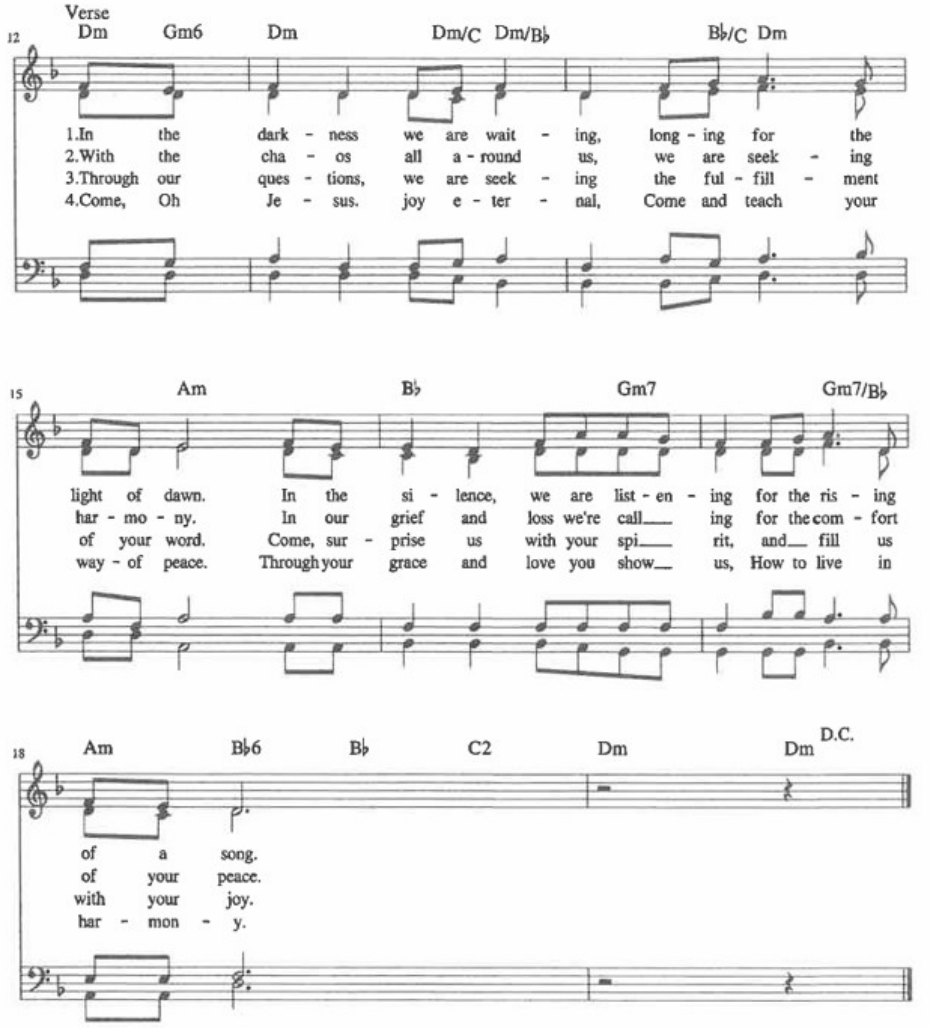
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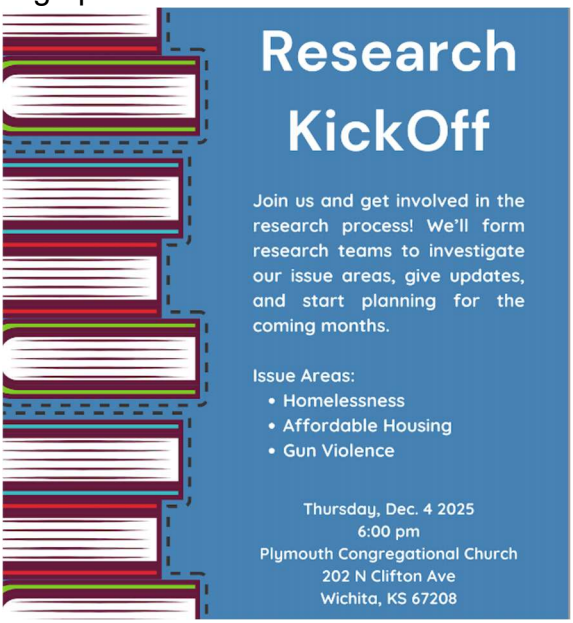

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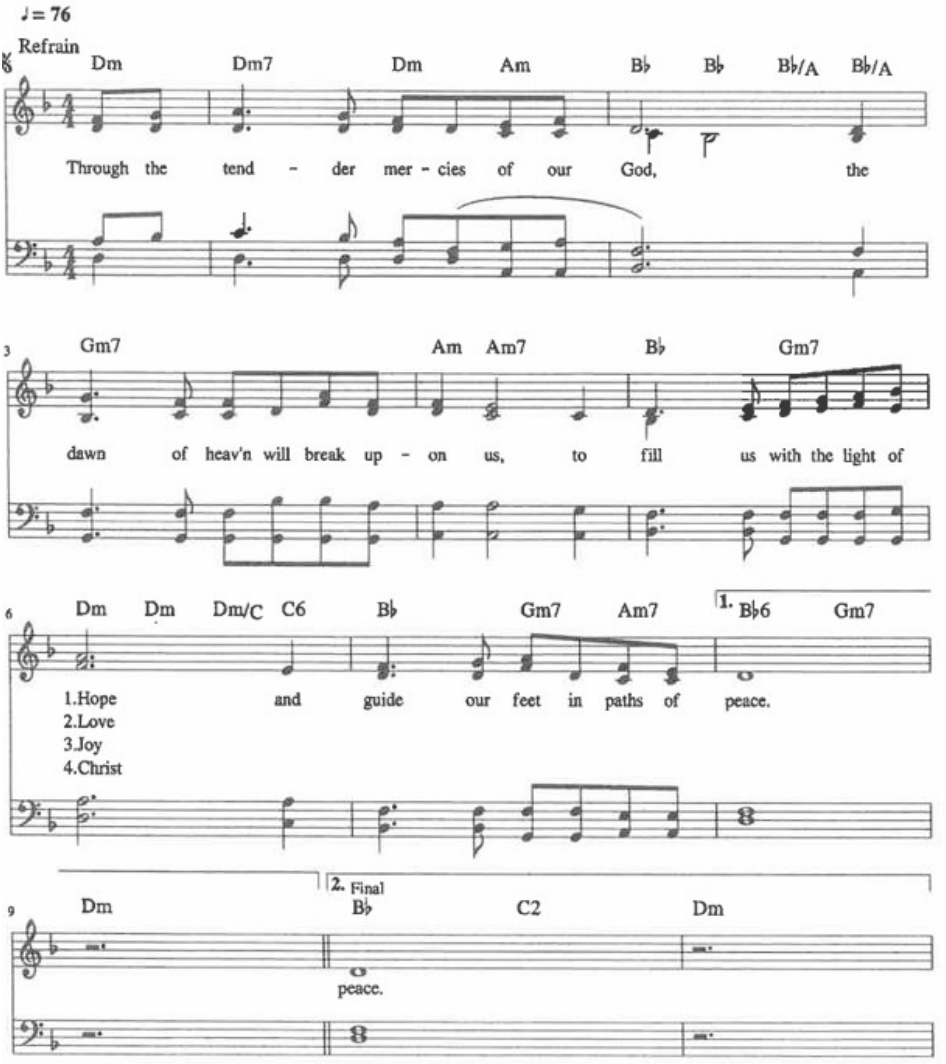
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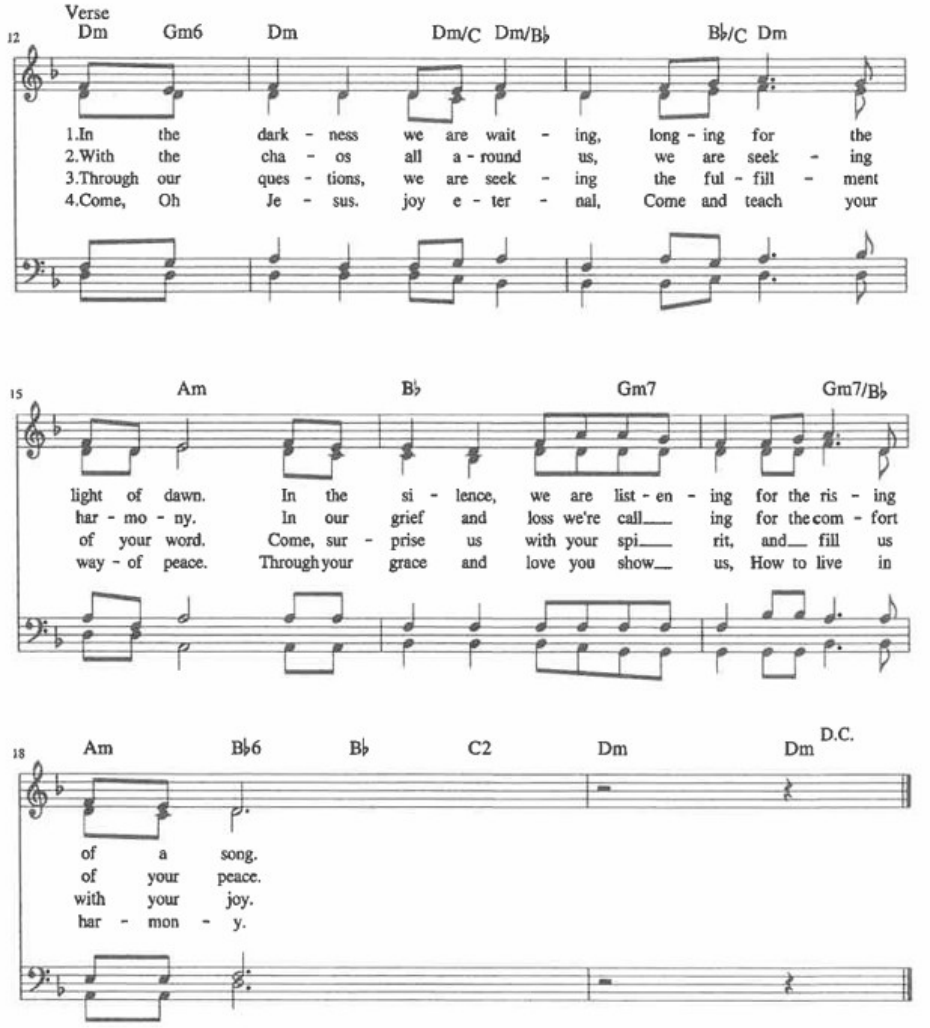
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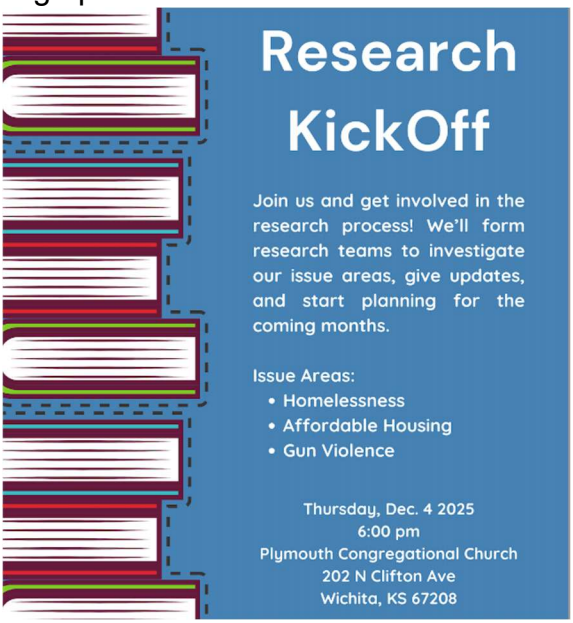

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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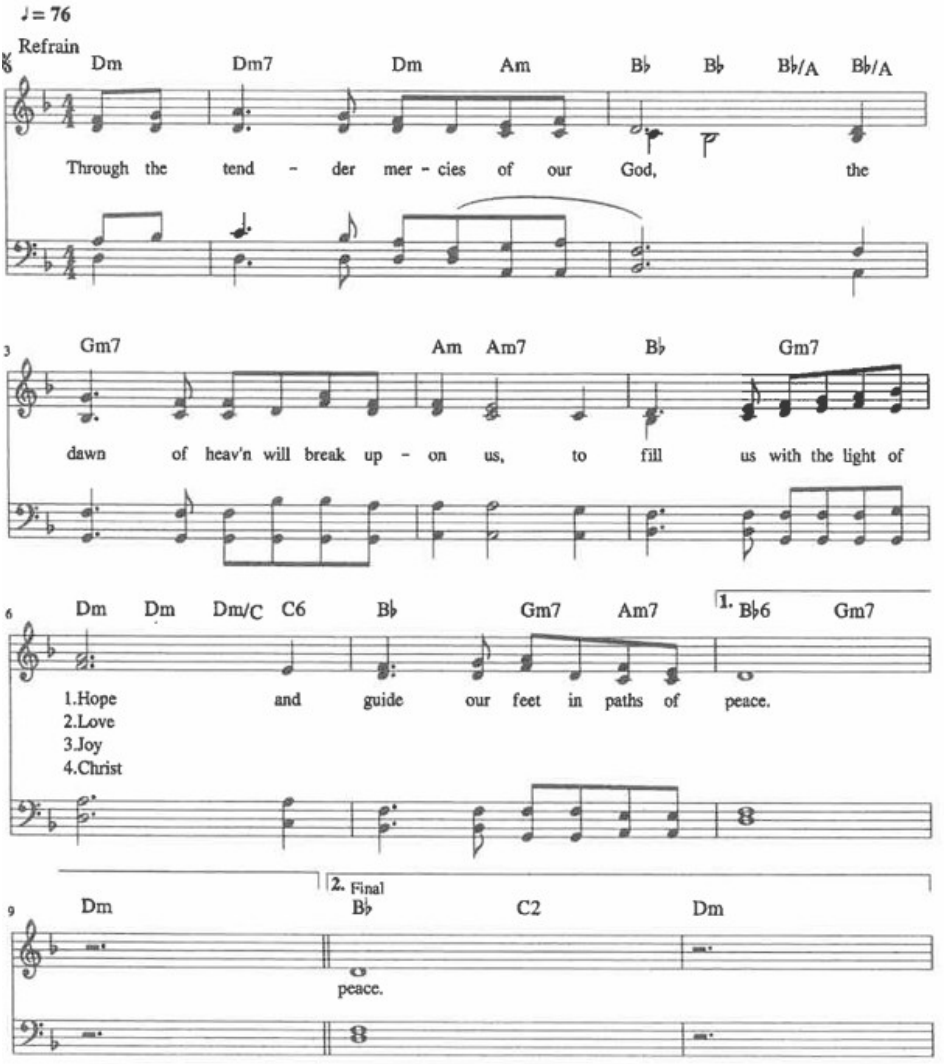
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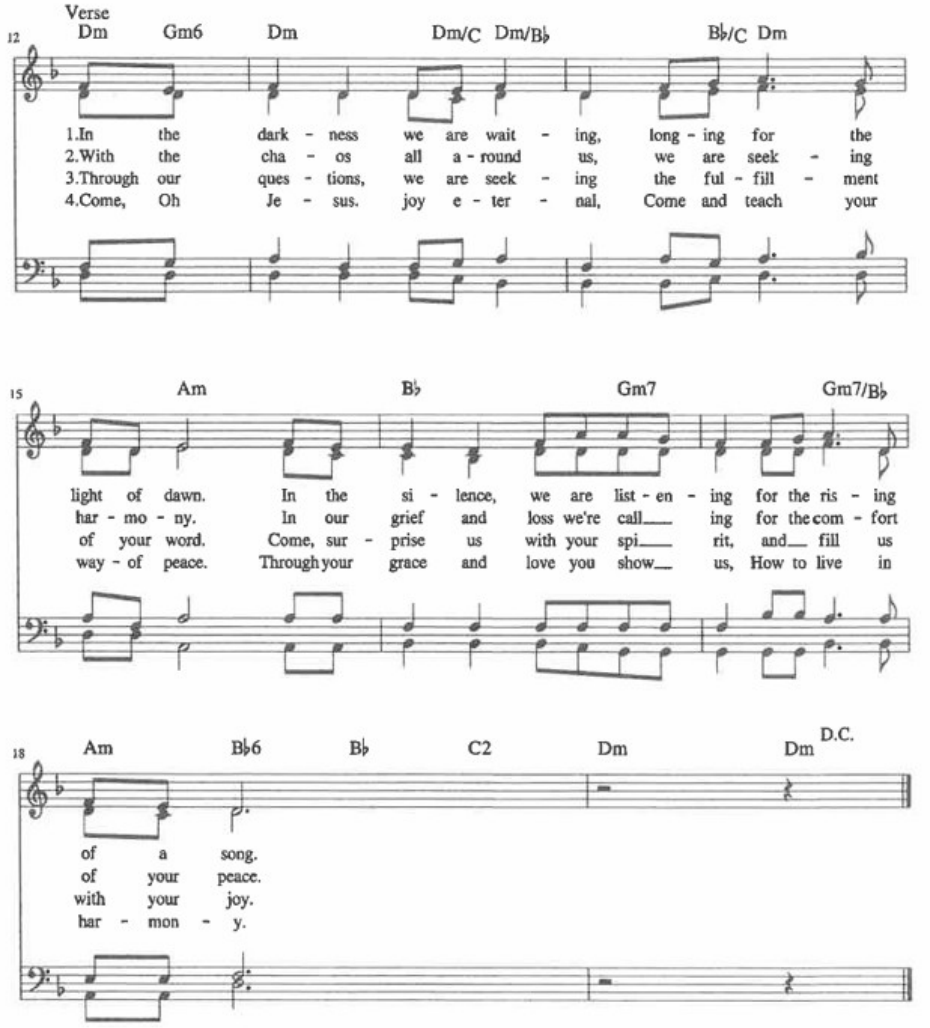
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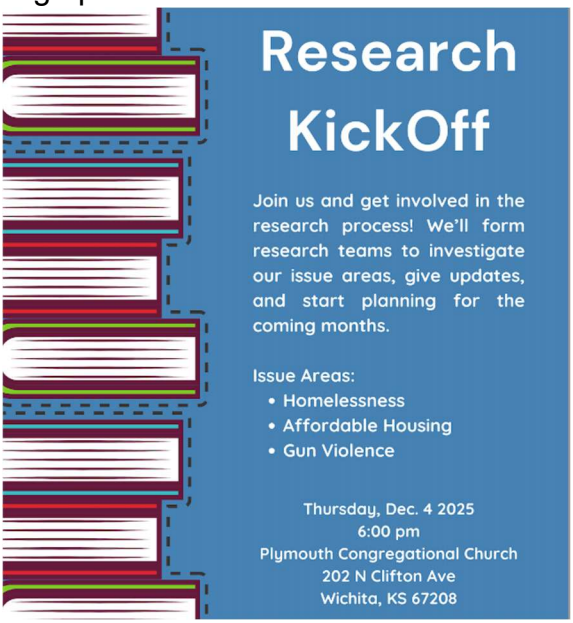

