



GOD, YOU ARE MY GOD, FOR YOU I LONG

Responsorial Song for Morning Prayer from Psalm 63 for Sunday

22A

for Psalmist, Assembly, Decant & Duet

with Keyboard, Flute & Guitar

TONY BARR

*I thirst for you, my God.
I long to see you facet*

*phase one
distress and alienation*

God, you are my God, for you I long ,
my soul thirsts for you alone.
Always, my heart pines for you
like the parched, weary land, craving water.
I look to your Holy Place
to see your power and glory!

*phase two
despair born of remembrance*

I remember you as I lie on my bed,
all night my thoughts turn to you.
Always, you have kept me in safety,
in the shelter of your wings I delight!
I cling to you for protection,
your right hand shall guide and keep me.

*phase three
the oracular consultation*

*phase four
a rebirth of ecstatic contentment*

My life is a blessing to you,
my hands raised in song to your name.
You fill me with joy at your banquet,
every breath that I take shall praise you!
What are my days without your love?
My lips make constant thanksgiving;

Let all who try to destroy my life
be wiped from the face of the earth.
Your power drives injustice to flight,
the proud tumble down to the dust.
The just shall rejoice in your presence,
only the living shall give you glory!

As with all these psalm settings, instrumental pieces are to be played only if those instruments are available.
At its most basic form, all the psalm needs is a psalmist (cantor) and assembly.
Reommended is for two psalmists (cantors) singing alternating verses, determined by their vocal range.

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Full | 2 |
| Score..... | 7 |
| Choral/Vocal | 9 |
| Score..... | 10 |
| A Lamentation from Exile..... | |
| A Liturgical Text..... | |

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God, You Are My God, For You I Long

Responsorial Song from Psalm 63 for Sunday 22

INTRO ♩ = ca. 60

Music & text from Ps. 63 Tony Barr

Flute

Descant / Duet

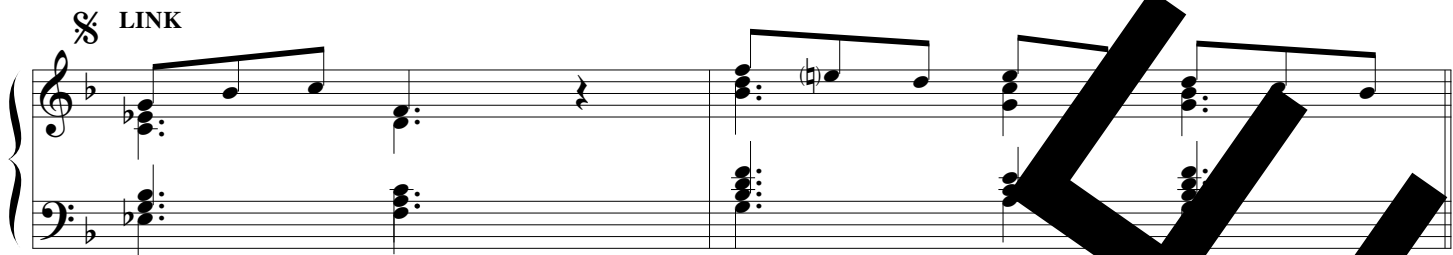
Psalmist (Cantor) / Assmibly

1st time only Psalmist (Cantor) at the a

I th for you, my God, I long to see your face.

Fmaj7 Gm7+2 Ebmaj7 Dm Cm7

LINK



REFRAIN

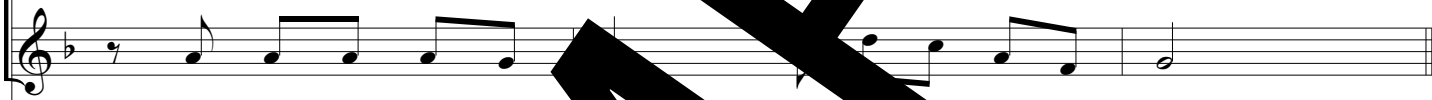
Flute on selected Refrains



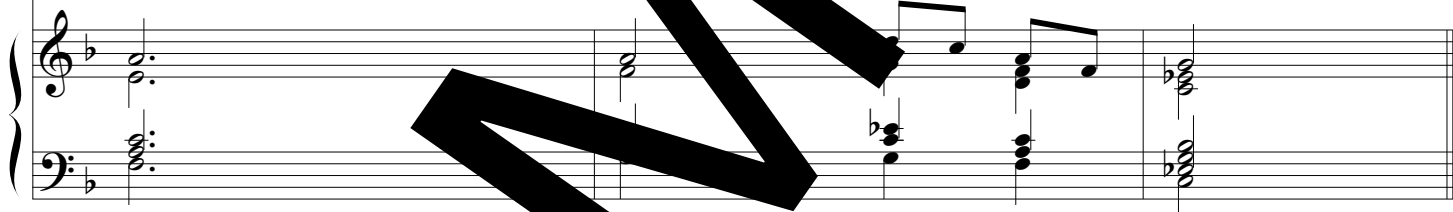
Descant on selected Refrains



I thirst for you, my God; I long to see your face.



