

WORSHIP KIT

# Lift Up Your Heads

HANGING  
OF THE GREENS



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# Lift Up Your Heads

## HANGING OF THE GREENS

### Notes

Taking its theme from Psalm 24, this hanging of the greens service invites us to “look up ... for your redemption is drawing nigh.” The service is designed so that various parts of the holiday decorations may be done during the worship ... or the service may take place before or after the decorating.

In terms of actual decorating of the church, this service allows for a number of options:

- It is possible to complete this whole service as written, and then decorate the church. In that case, you might want to at least show a sample or two of each item being discussed (a candle, a green garland, a wreath, a red bow) as they are mentioned in the service.
- Or you could go through most of the service (here, too, showing samples along the way might be helpful)—to the place where the cross (+) appears in the order of service, and do the decorating then. When the decorating is completed, the service closes with the Offering, the Lord’s Prayer, the Benediction and the closing hymn.
- Or you could divide the decorating into various tasks following the service outline, and do each task at that point in the service, an option that requires considerable planning.

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## Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

### Newsletter Notice

Join us for our hanging of the greens service, “Lift Up Your Heads” in which we discover the meaning behind the decorations that adorn the church and bask in the joy of celebrating the excitement of the upcoming birth of our Savior as we look up and around at our new surroundings.

### Bulletin Notice

Join us for our hanging of the greens service, “Lift Up Your Heads” in which we discover the meaning behind the decorations that adorn the church and bask in the joy of celebrating the excitement of the upcoming birth of our Savior as we look up and around at our new surroundings.

# Lift Up Your Heads

HANGING OF THE GREENS

## Complete Script For Worship Leaders

- **Psalm 24:** The opening section's hymn is sung by the congregation to the tune Vom Himmel Hoch LM, interspersed with words spoken by the pastor:

Lift up your heads, O ancient gates!  
Behold, the King of Glory waits.

☐ Who is the King of Glory?

The Lord who comes in victory—  
The Lord almighty, it is he!

☐ Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?

All those whose souls have been washed clean  
Within God's temple shall be seen.

☐ They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation.

Here in God's house they find a place,  
All those who seek the Savior's face.

Ⓟ The earth is the Lord's and all it holds, the world and all who dwell therein.

Lift up your heads, O ancient gates!  
Behold, the King of Glory waits.

Ⓟ Who is the King of Glory?

The Lord who comes in victory—  
The Lord almighty, it is he!

- The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ On this day when we hang greens in the church, we remember, dear Jesus, how you have beautified our lives with your coming among us through your birth. Thank you for clothing us with your love, dressing us with your robes of righteousness through your salvation and for adorning us with the joy of knowing you as our Friend and Giver of all good gifts. Amen.

- The **Children's Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

*Needed: Church Christmas decorations*

Ⓟ Hello, boys and girls. What do I have here? (Hold up Christmas decorations and allow the children to respond.) That's right! They are Christmas decorations. What are we going to do with these decorations? (Allow the children to respond.) That's right! We are going to hang them all around the church. That's why we call this a hanging of the greens service.

When Jesus was born over 2000 years ago, he was born in a dark and dreary stable and not many people at first knew about his birth. But now that we know that the celebration of Jesus' birthday is coming up, we want this house of the Lord to proclaim, "Jesus, our Savior, is on the way!" We want these decorations to declare how much we love him. We want these decorations to celebrate that God's Son has come to be with us, and we want everyone who enters this place to know that Baby Jesus' birth means that we have new life, the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life.

The decorations we put up in this church tell the story of Jesus. Listen carefully to what these decorations mean so that you, too, can tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love to everyone you meet.

- The **Homily Introduction** is spoken by the pastor:

Ⓟ "Lift up your heads," the Advent season invites us—not only in psalms and scriptures, but even in the way our church building looks at this wonderful time of year. When we have completed the work of decorating, which is the focus of this "hanging of the greens" service, people who



walk into the building will notice an immediate and exciting difference. Without being told, they will lift up their heads, just to see all that is new and attractive and different here.

That is very much an Advent thought. In the Gospel reading for this service—one of the Church’s traditional Gospels for Advent—Jesus tells his disciples about all kinds of things that can cause people to “lift up their heads,” some of them frightening and surprising, others (like our church decorations) more common and unexpected.

All of them, he says, can be viewed as signs of something very special: “Your redemption is drawing near.” That is the theme of Advent, and so of this service. That is, therefore, also the message of our decorations: “Your redemption is drawing near.” And it is the answer to the question, “O Lord, how shall I meet you?”

- **The Holy Gospel** section’s hymn is sung by the congregation to the tune Valet Will Ich Der Geben 76 76 D interspersed with words of Luke 21:25-31 spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

O Lord, how shall I meet you, how welcome you aright?  
Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart’s delight.  
Oh, kindle, precious Savior, your lamp within my breast,  
That all my glad behavior may show how I’ve been blest.

- Ⓟ There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars. Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in a cloud” with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place,

**Ⓒ stand up and raise your heads,**

- Ⓟ because your redemption is drawing near.

Your Zion strews before you green boughs and fairest palms;  
And I, too, will adore you with joyous songs and psalms.  
My heart shall bloom forever for you with praises new  
And from your name shall never withhold the honor due.

- Ⓟ Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place,

**Ⓒ you know that the kingdom of God is near.**

- Ⓟ Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;  
Arise, O Son so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.  
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see  
The day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!

- **The Light** section begins with Psalm 34:1-5, 22 read by the pastor:

Ⓟ A reading from Psalm 34 invites us to look up and see the coming light:

I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exult his name together.

I sought the Lord and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. Look to him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed.

The Lord redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

- **Candles (and maybe even Christmas lights)** may be carried in, in procession as the congregation sings the following hymn to the tune Nun Komm, Der Heiden Heiland 77 77:

As the season's beauty spreads, O ye saints, lift up your heads.  
As this place we decorate, God's great mercies contemplate.

Driving back the rule of night, ever brighter grows the light.  
Lift your heads; it shall appear: Your redemption drawing near.

- **The Homily** continues, delivered by the pastor:

Ⓟ "Look to the Lord and be radiant," the psalmist has invited us ... even as Isaiah ushers in the season with familiar words: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them the light has shined."

"Lift up your heads," for Advent is the season of ever-increasing light. It came upon the world almost like a sunrise ... or that light that begins to be evident even before the sun itself appears ... light that lets you know what a new day is surely on the way.

Light is such a primary sign of the season that the entire Bible begins with it: "Let there be light!" the Word of God cried forth in the beginning. "And there was light."

The evangelist John picks up that theme at the beginning of his Gospel, describing the coming of Christ by saying "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it."

Tune..... Vom Himmel Hoch LM

The image displays a piano accompaniment for the hymn 'Vom Himmel Hoch'. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system begins with a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a first finger fingering (1) in the bass staff. The melody in the treble staff starts with a whole rest, followed by a series of chords and single notes. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The second system starts with a fifth finger fingering (5) in both staves. The treble staff continues the melody with chords and single notes, while the bass staff provides accompaniment with chords and single notes. The piece concludes with a final chord in both staves.

- **Psalm 24**'s opening section's hymn is sung by the congregation to the tune Vom Himmel Hoch LM, interspersed with words spoken by the pastor:

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**P** Who is the King of Glory?

The Lord who comes in victory—  
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**P** They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation.

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