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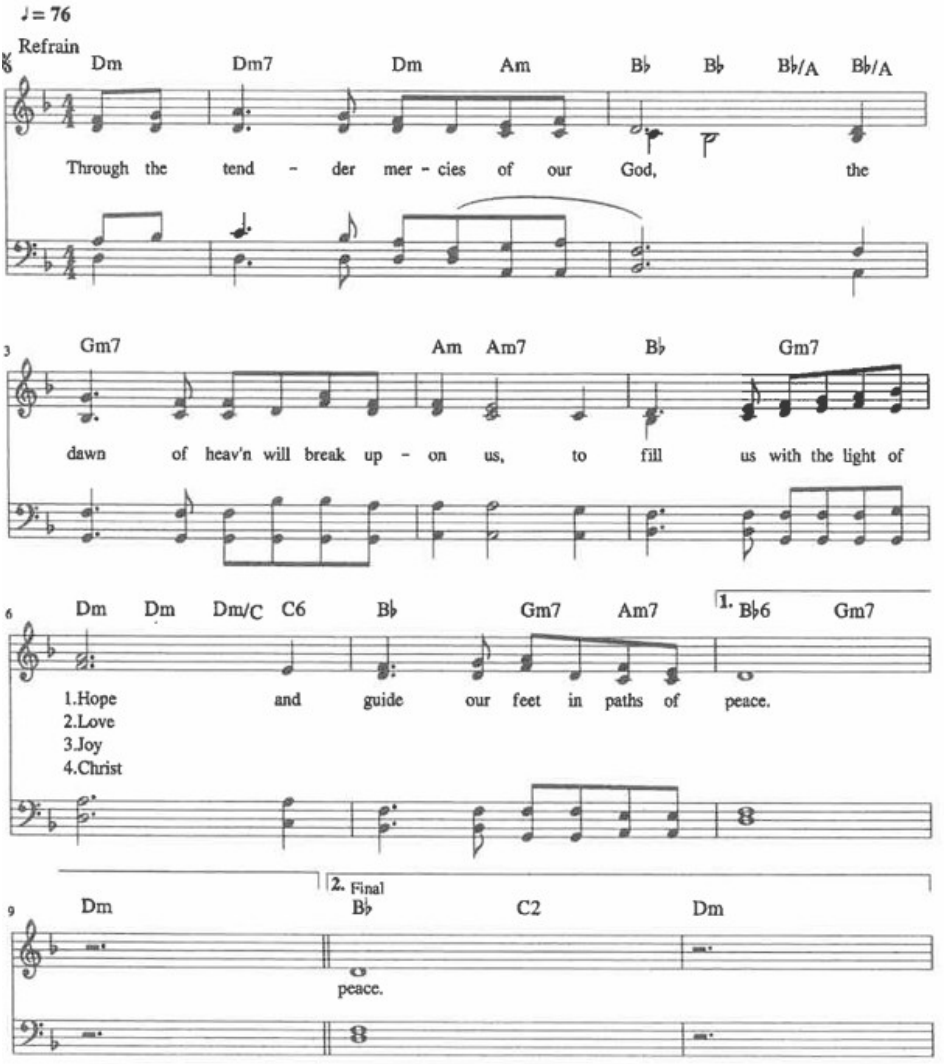
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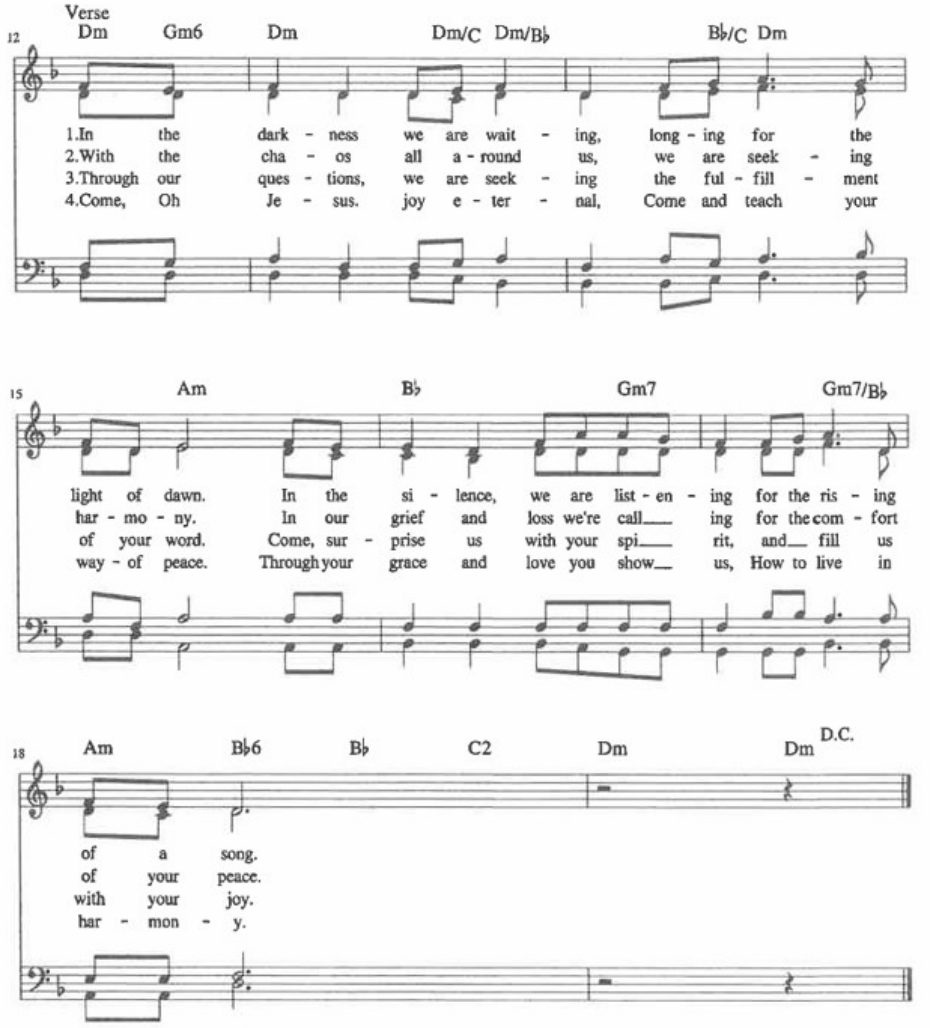
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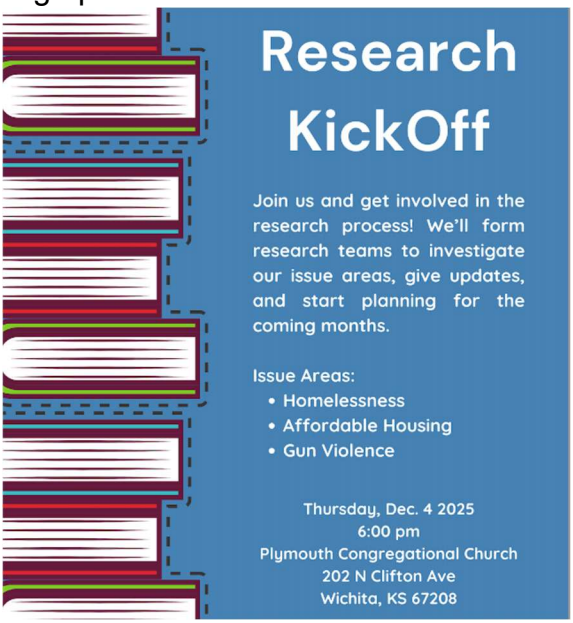

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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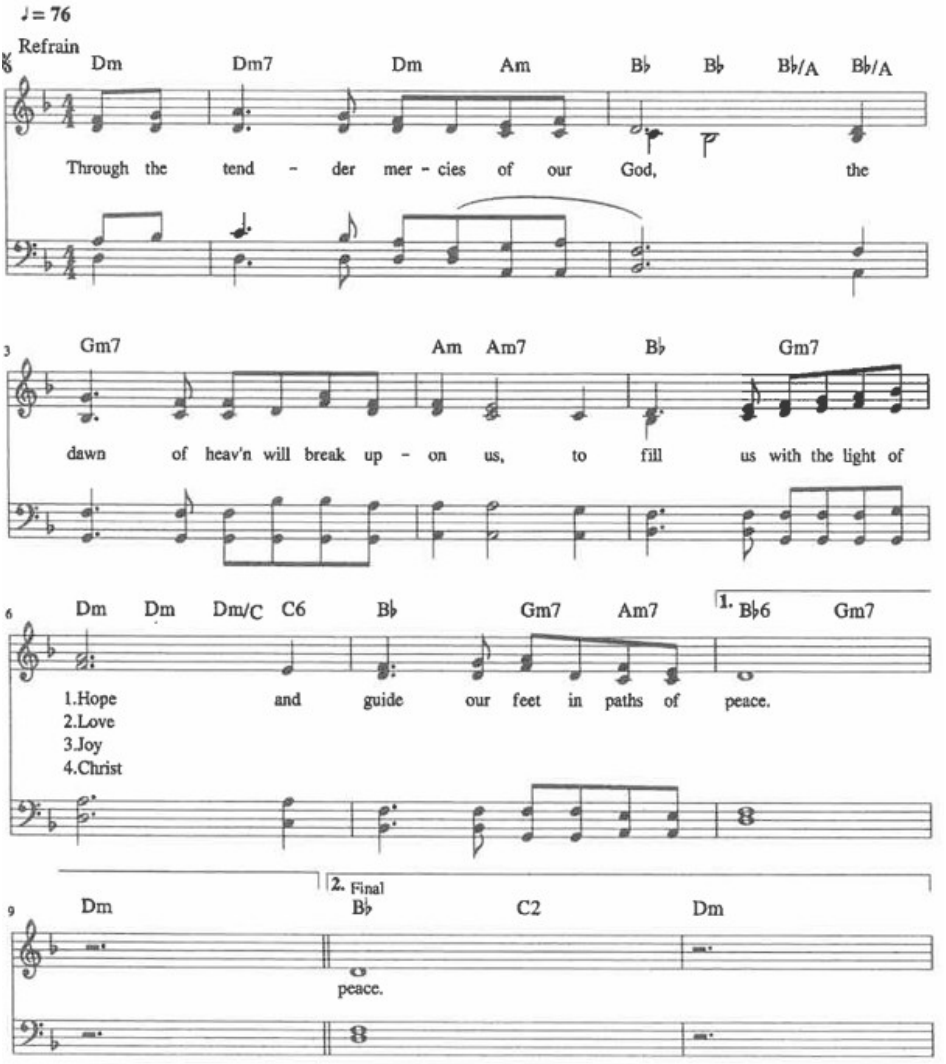
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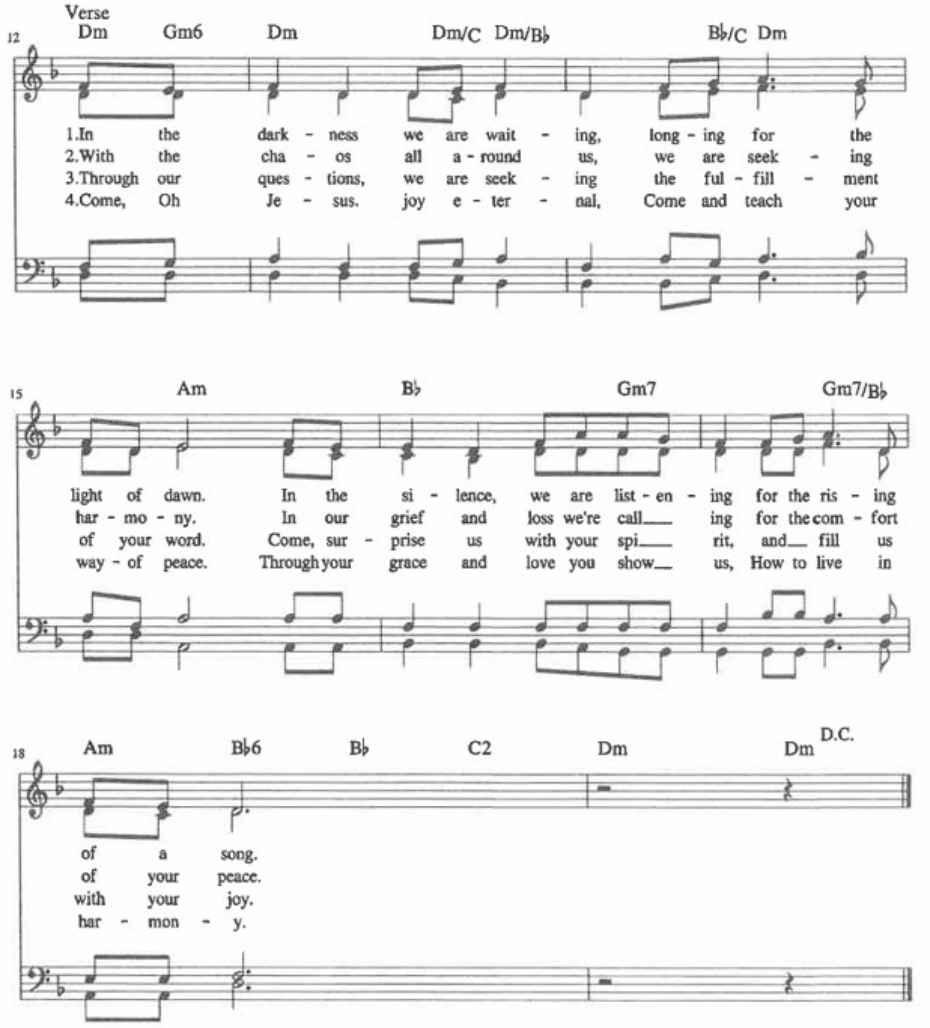
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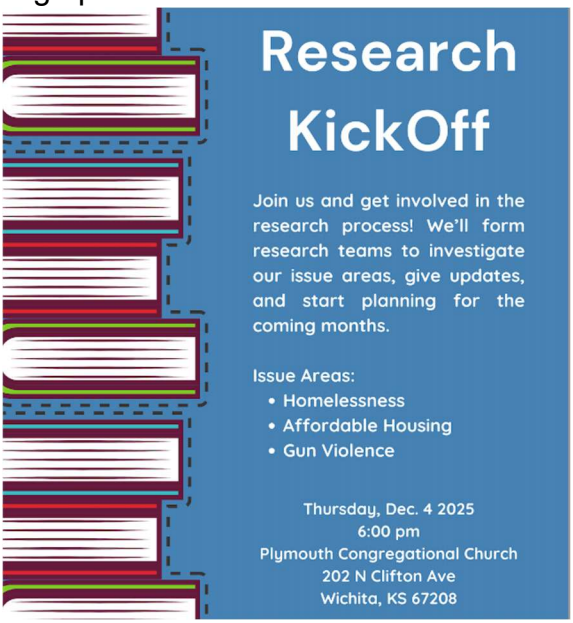

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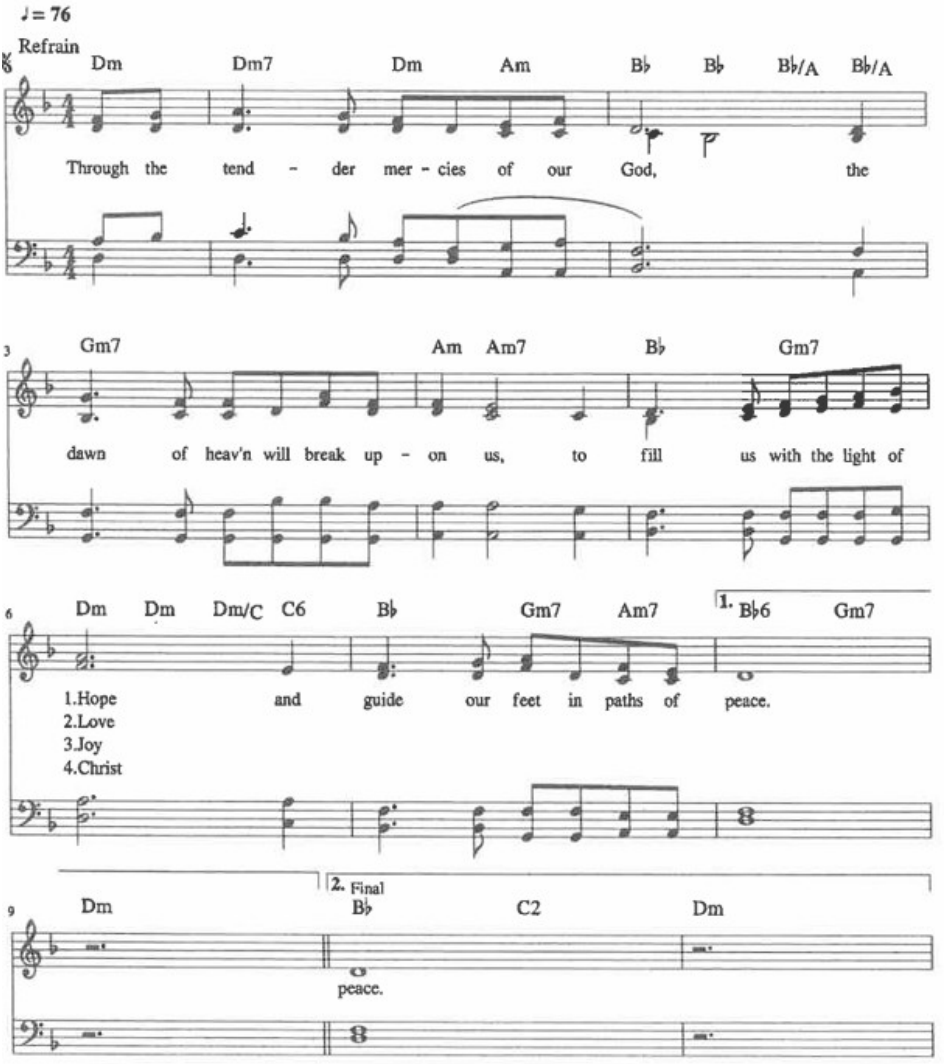
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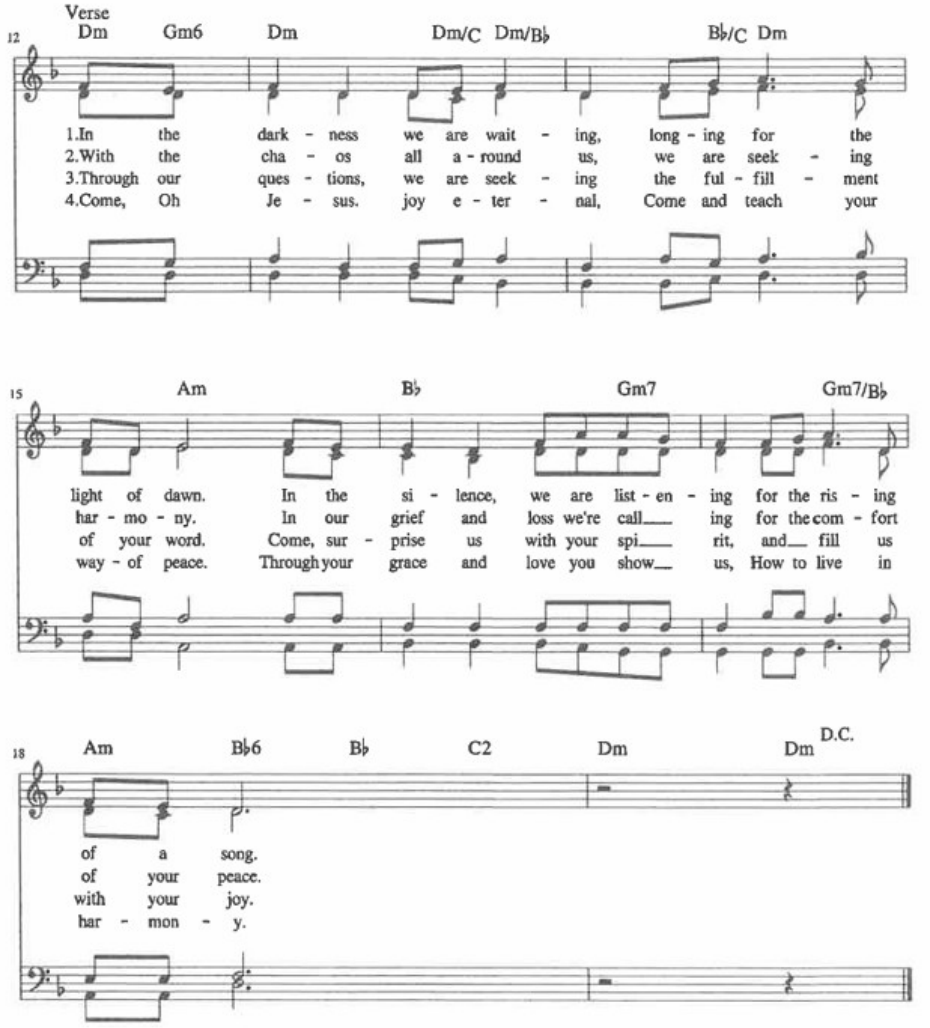
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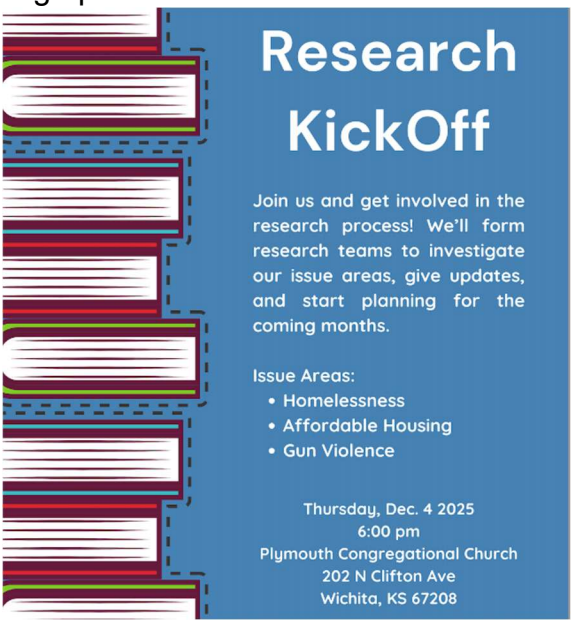