I thirst for you, my I long to see your face.



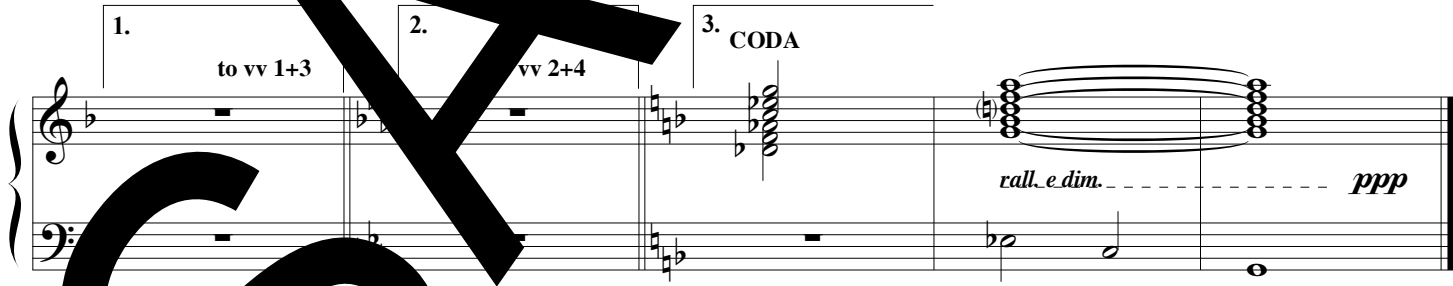
1.

to vv 1+3

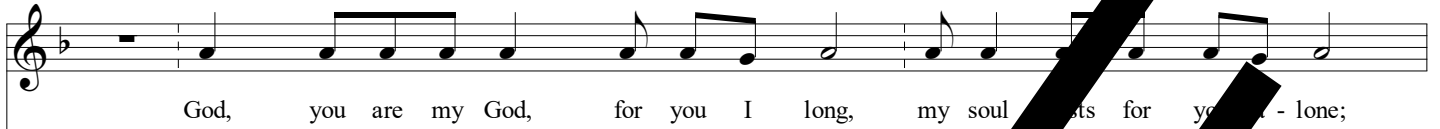
2.

vv 2+4

3. CODA



VERSE 1 Psalmist A (Cantor) *at the ambo*



God, you are my God, for you I long, my soul thirsts for you - lone;

VERSE 3 Psalmist A (Cantor) *at the ambo*



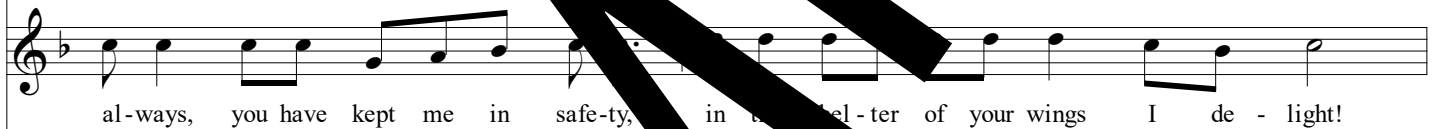
I re-memb-er you as I lie on my bed, all night my thoughts to



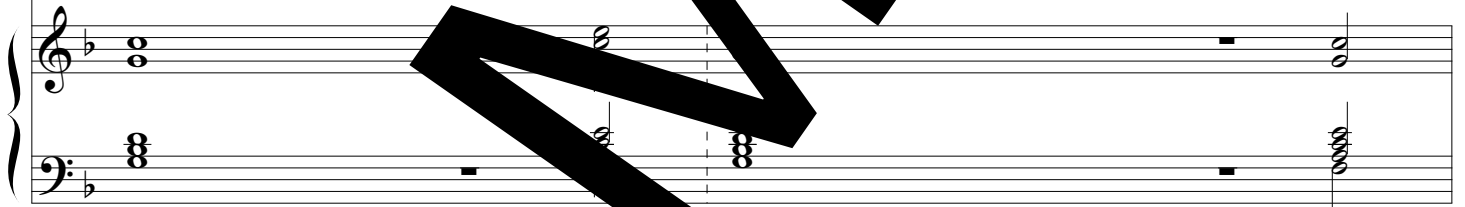
Piano accompaniment for Verse 3, showing chords and bass lines.