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
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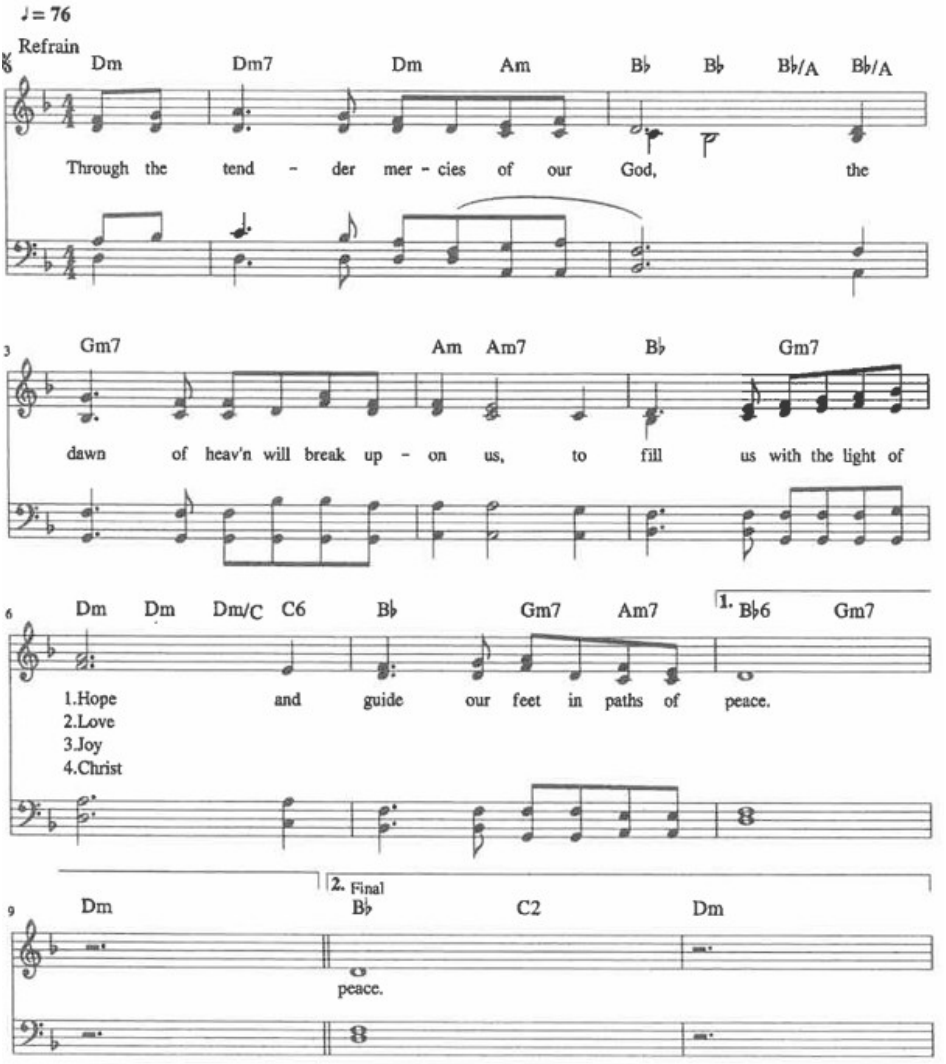
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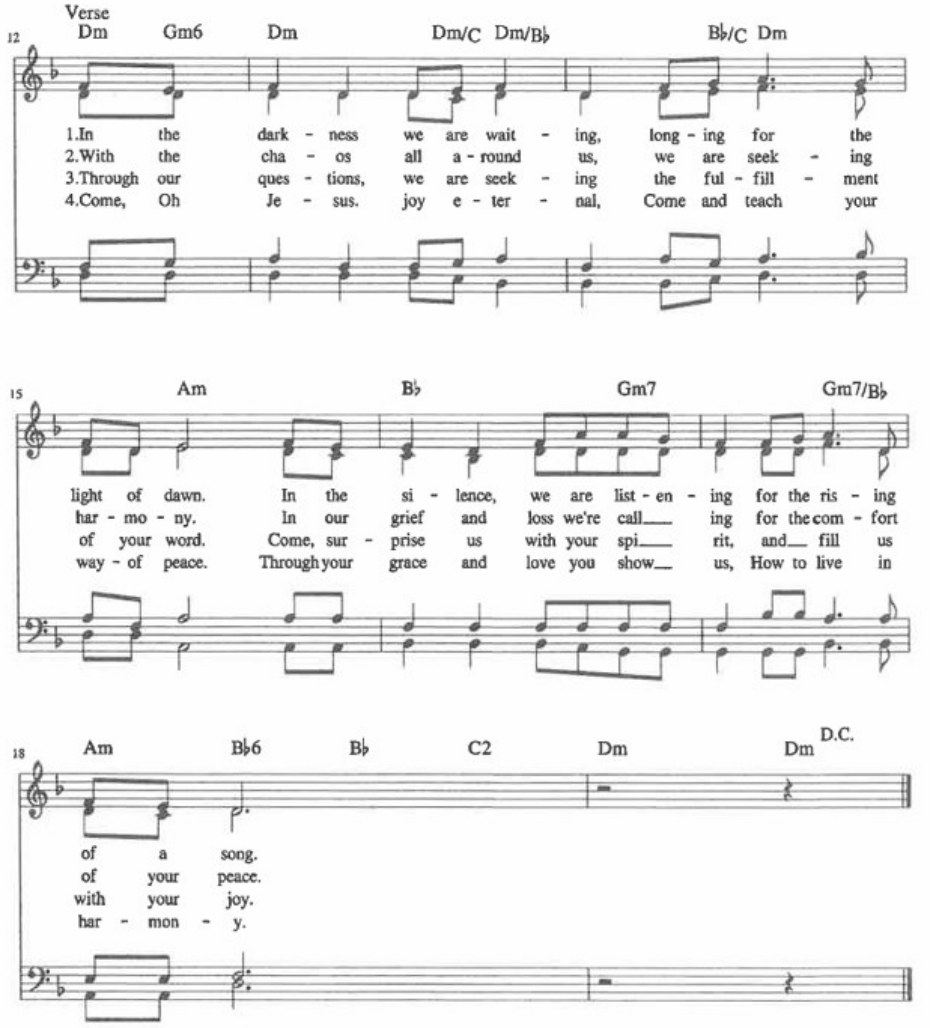
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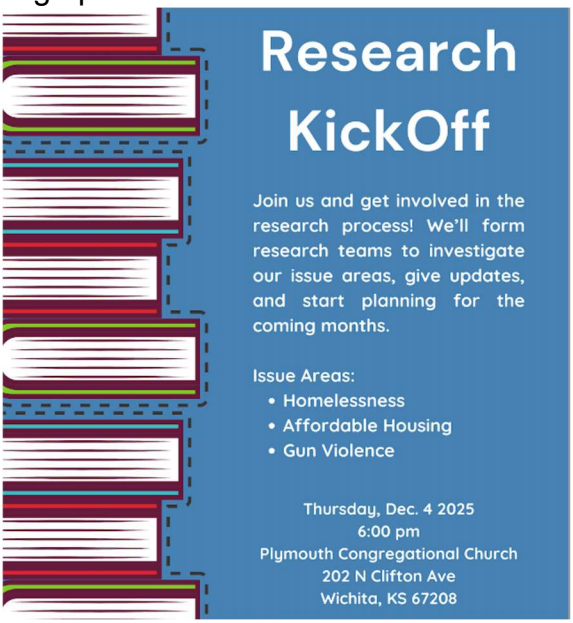

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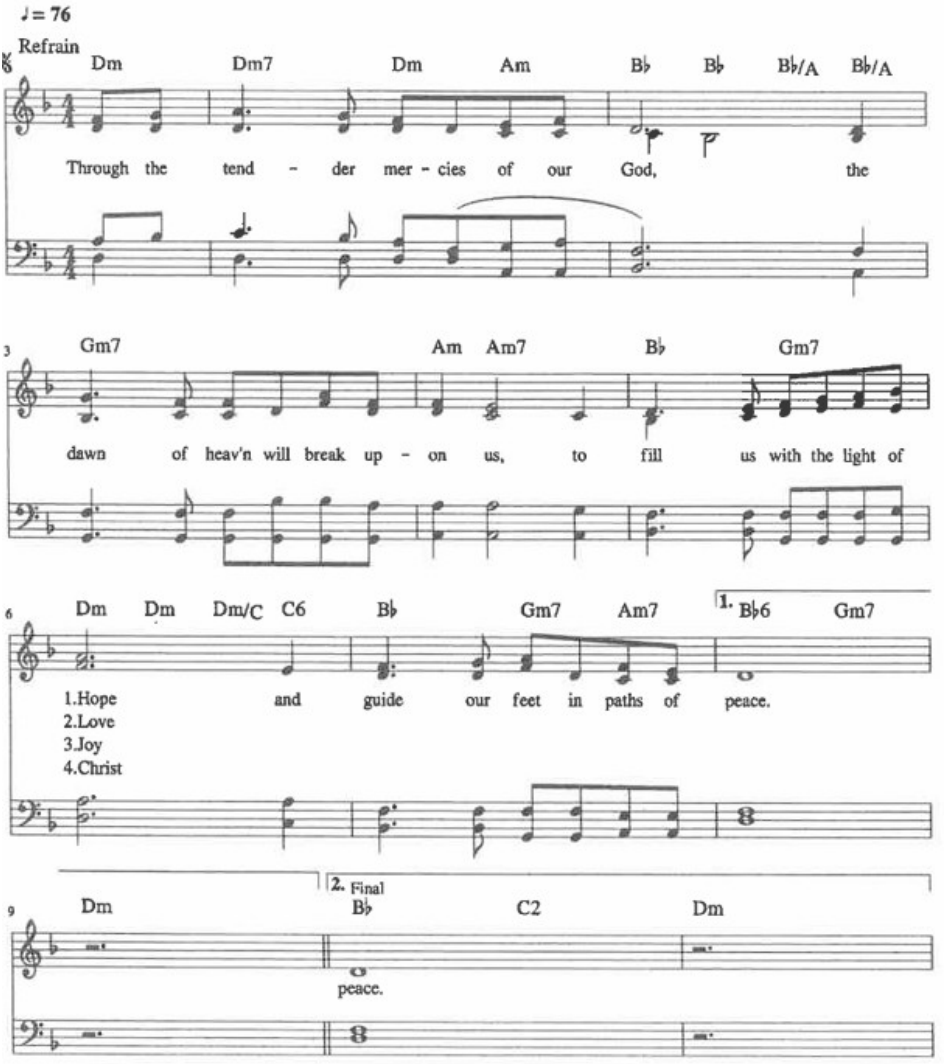
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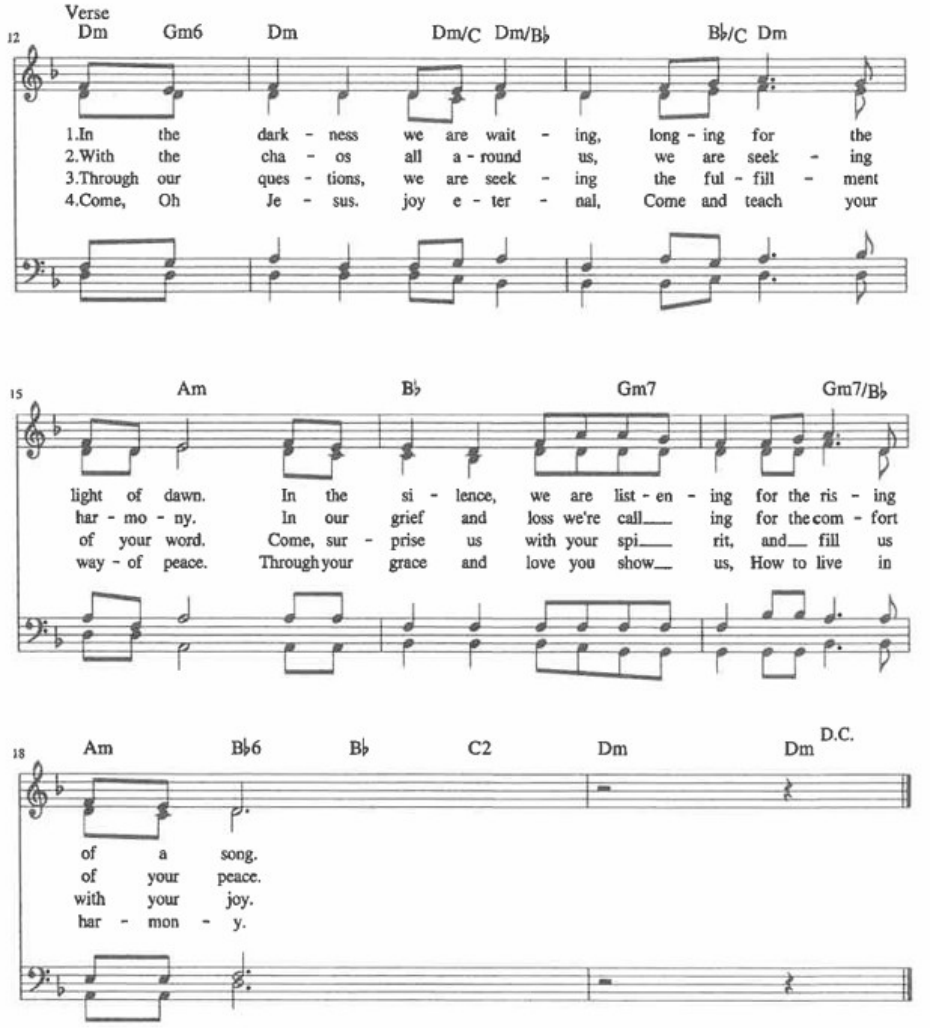
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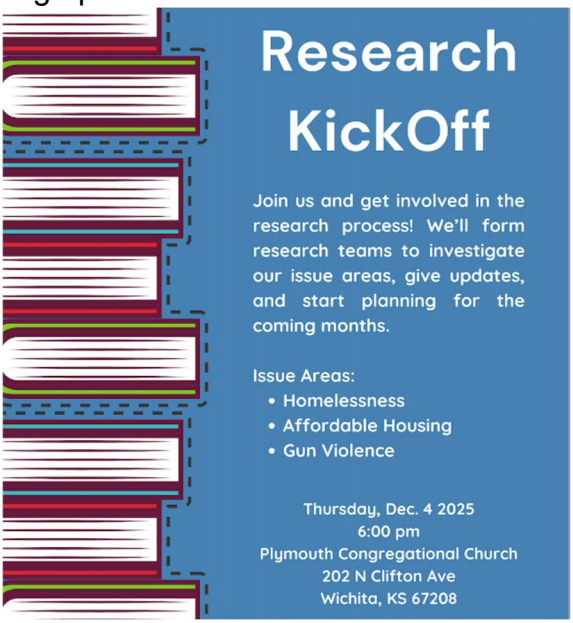

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
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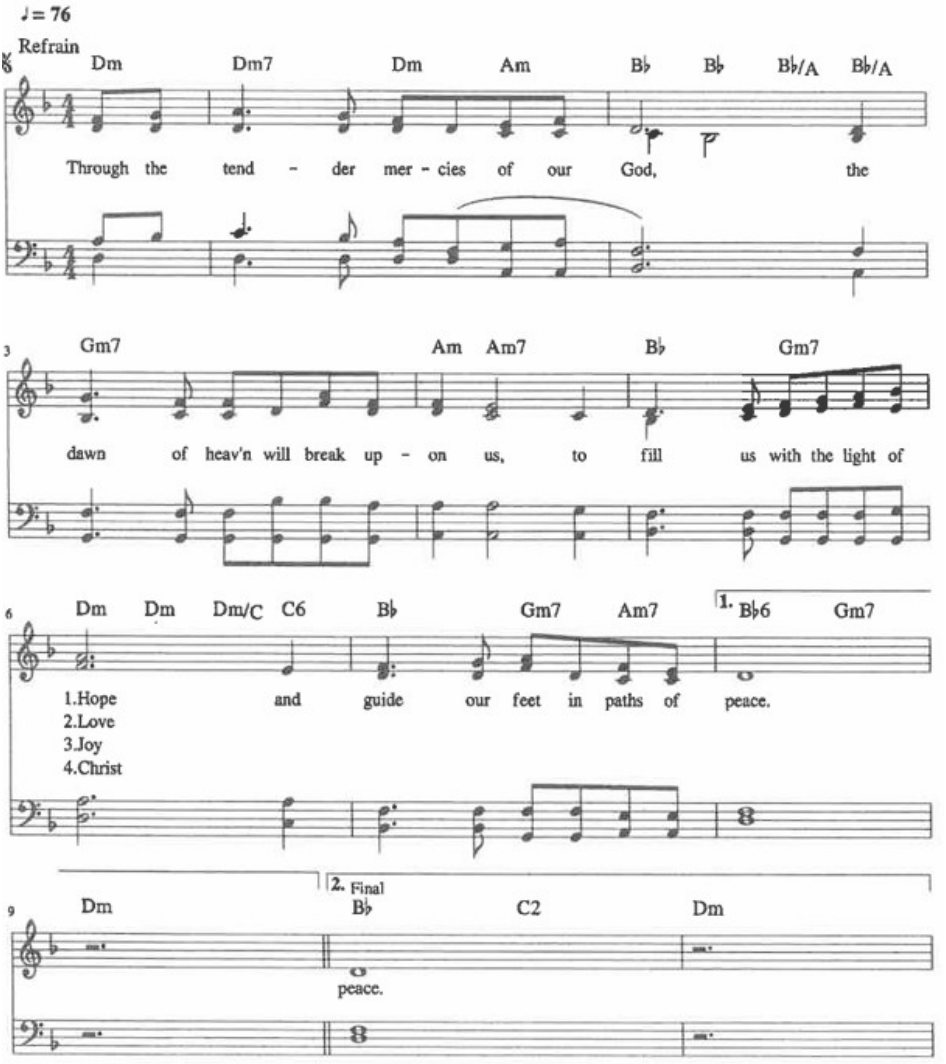
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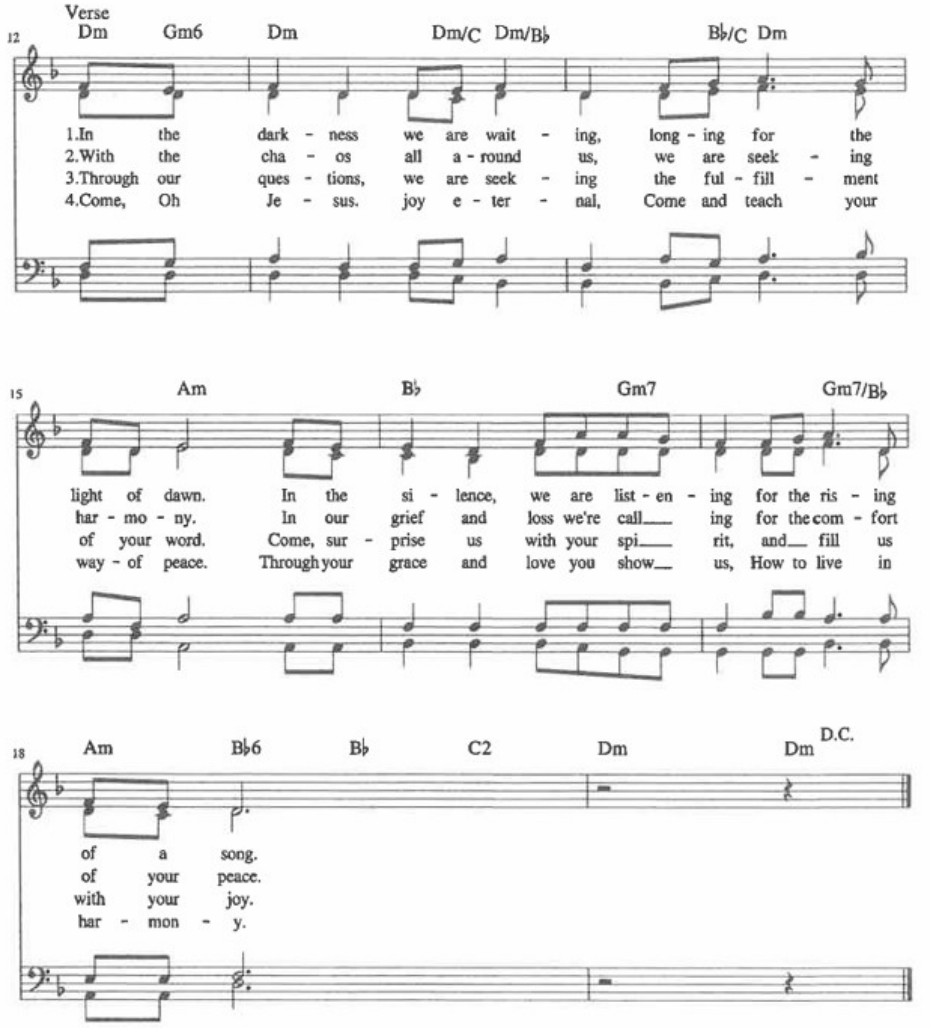
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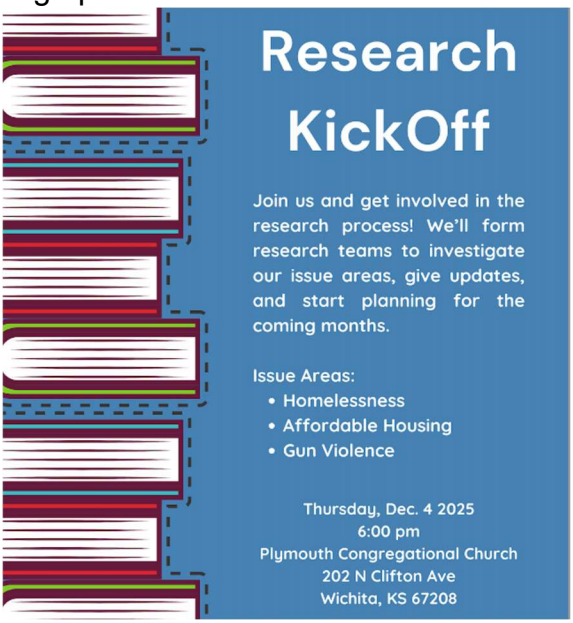

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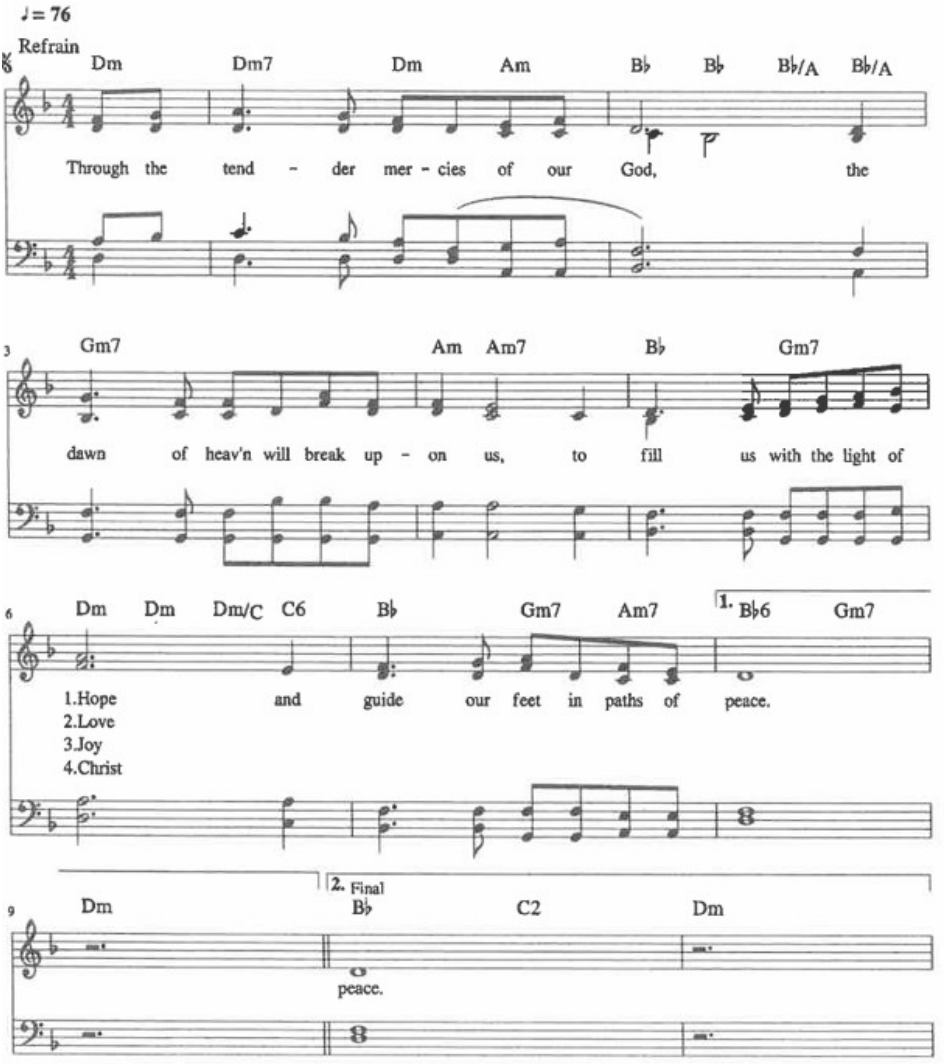
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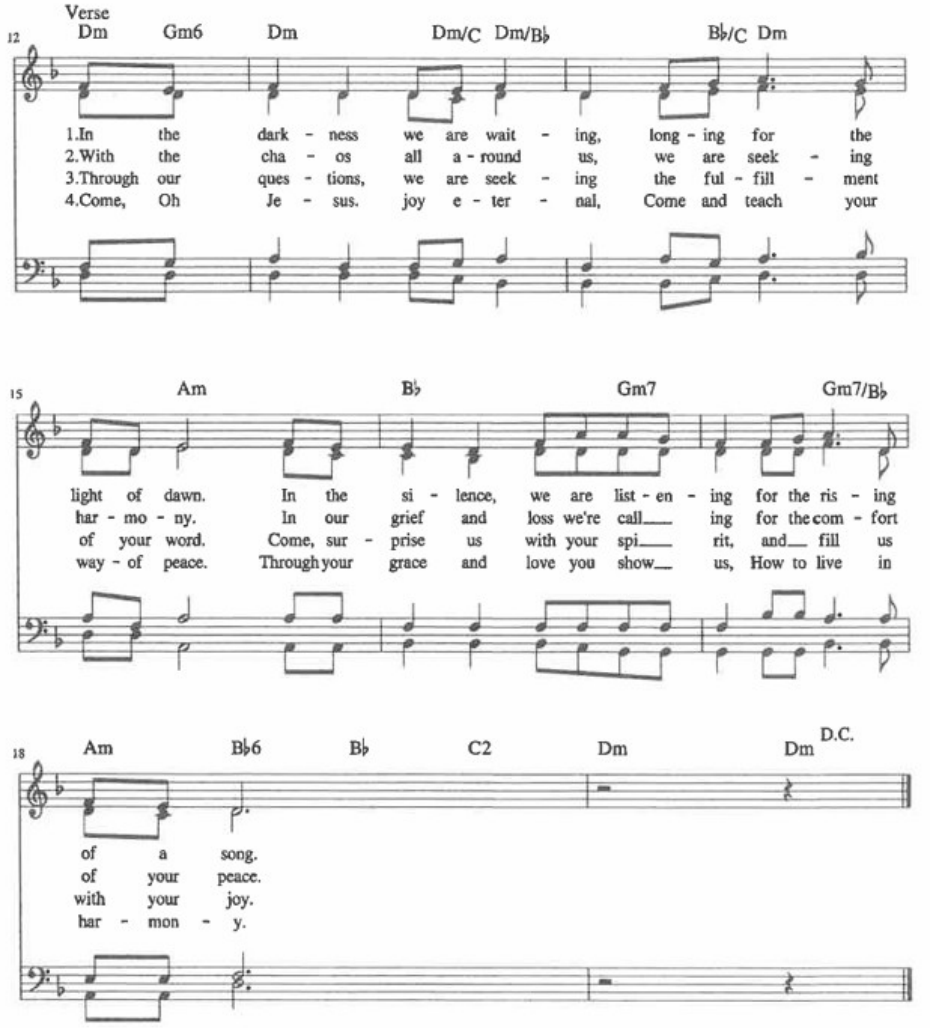
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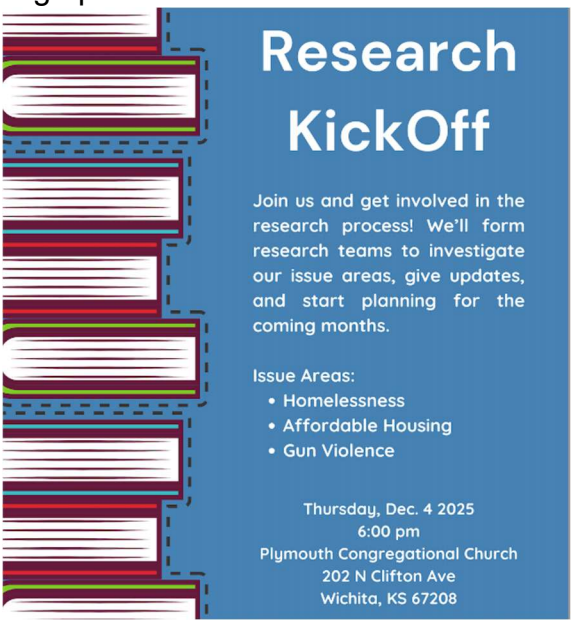

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Greeting our Guests (Please pass the welcome registers)

Seeing and Seeking God
Work of the Church
Sharing our Praises and Concerns

Sung prayer of God's People
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus #218

Sending

**Light Dawns on a Weary World* #205

*Benediction

* * * * *

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
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At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
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We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
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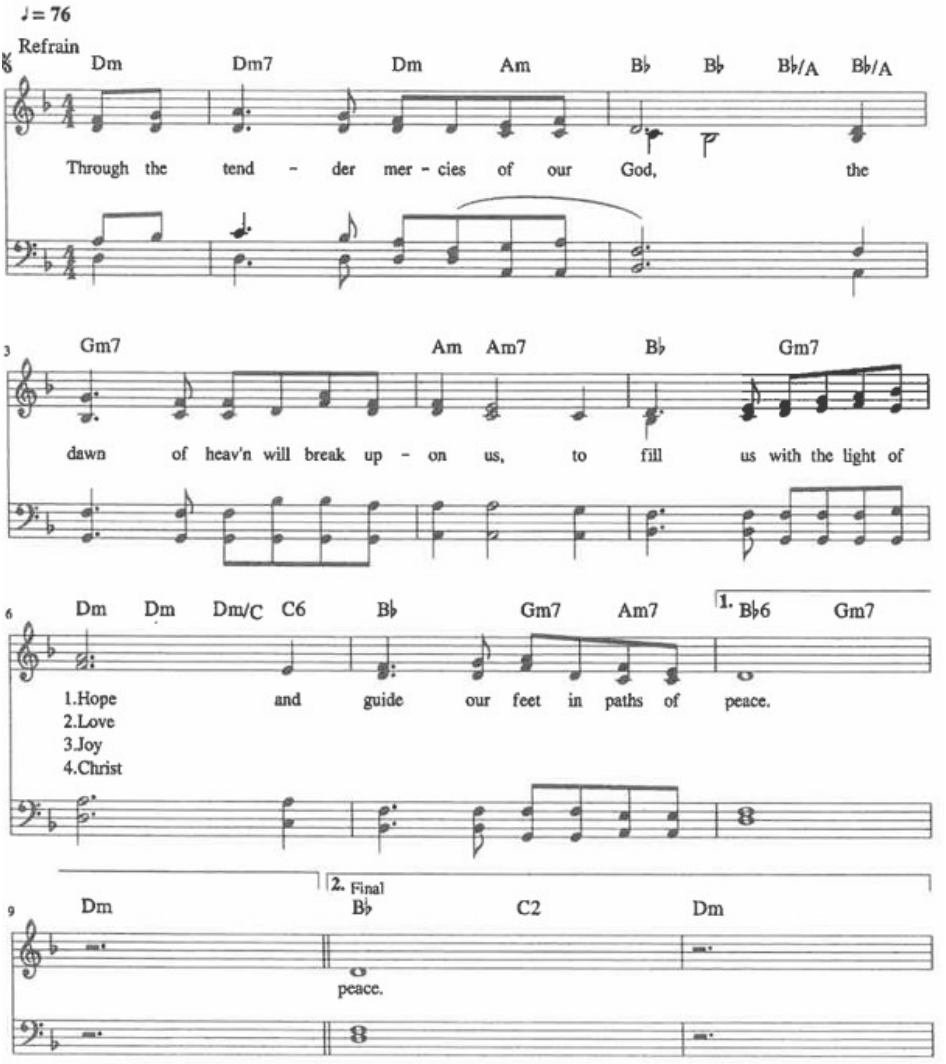
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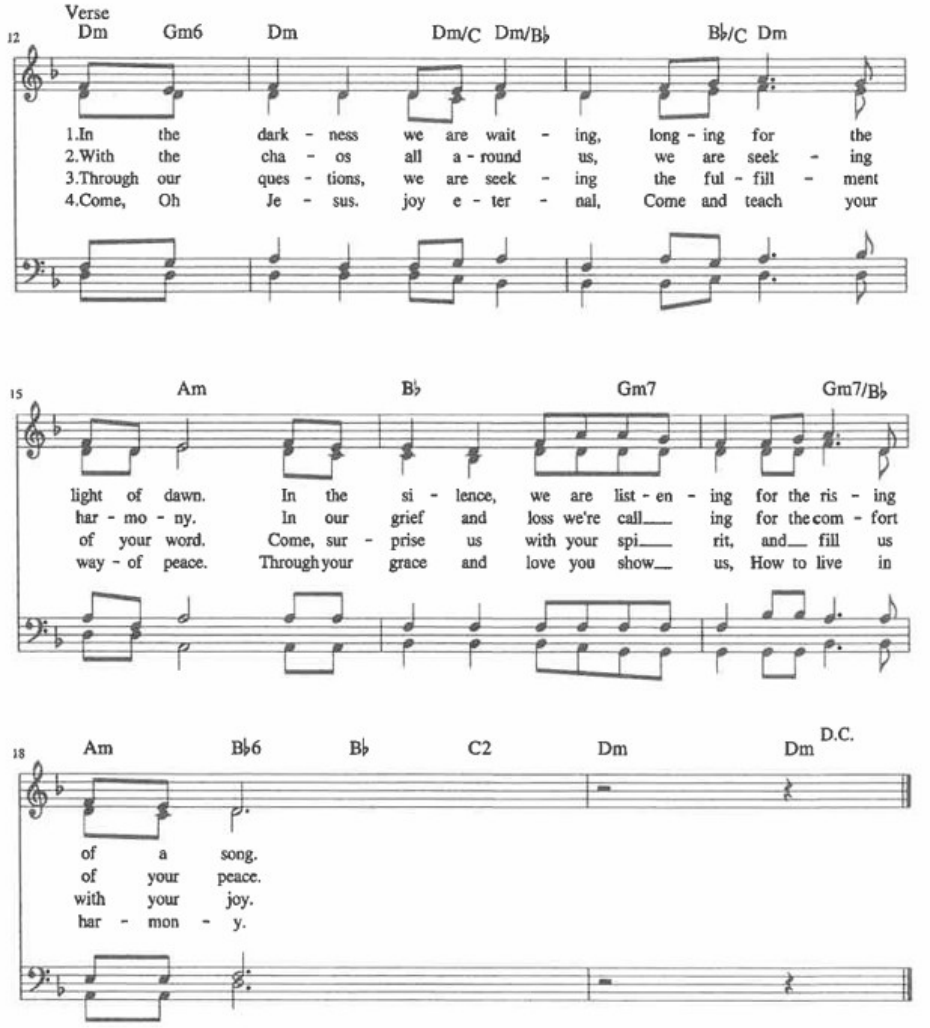
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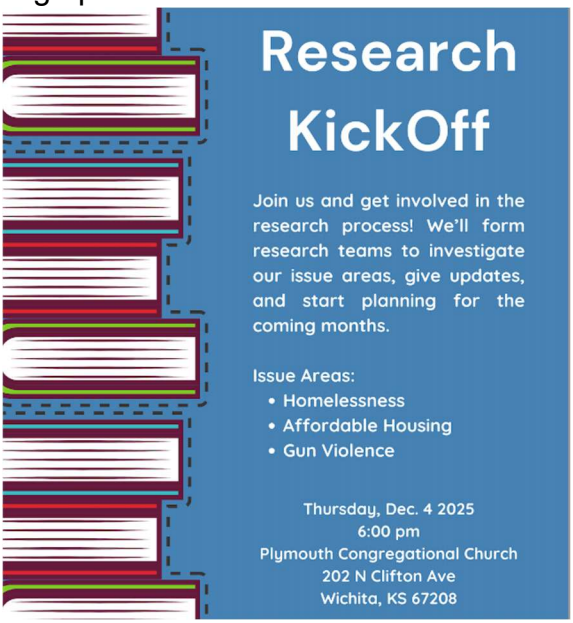