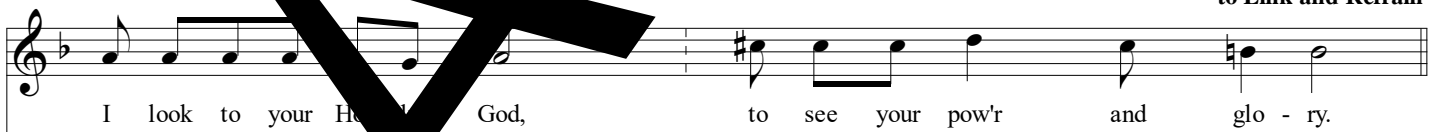
al-ways my heart pines for you like a parched, wea-ry land, crav-ing wa-ter.



al-ways, you have kept me in safe-ty, in the shel-ter of your wings I de-light!



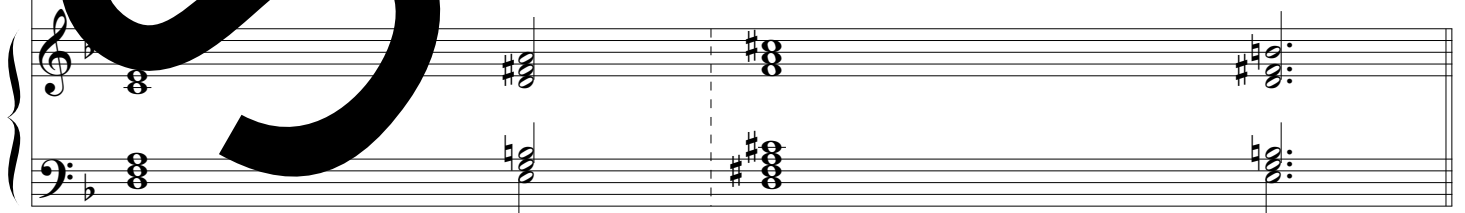
Piano accompaniment for Verse 3, showing chords and bass lines.



I look to your Holy God, to see your pow'r and glo-ry.



I cling to your pro-tec-tion, your right hand shall guide and keep me.



Piano accompaniment for Verse 3, showing chords and bass lines.

to Link and Refrain

VERSE 2 Duet

What are my days with-out your love? My lips make con-stant thank-giv-ing;

Psalmt (Cantor) B at the ambo

What are my days with-out your love? My lips make con-stant thank-giv-ing;

VERSE 4 Duet

Let all who try to des-troy my life be wiped from the face of the earth.

Psalmt B (Cantor) at the ambo

Let all who try to des-troy my life be wiped from the face of the earth.

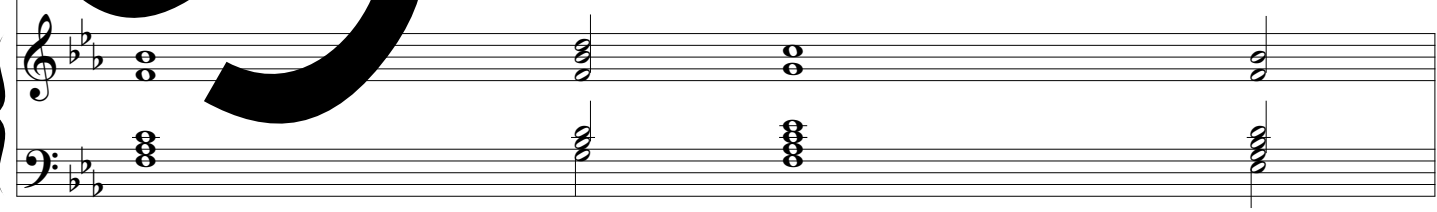


my life is a bless-ing to you, my hands raised in song to your name.

my life is a bless-ing to you, my hands raised in song to your name.

³⁶ You drive in-jus-tice to flight, the proud tum-ble down to the dust.

You drive in-jus-tice to flight, the proud tum-ble down to the dust.




to Link and Refrain

The musical score consists of five systems. The first four systems are for voice, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are: "You fill me with joy at your ban-quet, ev-'ry breath that I take shall praise you." The fifth system is for piano accompaniment, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and the same key signature. The lyrics for the piano part are: "The just shall re-joyce in your pres-ence, on the liv-ing shall give you glo-ry!". A large, diagonal watermark reading "SAMPLE" is overlaid across the entire page.

SAMPLE

God, You Are My God, For You I Long

Responsorial Song from Psalm 63 for Sunday 22^d

REFRAIN ♩ = ca. 60

Descant on selected Refrains

Music & text from Ps. 63 Tony Barr

I thirst for you, my God; I long to see your face

All

I thirst for you, my God; I long to see your face

VERSE 1 Psalmist A (Cantor) *at the ambo*

God, you are my God, for you I long, my soul thirsts for you a-lone;

VERSE 3 Psalmist A (Cantor) *at the ambo*

I re-mem-ber you as I lie on my bed, all night my thoughts turn to you,

al-ways my heart pin-ed to you, like parched, wea-ry land, crav-ing wa-ter.

al-ways, you have brought me in safe-ty, in the shel-ter of your wings I de-light!

to Link and Refrain

I long to your Ho - ly God, to see your pow'r and glo - ry.