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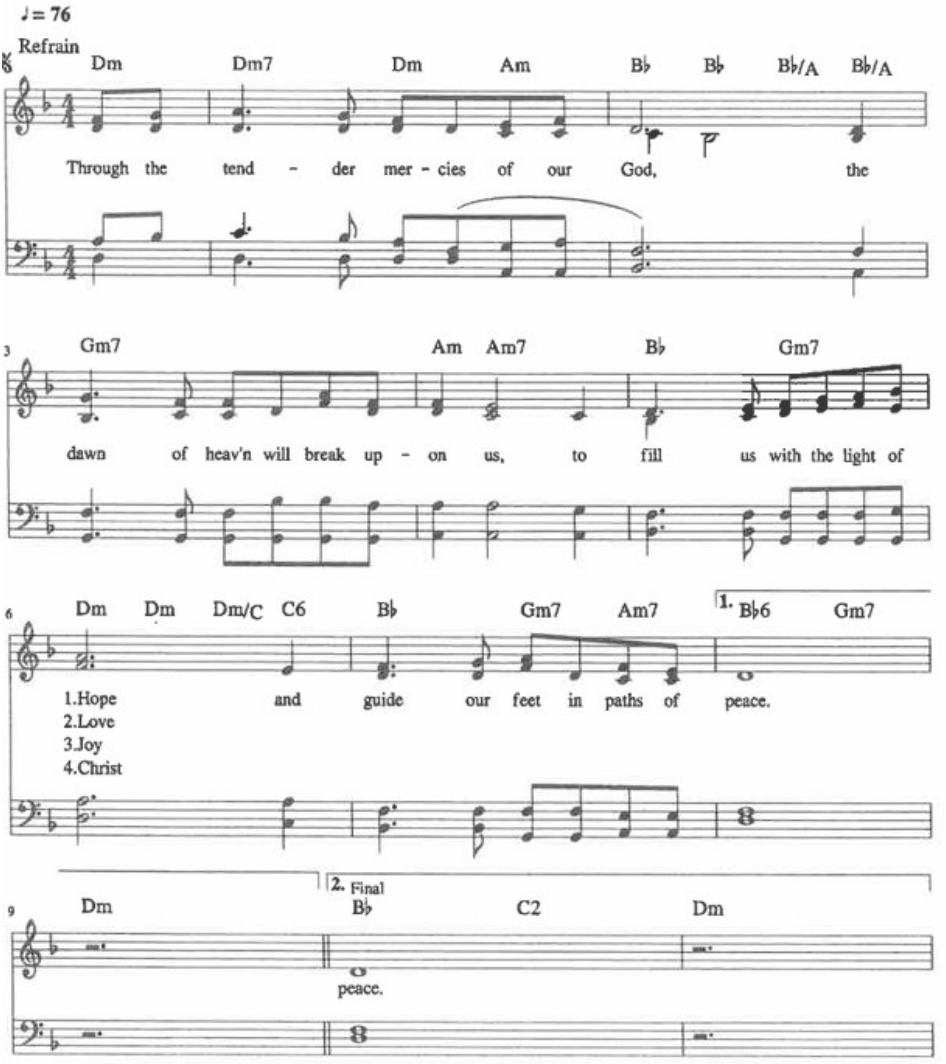
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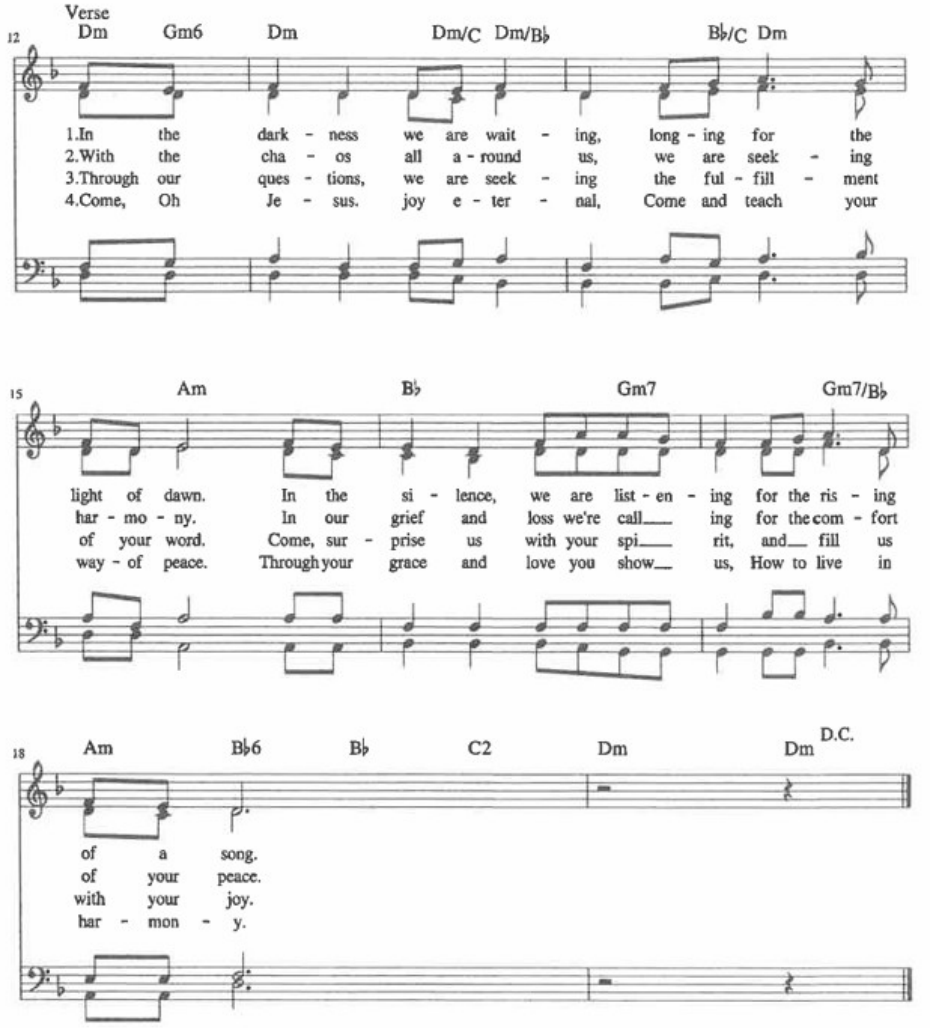
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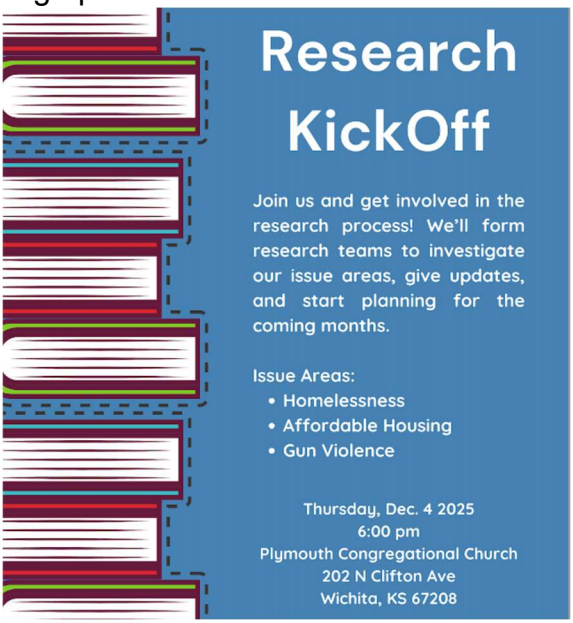

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walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
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walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
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We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
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"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
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O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
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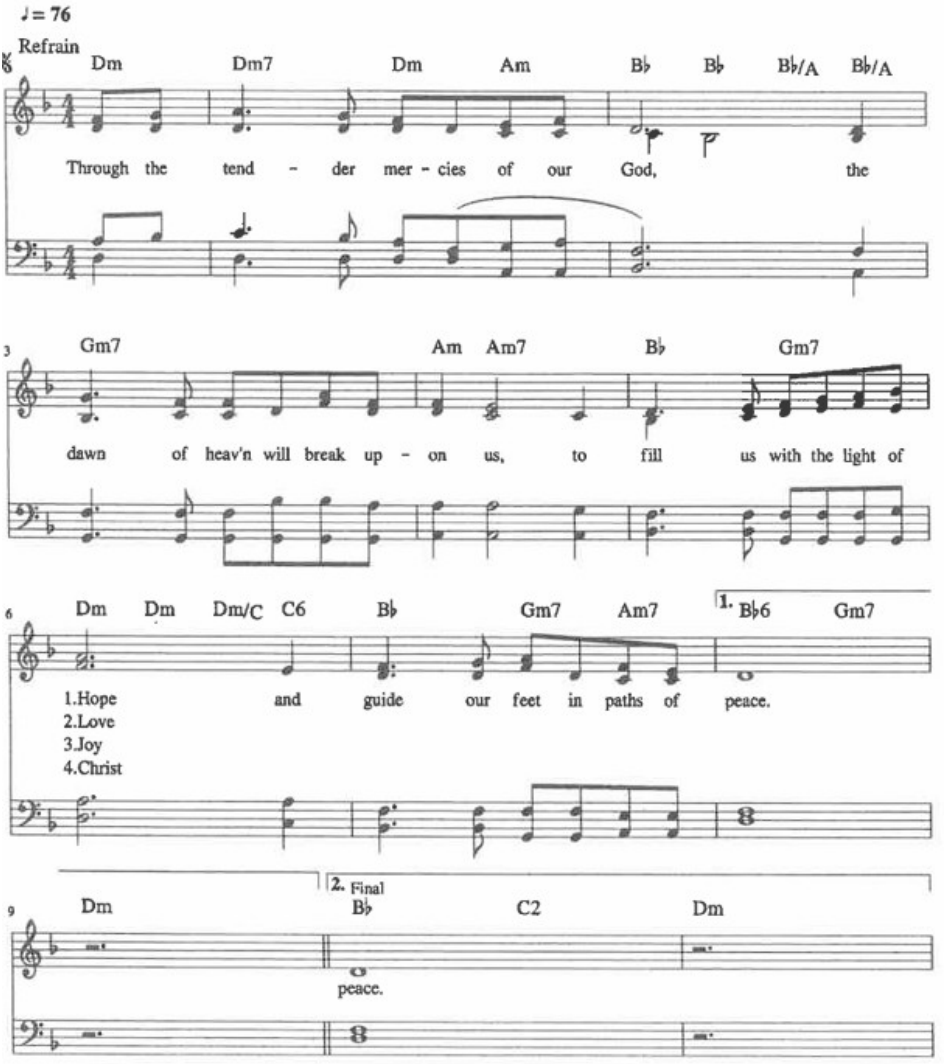
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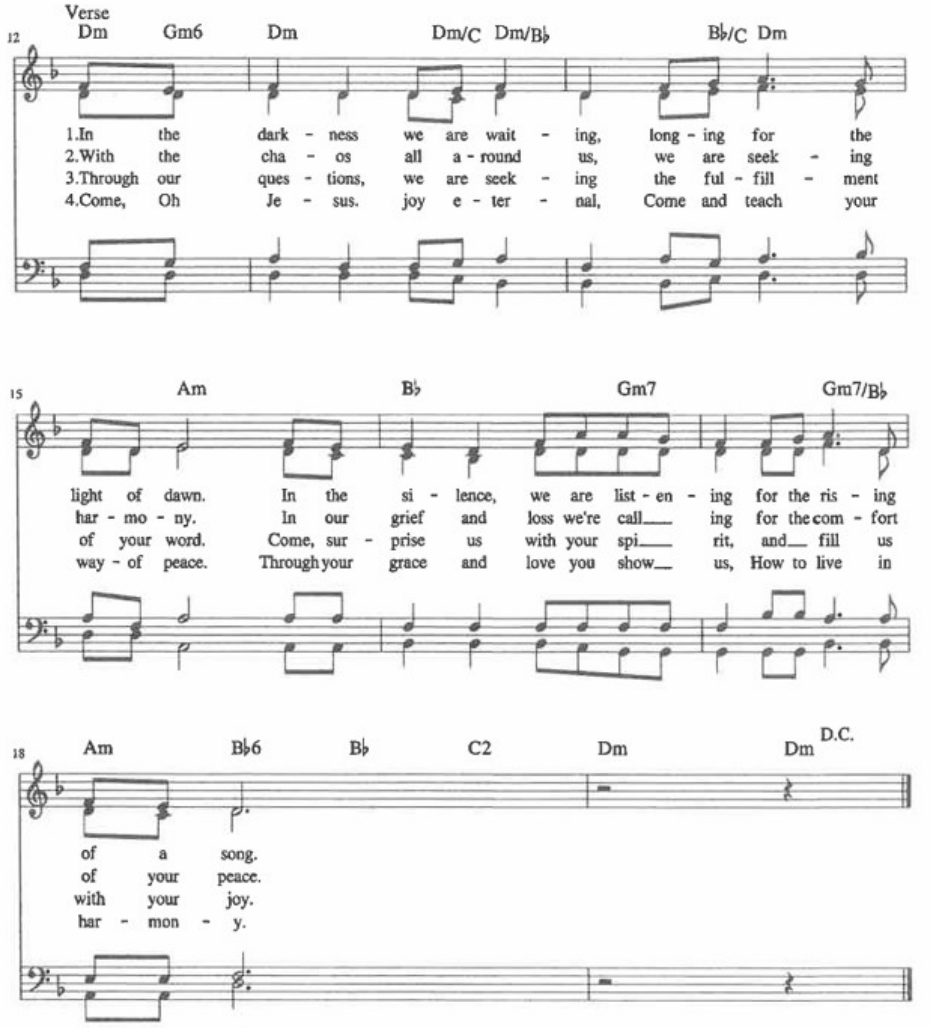
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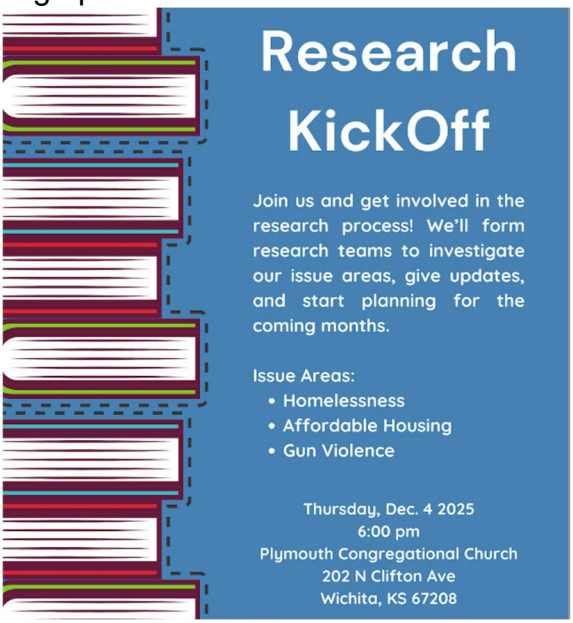

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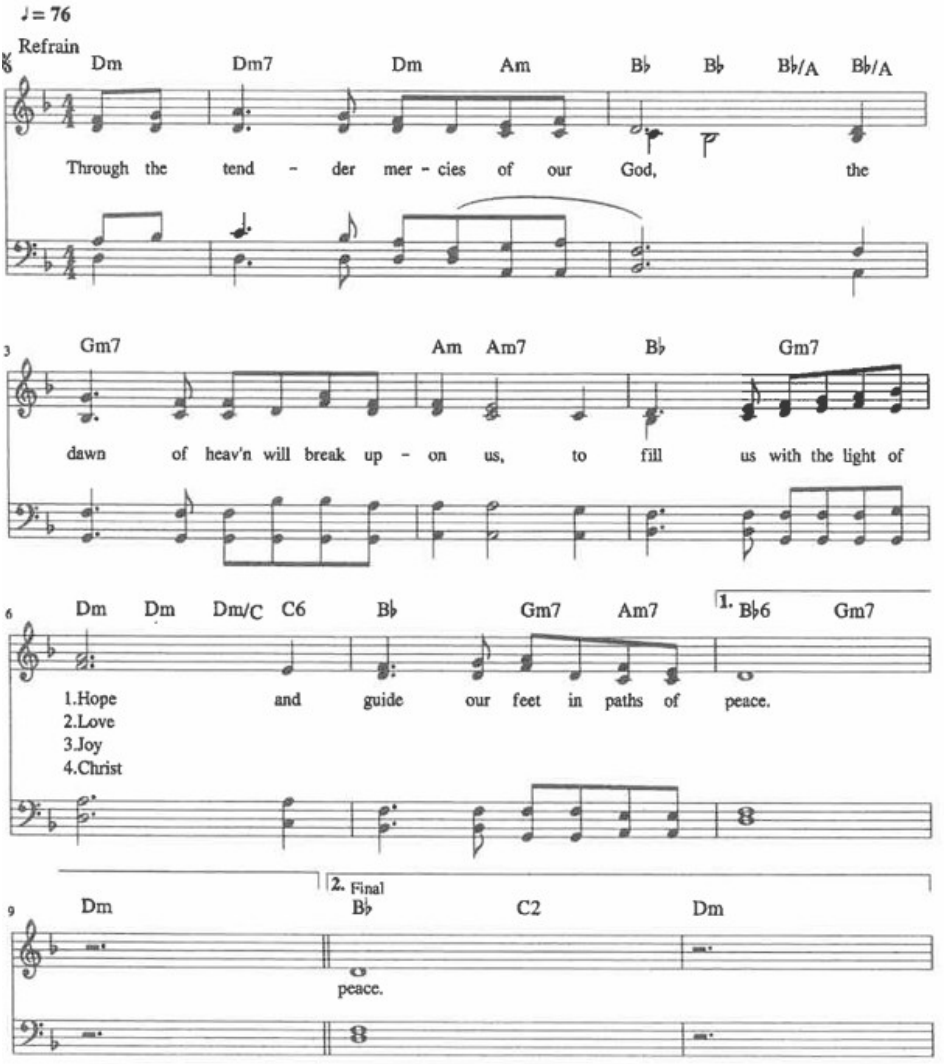
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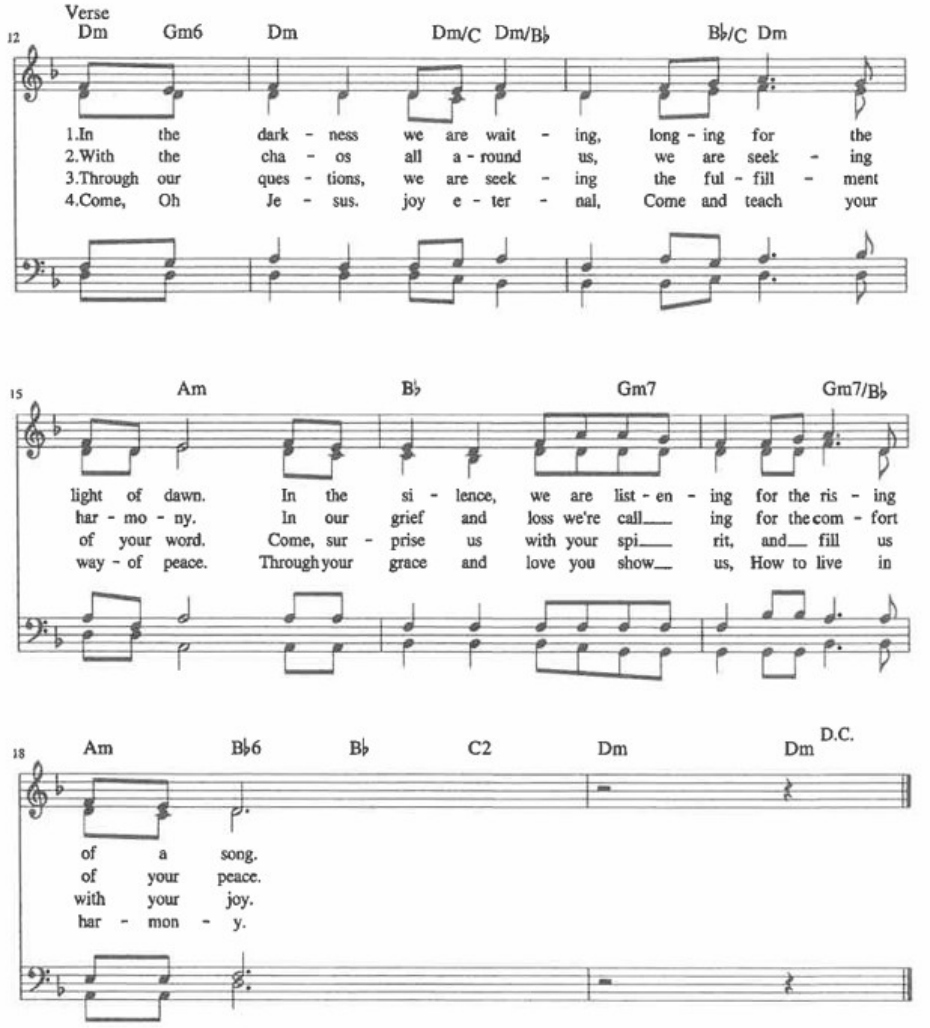
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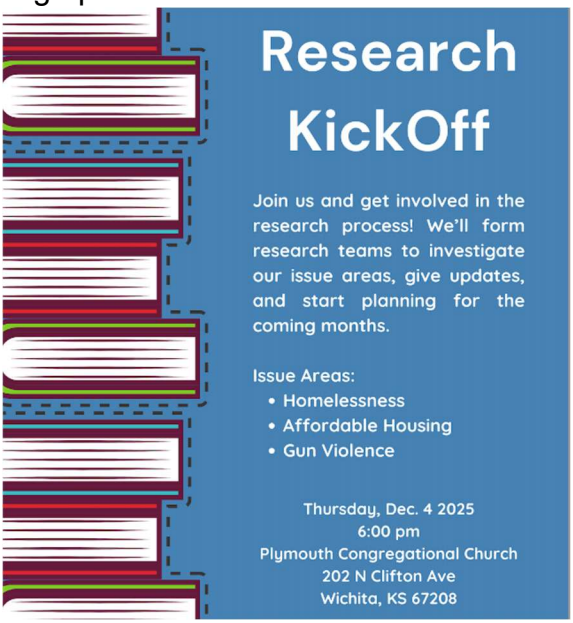

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We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
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Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
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"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
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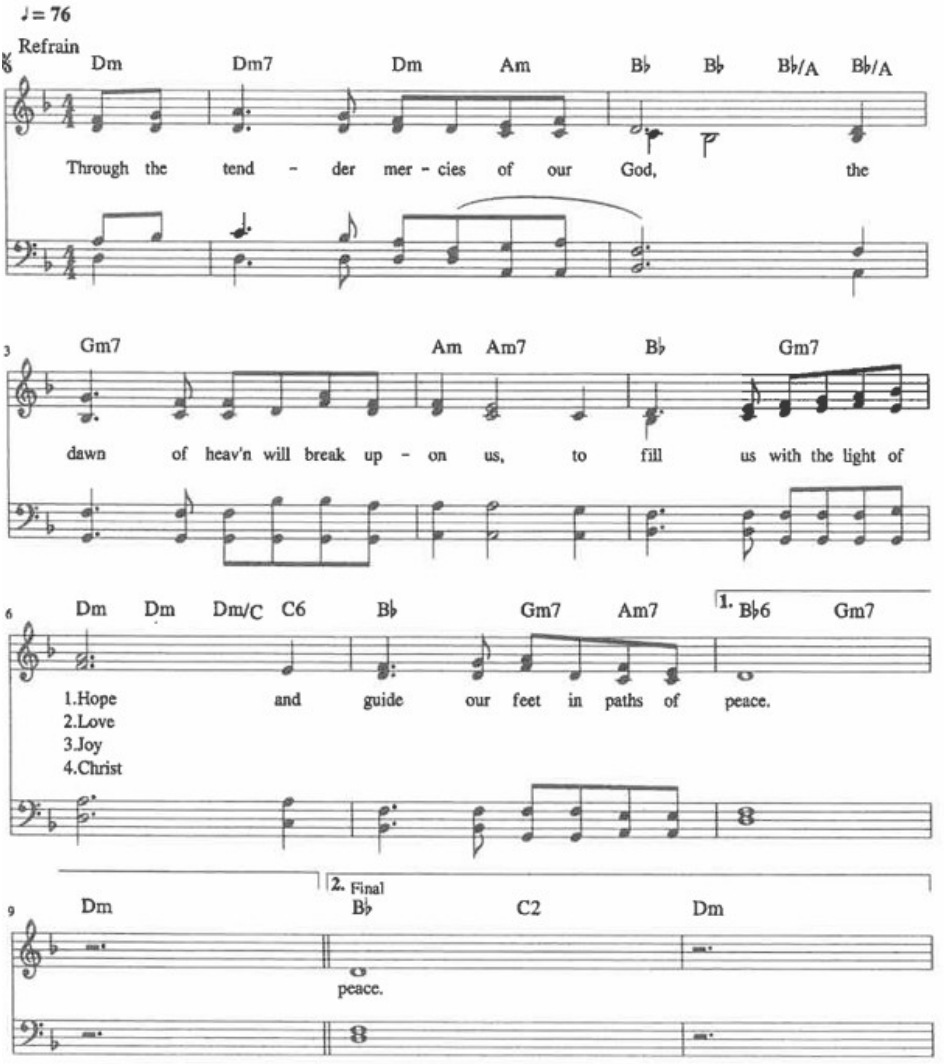
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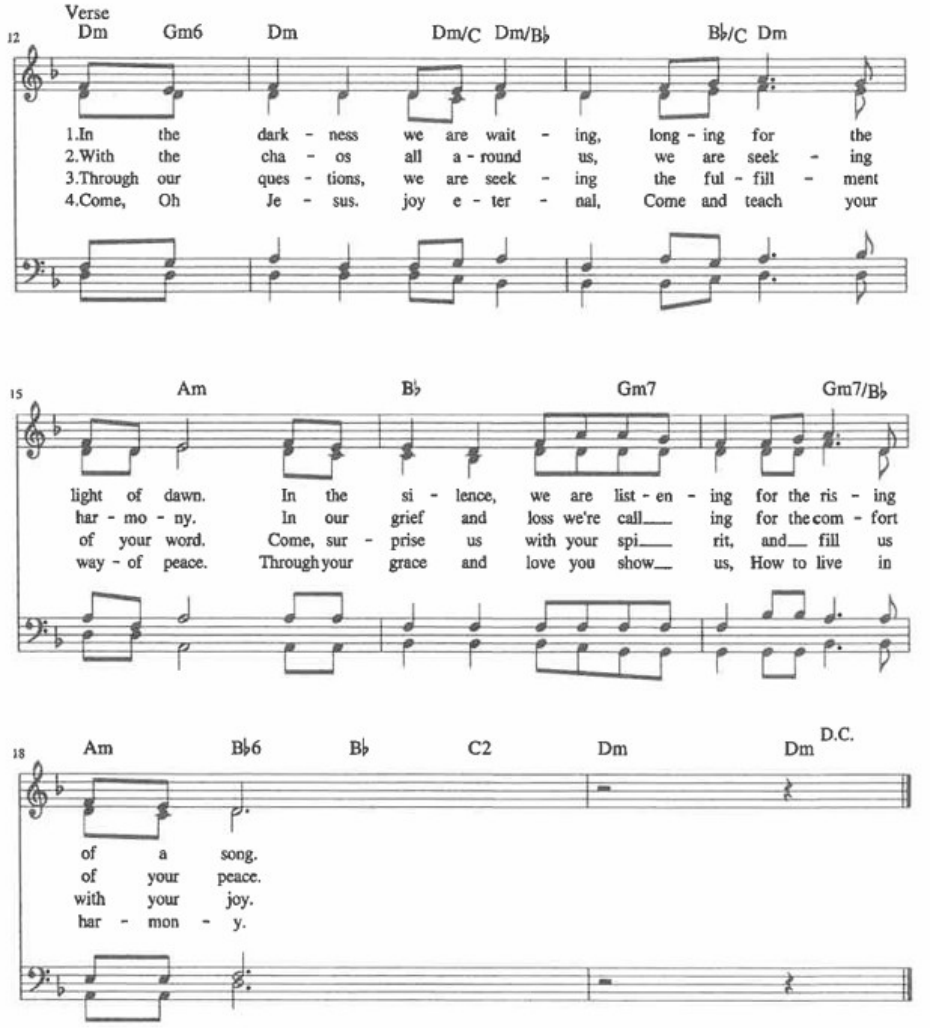
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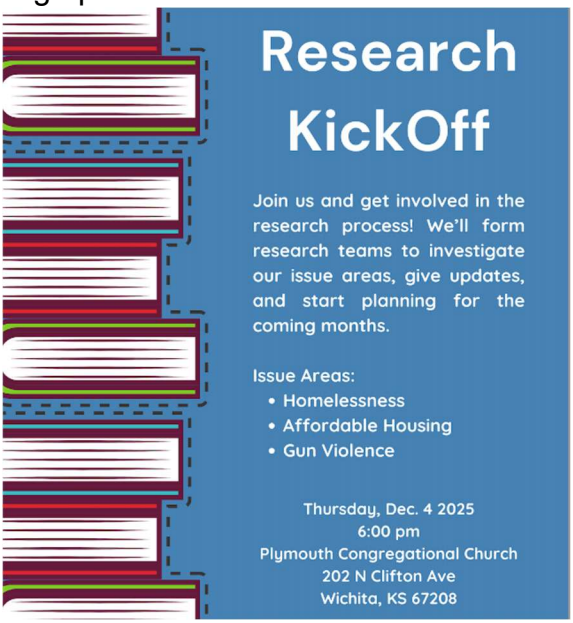

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God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
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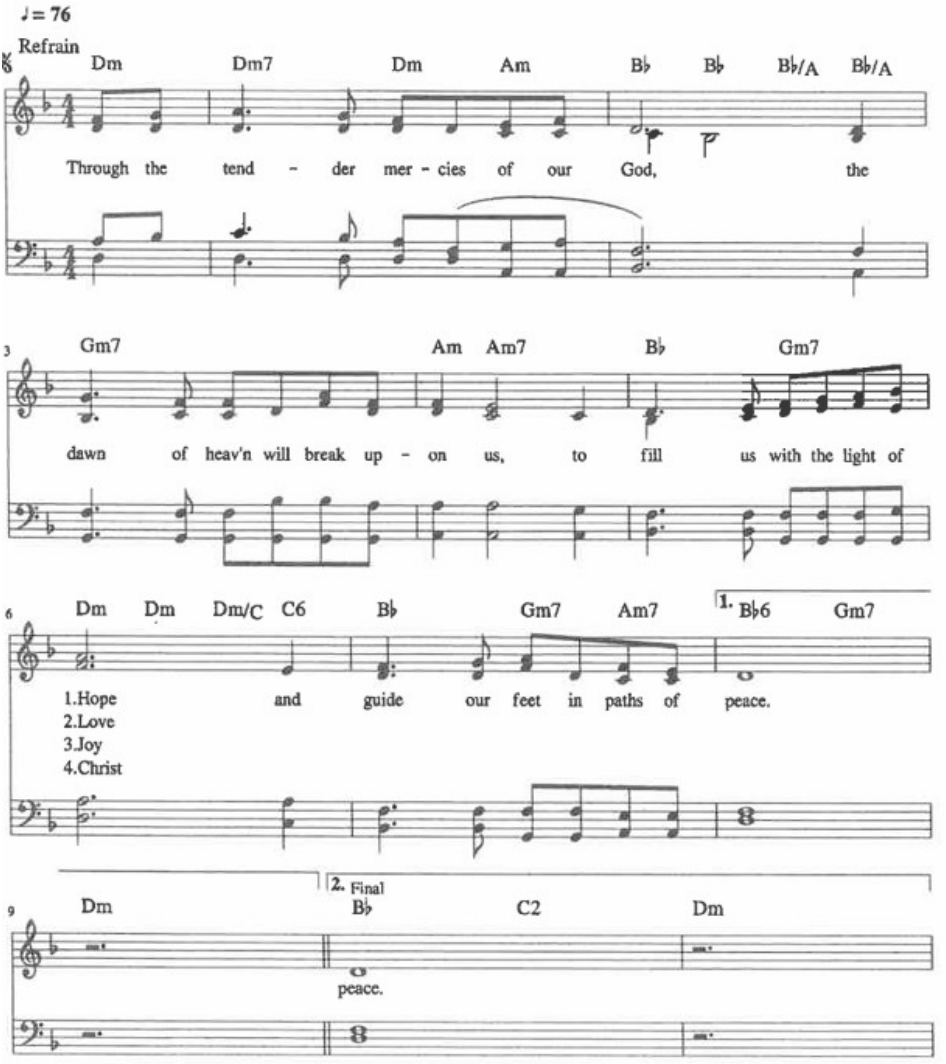
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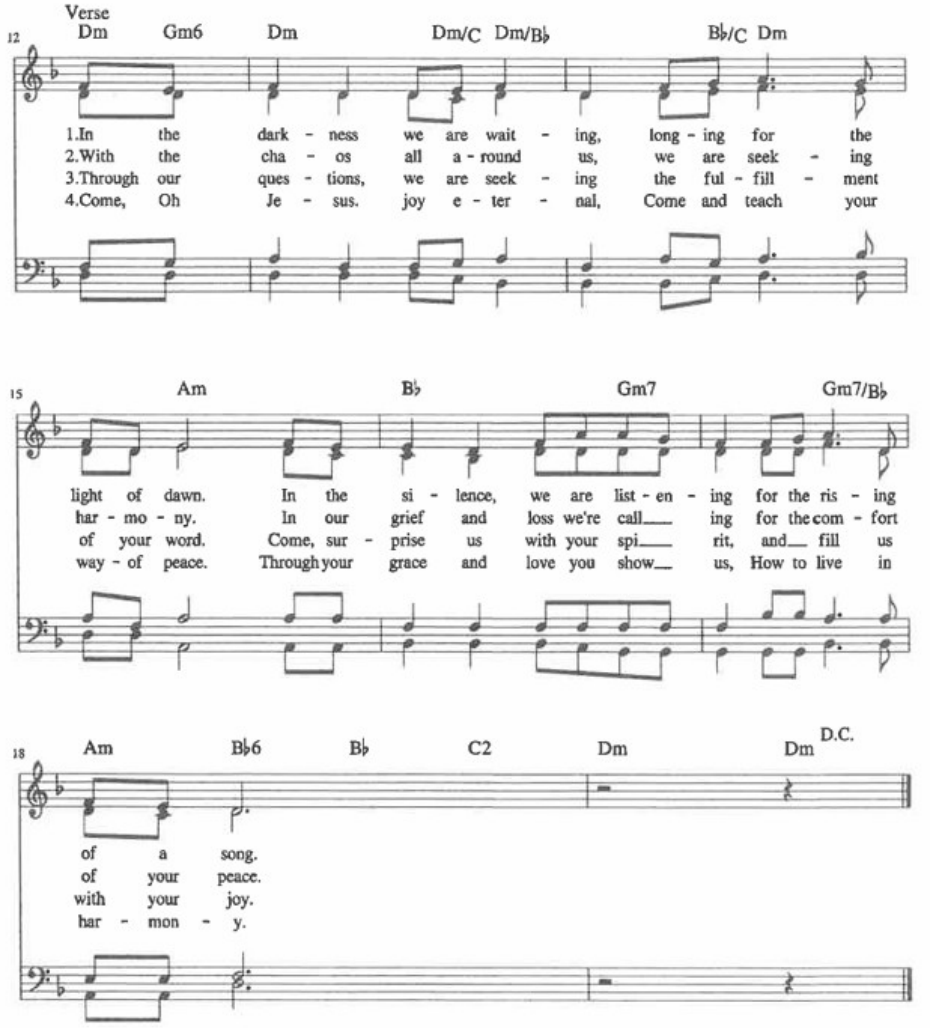
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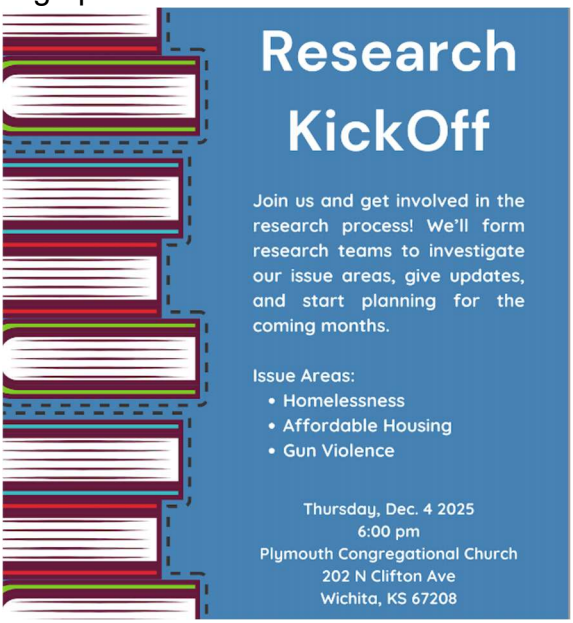

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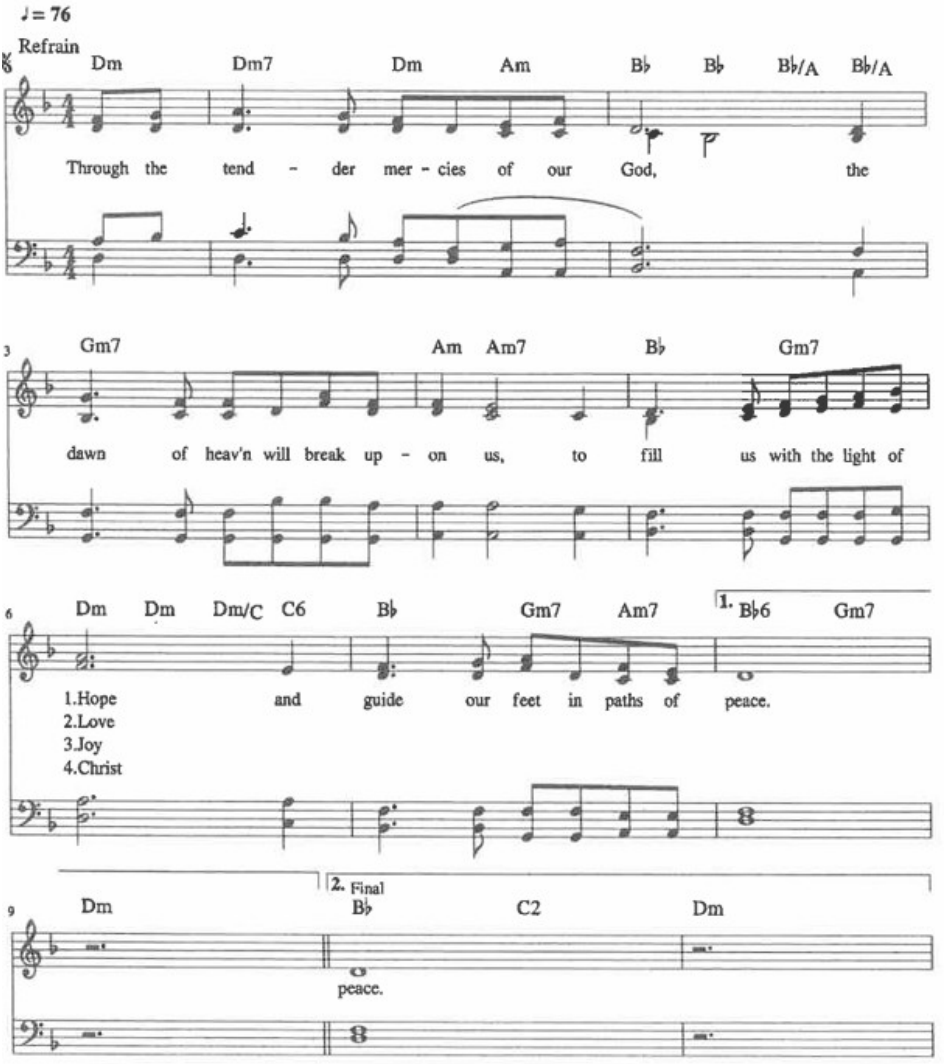
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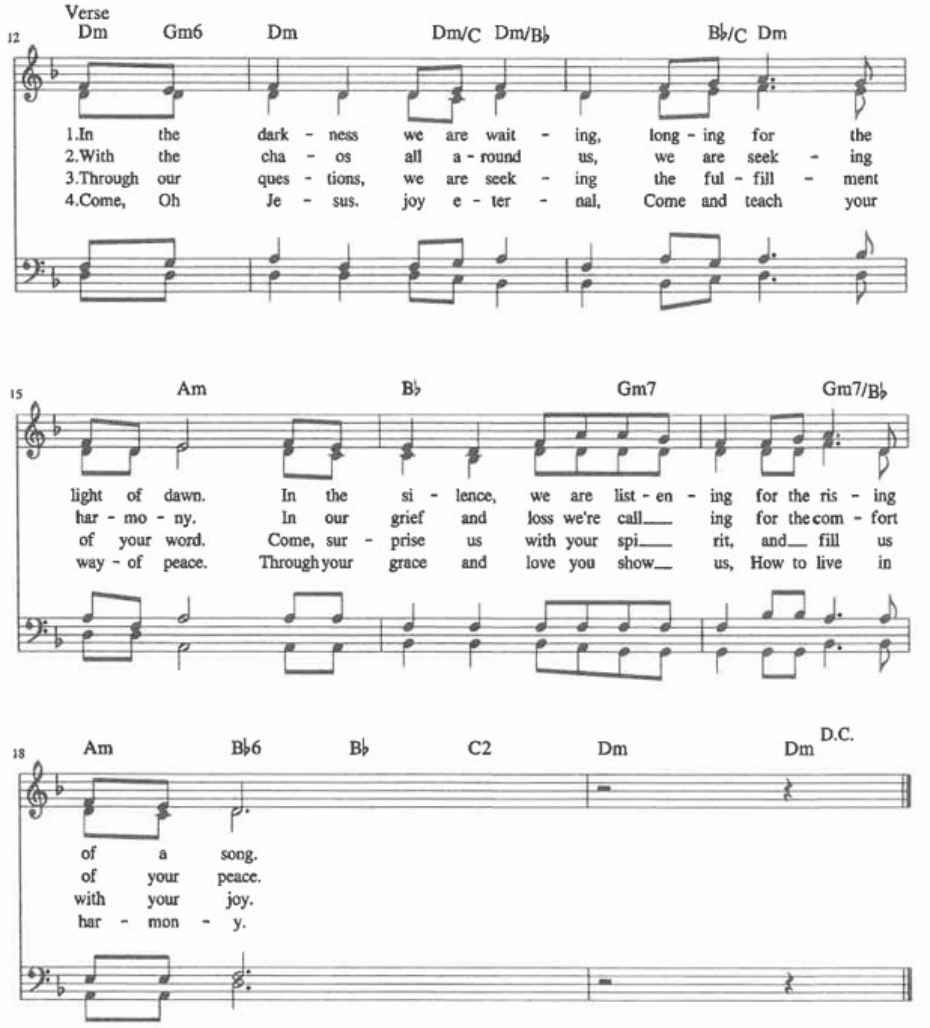
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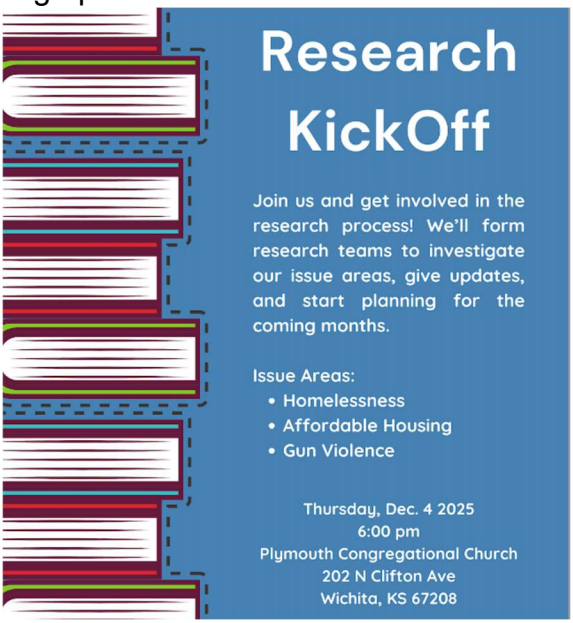

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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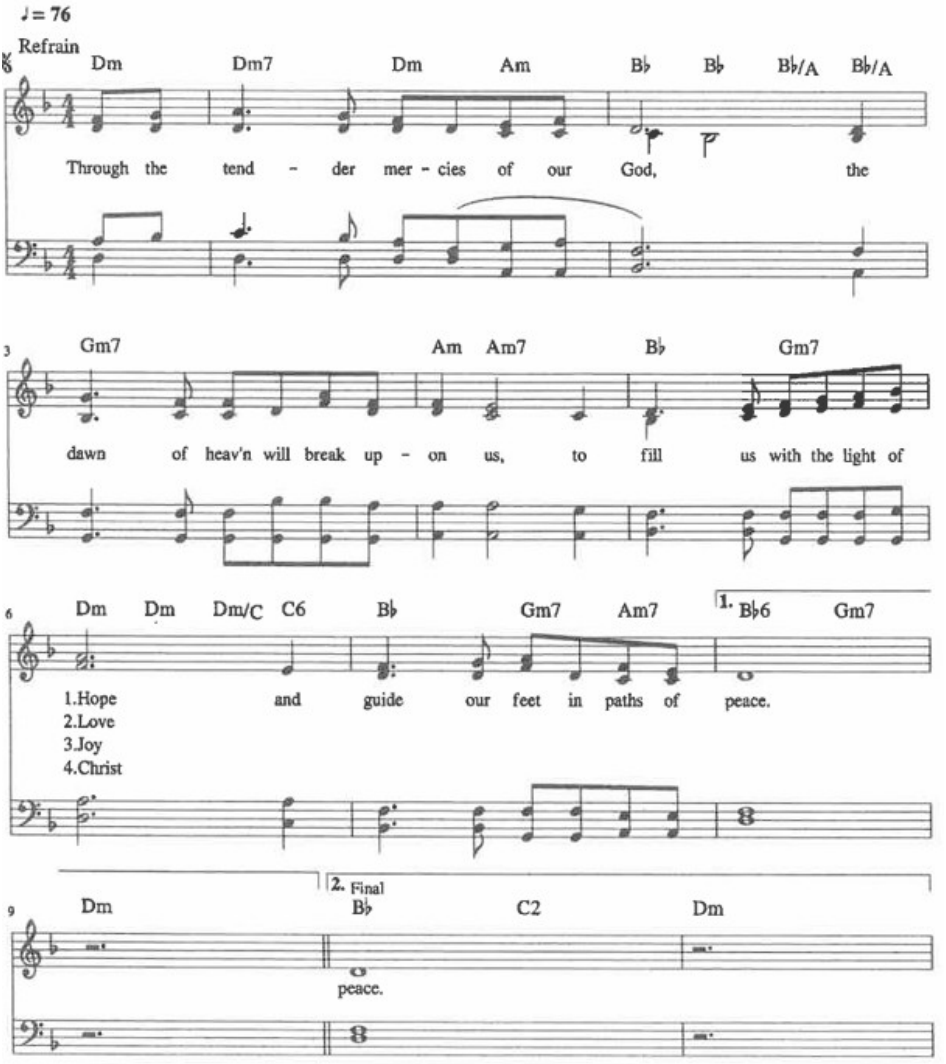
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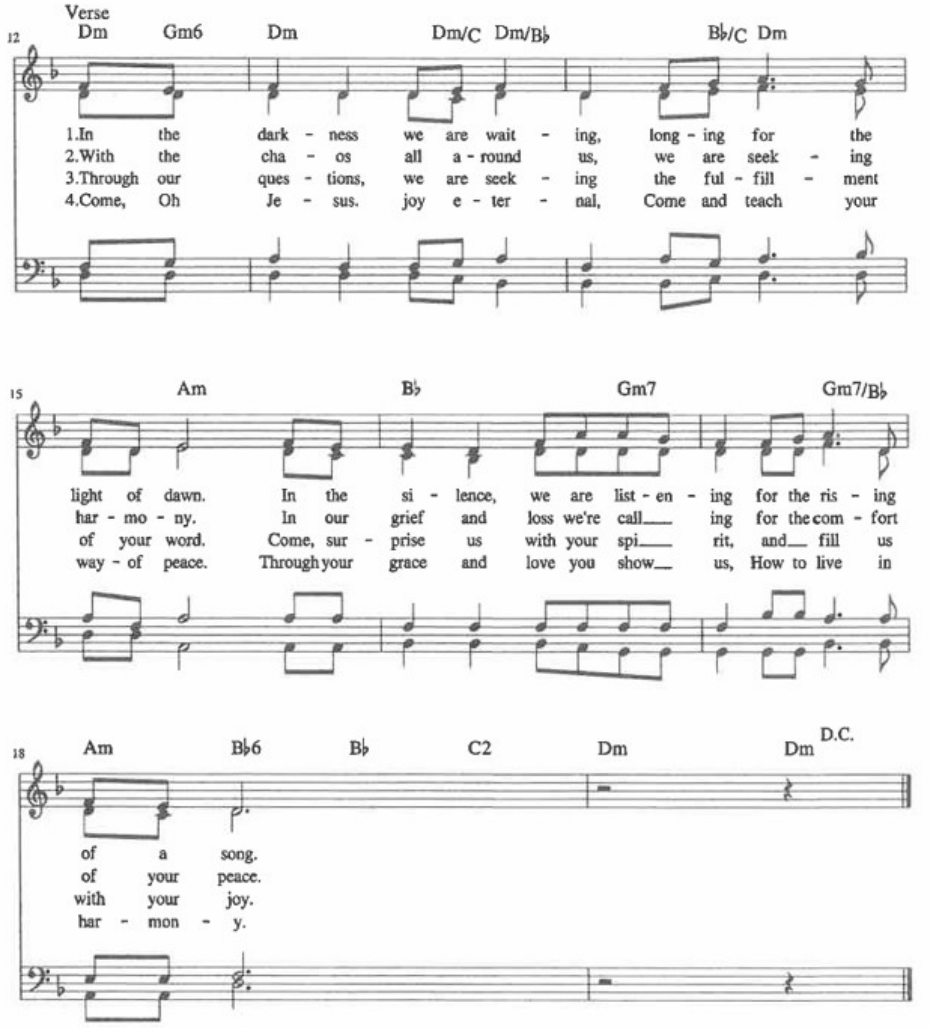
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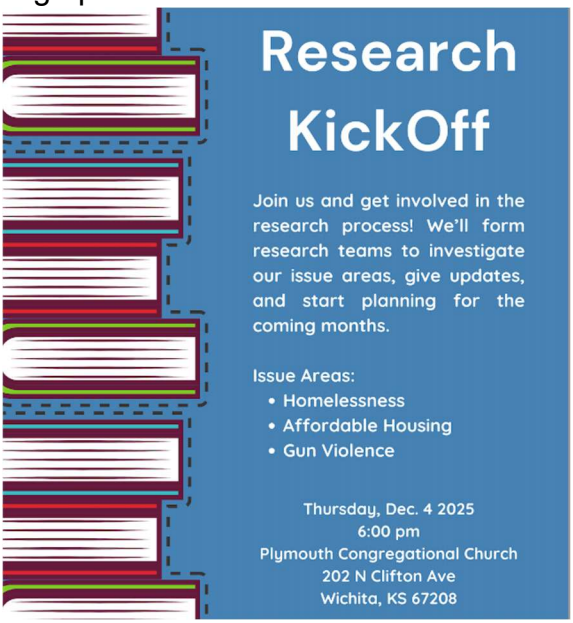

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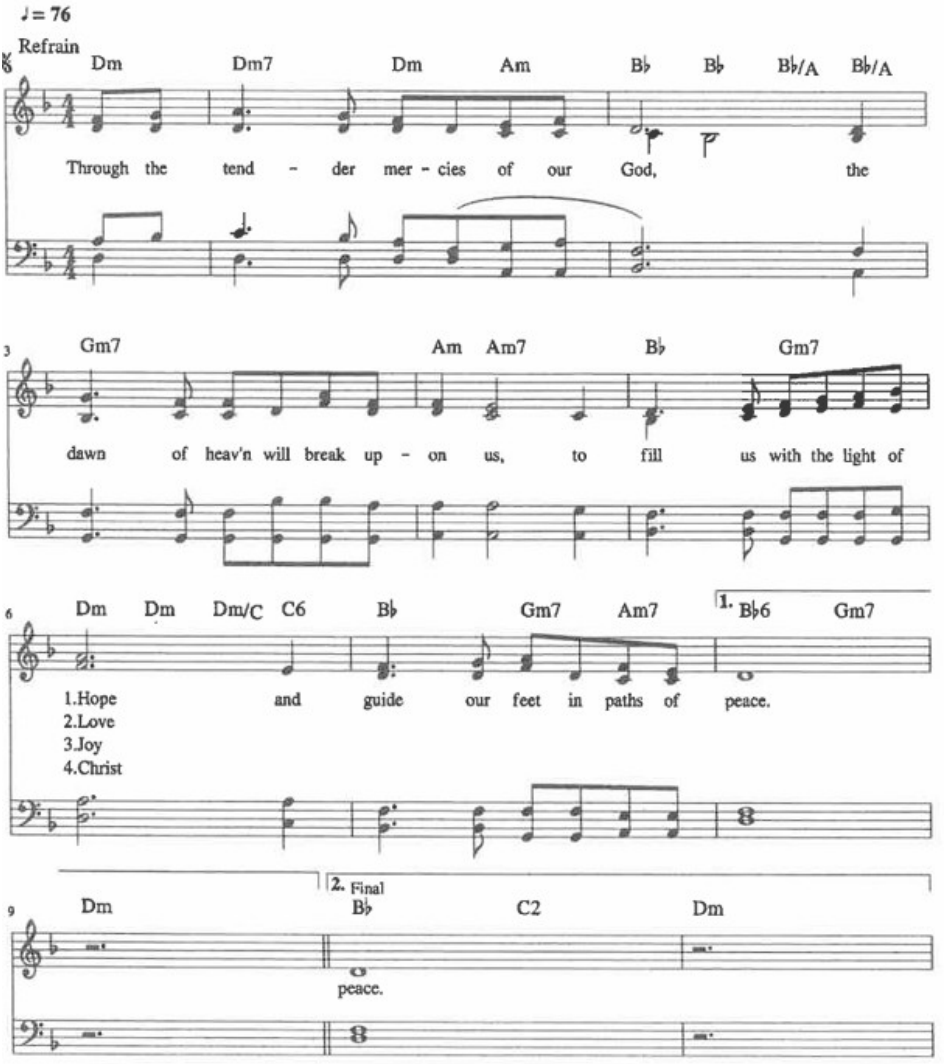
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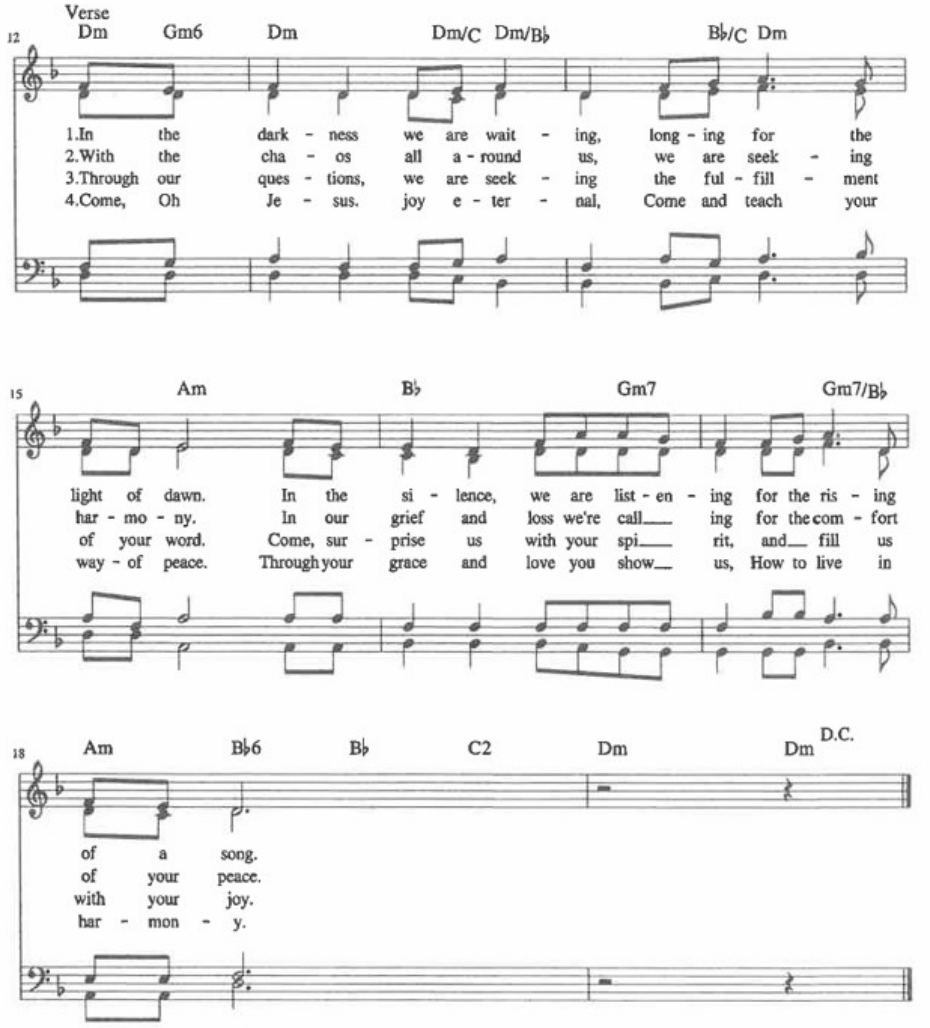
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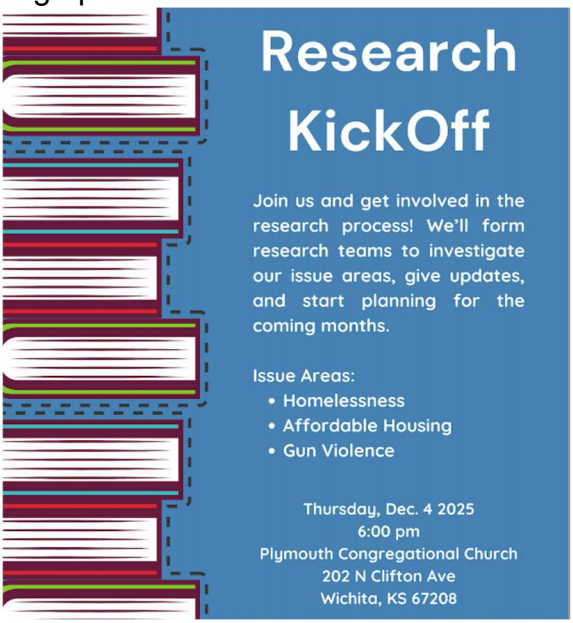

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PRAYER by Carol Penner

God of grace, today we pray for peace for the city of Bethlehem.
It has had more than its share of conflict,
as it changed from a little town
to a bustling city visited by millions each year.
You know the walls that separate people in Bethlehem;
walls of concrete, walls of prejudice, walls of hatred,
walls between Israeli and Palestinian,
walls between Jew and Christian and Muslim,
walls between cultures and languages.
We can hardly think of another place on earth
with such high walls and such deep hostility.
Yet this is where you were born:
your everlasting light still shines in those dark streets.
Thank you that your light shines
in the goodwill of people who do not return evil for evil.
We see it in the patience of people who wait for a better future,
and the creativity of people who make plans for peace,
even as powers and principalities make plans for war.
Your hope grows in refugee camps and narrow city streets.
It is nurtured in churches around the world
who pray for peace in Bethlehem.
Bulldozers and tanks can't crush that hope.
Laws and regulations can't stifle that hope.
Blockades and barricades can't stop that hope.
Bombs and guns can't blow it up.
At Christmas as the eyes of the world turn to Manger Square,
we remember the birth of the Prince of peace.
"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of the heavens.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.
O holy child of Bethlehem! Descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell,
oh come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel."
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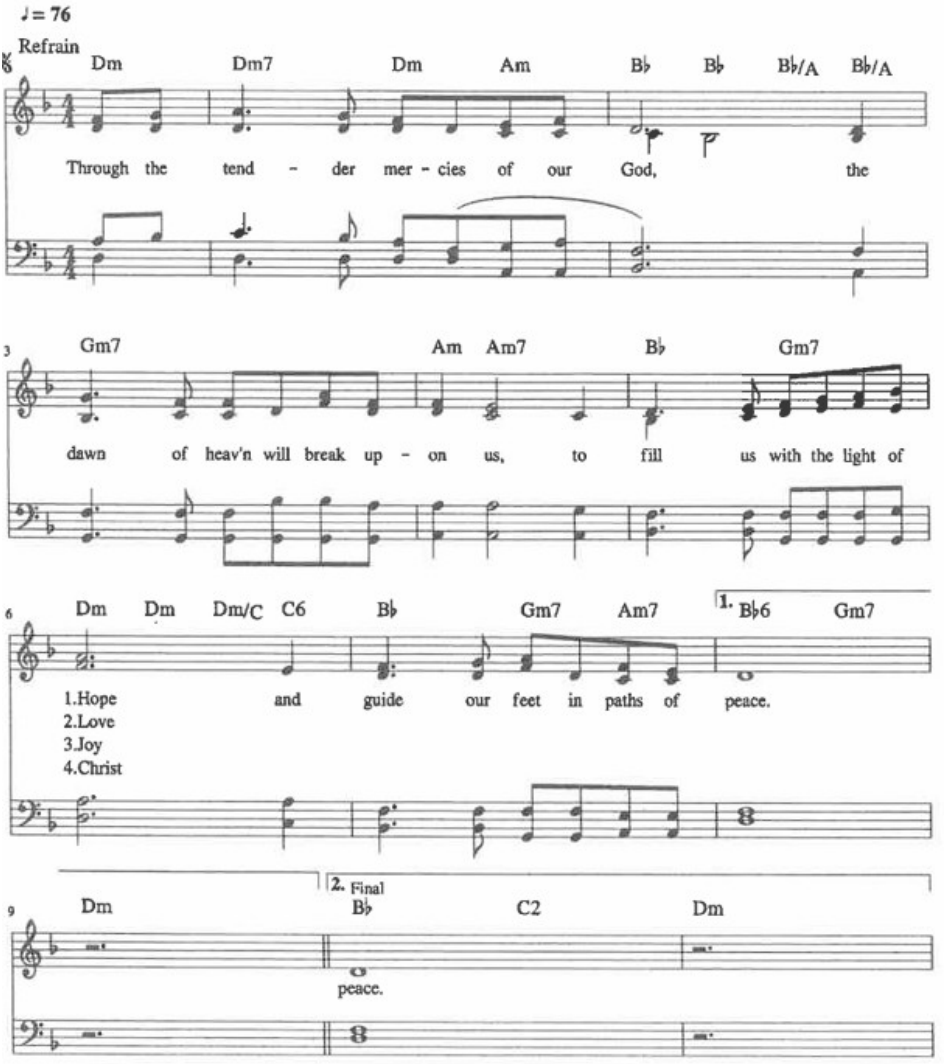
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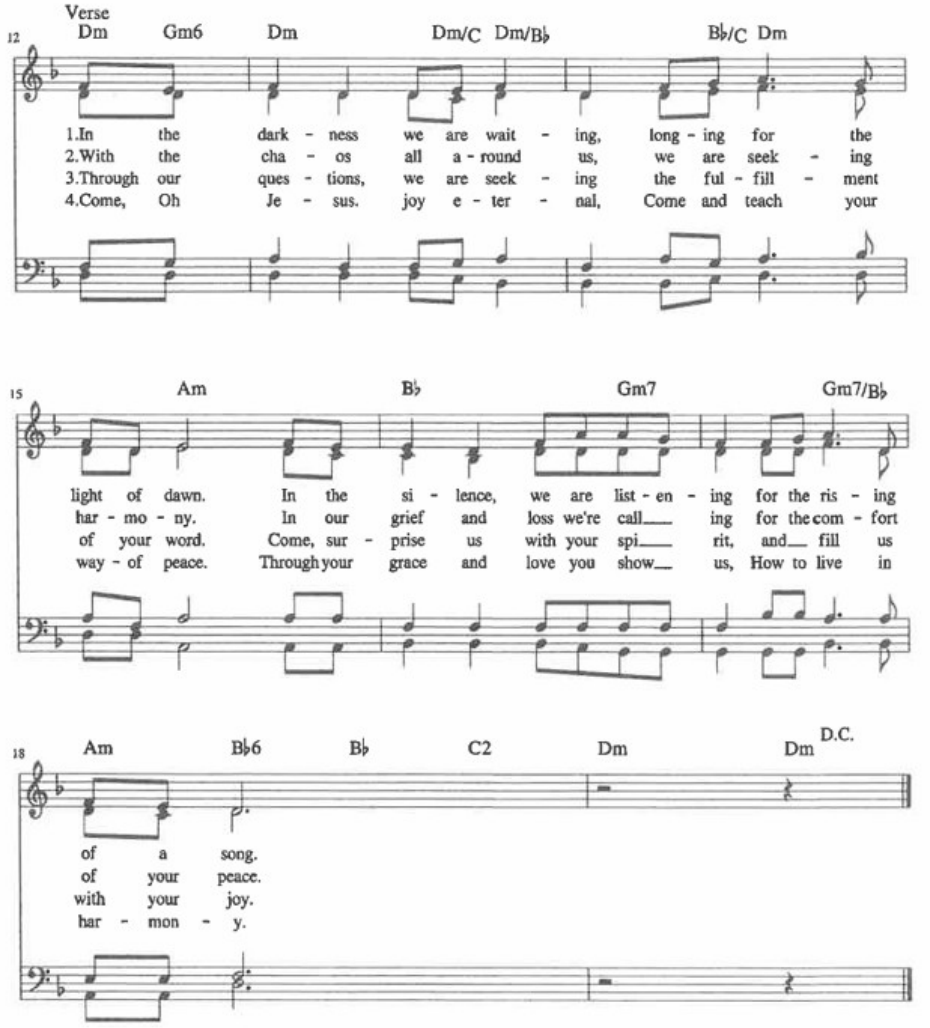
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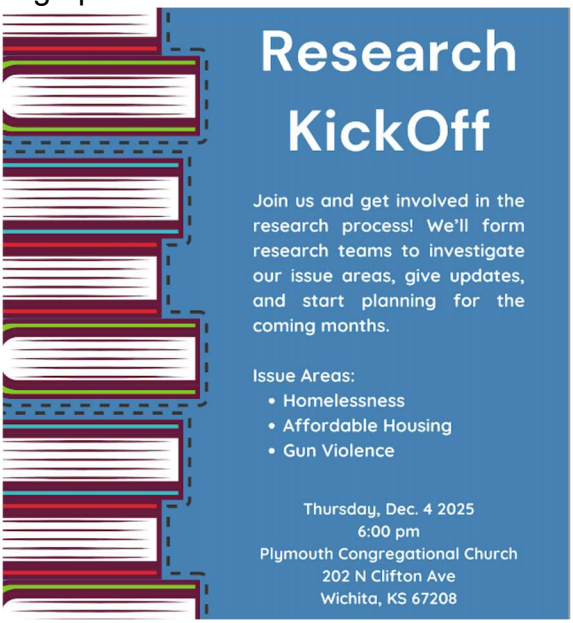

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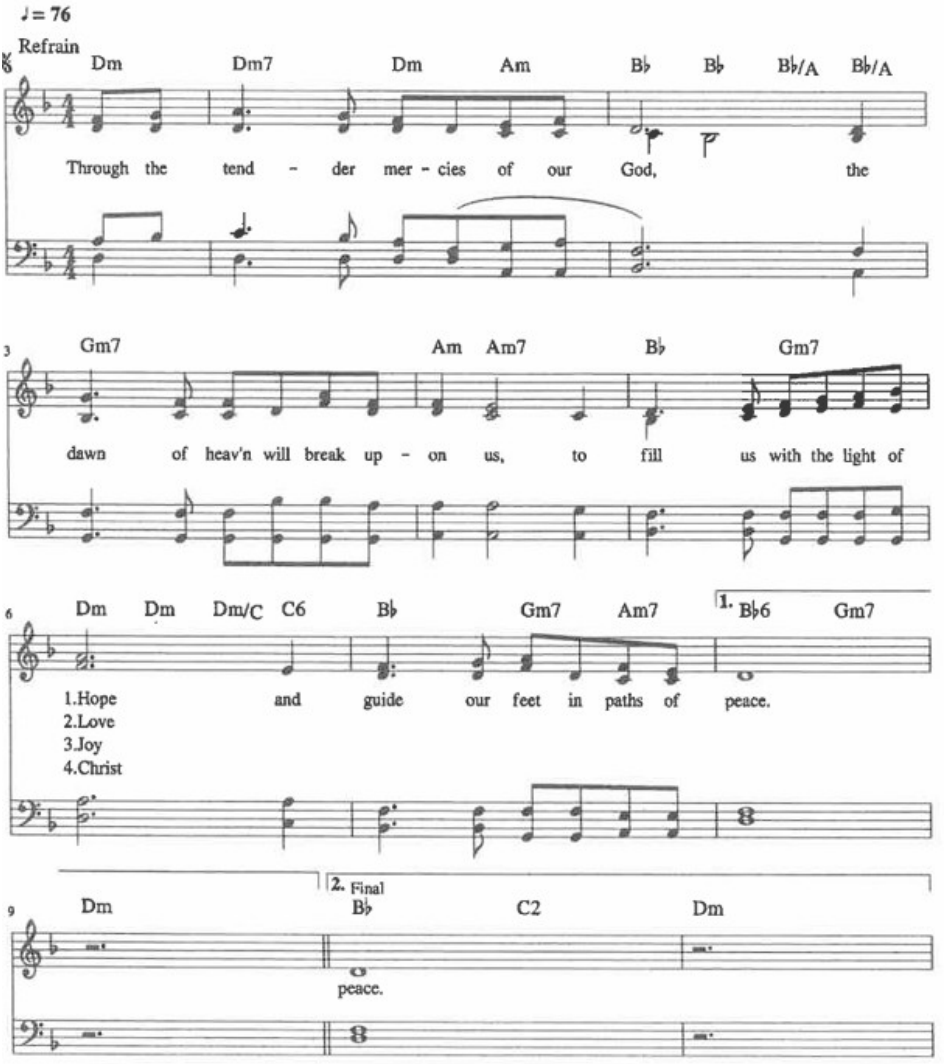
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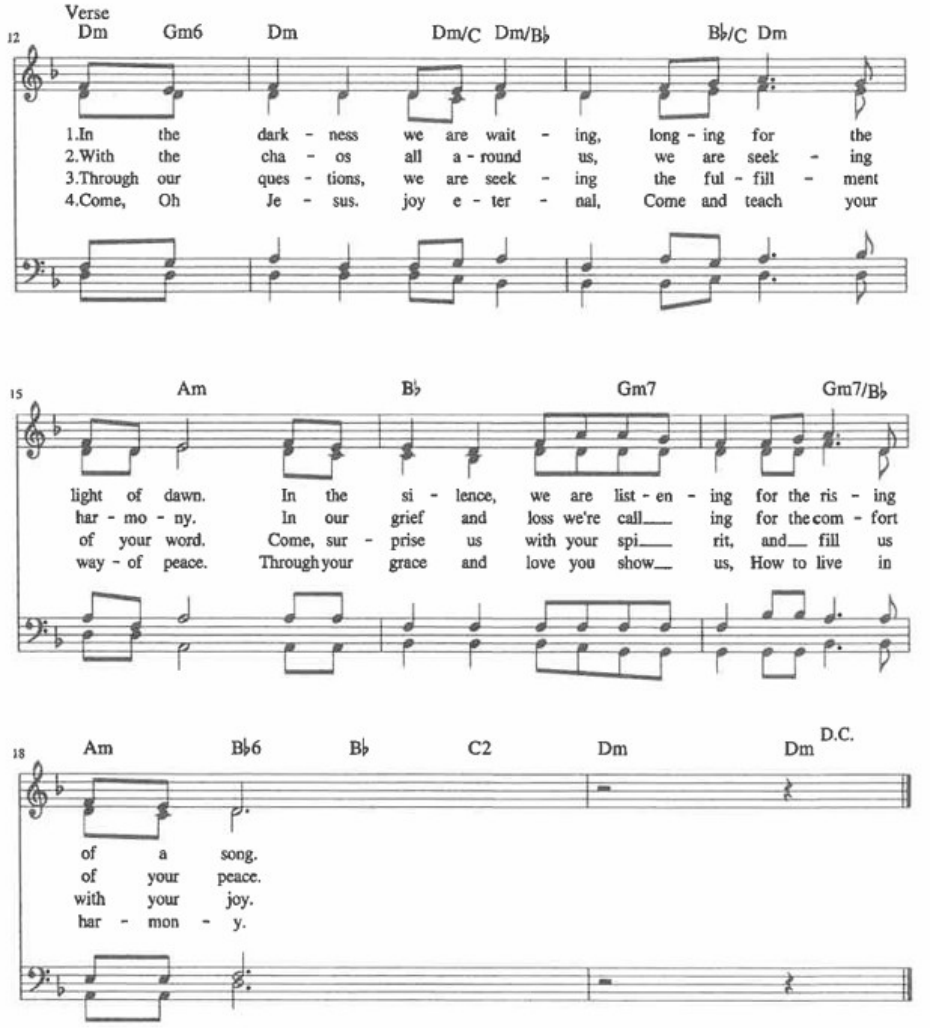
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Congregational Meeting Please join Vision Council on Sunday, **December 7th** at 4:00 p.m. for a virtual congregation meeting. The purpose is to introduce items that will be voted upon at the January annual meeting. The agenda will include a draft of the 2026 budget, review of open commission positions, Immigration Detention Response Plan, and one bylaws change. The meeting will last approximately one hour. Join the session by clicking the livestream link at hopemennonite.org.

Witness and Outreach is again partnering with Wichita's HumanKind Ministries Operation Holiday to gather **non-perishable food**, **winter accessories**, and **kid's/teen's coats-2T to adult 2XL** (new or gently used). You will find collection boxes by the Witness and Outreach bulletin board for your donated items. The boxes will be turned in after Sunday, December 7th. You can also donate time by helping out with the "prep crew" or "distribution crew" as they prepare and later distribute the collected items to Wichita families. All of the volunteer information can be found at https://www.humankindwichita.org and clicking on the "Events" tab where you will find "volunteer at OH."

We are very excited to have 4 Sundays during Advent for a fun, unusual Adult Sunday School experience entitled, "Jesus Didn't Want Us to Act Like Adults." So, you are invited to join us on November 30, December 7, 14, and 21 to take a break from adulting and revisit childhood for one hour each week during Advent. Jesus called us to a childlike faith, and it was obvious that he held children in very high esteem during his ministry. Although acting "childish" often gets a bad name, being "childlike" is a life of unconditional love, unending grace, and an almost irrational capacity for joy, fun, creativity, compassion, generosity, and forgiveness. So come on. Let your inner child be honored during this Advent season and join us! Come for one Sunday or all of them – it won't matter. We promise you'll enjoy the break from your adult life! Laurie Regehr and Amy Bellar

The next meeting of the Kansas Repair Coalition will be Monday, **December 1** at 5:30 pm on zoom. See Marcus Loganbill for more information. This organization focuses on the dismantling of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Give back on Giving Tuesday at Mennonite Central Committee, **December 2** from 6:30-8PM! Bring your kids, grandkids, and friends to MCC (121 E. 30th St, North Newton) for a fun evening of packing hygiene kits. Pack hygiene kits, tie comforters, make a cardboard comforter block craft, and enjoy snacks. Kick off your holiday shopping by picking gifts for your friends and family from the MCC Christmas Giving Guide. Find out more at mcc.org/giving-Tuesday.

Prayers for the wider church

… Give thanks for the pastors, leaders, and congregations in Western District Conference who share Christ's love through new church plants and mission initiatives. Pray that God continues to guide them with vision, courage, and joy.

… Last Thursday, as people in the United States celebrated Thanksgiving, let all remember that many inhabitants of Turtle Island — the United States — are mourning this holiday as a stark reminder of 500 years of betrayal, land theft and genocide. Pray that God's spirit will show all who share this land how to balance gratitude with repentance, lament and willingness to repair the harms done.

There is a plate of dried, non-artificial olive branches in the Pastor's office. That's because for many, olive branches are a symbol of peace and reconciliation, made possible by and in God. Extending an olive branch to a person or to a cause is intended to be a gesture toward that end—a wish to end discord and bring greater peace and well-being.

We can all think of relationships, systems, and realities that could use an olive branch—or two or three, or better yet, a whole tree. We long for leaves and gestures that can heal the hurting places within our lives and world. Sometimes we need help and encouragement when extending or receiving olive branches.

To that end, Pastor Ruth will offer periodic olive branch opportunities (see other side). This won't be an exhaustive list (there is no such thing), nor will she assume these opportunities are ones everyone can get behind in the same way. Pastor Ruth will curate these opportunities with prayer and in consultation with other leaders at Hope Mennonite, keeping our Hope Vision and Values in mind. May these olive branch opportunities become avenues for us live out our welcome and inclusion statement with greater awareness, vitality, tools, and courage.

Olive branch opportunity-November 30, 2025

On December 2, Justice Together will request that the Wichita City Council include an Affordable Housing Fund investment ($10 million) as part of the proposed 1 cent sale that will be on the Spring 2026 ballot. The City Council will determine allocations of sales tax revenue (total of $115 million) on December 9. Learn more & sign up: tinyurl.com/wichitahousingaction

Here are a couple of action steps you can take to help this effort:

- Contact your City Council member
- Send a preprinted postcard to Mayor Wu or put in basket on literature table by **today**-November 30.
- Pick up a flyer with more information & ideas
- ATTEND THE PRAYER VIGIL OUTSIDE THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT 8:30 AM ON **DECEMBER 2**

Postcards to Mayor Wu and flyers are available on the literature table between the mailboxes. (Note: Justice Together Network members will find them in their mailboxes).

Also, please let Pastor Ruth know if you would like to join her at the Justice Together prayer vigil on December 2 at 8:30am outside the council chambers.

In addition, please take note of the Justice Together Research kick-off event coming up December 4.