I long to you for pro - tec - tion, your right hand shall guide and keep me.

VERSE 2 Duet

What are my days with-out your love? My lips make con-s-tant thank-giv-ing;
 Psalmist (Cantor) B *at the ambo*

What are my days with-out your love? My lips make con-s-tant thank-giv-ing;

VERSE 4 Duet

Let all who try to des-troy my life be wip-ed from the face of the earth.
 Psalmist B (Cantor) *at the ambo*

Let all who try to des-troy my life be wip-ed from the face of the earth.

VERSE 2 Duet

my life is a bless-ing to you, my hands raised in song to your name.

my life is a bless-ing to you, my hands raised in song to your name.

VERSE 4 Duet

Your pow'r drives in - jus-tice to flig-ht the proud tum-ble down to the dust.

Your pow'r drives in - jus-tice to flig-ht the proud tum-ble down to the dust.

VERSE 2 Duet

to Link and Refrain

You fill me with joy at your ban-quet, ev-'ry breath that I take shall praise you.

You fill me with joy at your ban-quet, ev-'ry breath that I take shall praise you.

VERSE 4 Duet

The just shall re-joice in your pres-ence, on-ly the liv-ing shall give you glo-ry!

The just shall re-joice in your pres-ence, on-ly the liv-ing shall give you glo-ry!

About Psalm 63 - A Lamentation in Exile.

Literary Origins

Psalm 63, a post-Exilic text, is composed of much older elements. Tradition claims it is a song of David, dating the oldest elements of the epic to around BC 1,000. Yet it is not found in the Davidic collection of psalms (which refers to God as Yahweh, the ever close and loving Lord) but in the Northern collection (where god is Elohim, a distant and remote God of the Powers). This suggests that an earlier song from the Southern tradition was adapted at a later stage for use in the Northern shrine around 700-800 BC.

Many text references suggest a major post-exilic adaptation, when liturgical perceptions were greatly altered. There are at least six distinct references to the temple and its associated images or activities.

- v. 2a I look to your Holy Place: a phrase with strong liturgical connotations (see Psalm 134).
- v. 2b to see your power and glory: acknowledging the temple as God's living presence on earth.
- v. 3 my lips make constant thanksgiving: in Psalm. 51, ritual purification of the mouth preceded all proclamations of praise
- v. 4 my hands raised in song to your name: the prescribed attitude for public prayer (Lev 9:22, Sir 50:20).
- v. 5 every breath that I take shall praise you: a phrase used in the liturgy of the Holy where praise was a corporate event
- v. 7 in the shelter of your wings I take delight: being in the temple is a sure sign of God's protection see Palms. 91, 121

This is essentially a liturgical song. Long after the destruction of the Temple, when the Jews met only in Synagogue, this psalm of longing for God's presence retains its earliest associations with temple worship. Over the centuries, it has become a powerful one-piece for those who longed for the restoration of Israel to its former glory, where temple liturgies would once again flourish in the sight of God and the eyes of the nations.

It is part lamentation, part hymn of praise. Lamentation falls into four sections.

- phase one The psalmist expresses misery and despair: life has turned sour.
- phase two These turn to grief at being abandoned by God
- phase three A consultation with a temple priest or temple restores trust in an ever-faithful God
- phase four Encouraged by the temple, the psalmist returns to God with joy

The surviving text of Ps. 63 seems to have lost phases two and three, and the final hymn of praise eclipses sections three and four. The elements of phases one and four are jumbled up, failing to provide a cohesive whole. This has led scholars to suggest re-ordering the verses: 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 4, 5, 3, 9, 10, 11c, 11a, 11b.

David is in exile, in the wilderness. He is fleeing from Saul (1 Sam 23:14, 1 Sam 24:2) or maybe from Absalom (2 Sam 15:1-23). Two contrasting images sum up Israel's existence: desert and temple. The psalm title, reflecting 1 Sam 22-24, conjures up the image of a King or other important temple figure cut off from the temple. For the king, this meant death. Without temple activity (liturgy), God could be neither named nor named; and without God, there could be no covenant relationship, no meaningful existence. What else is life, other than proclaiming God daily in the temple? To be cut off from the assembly is to lose one's roots, to die. In this psalm we see the effects of exclusion from the liturgy: the psalmist is so homesick and so consumed with zeal for the house of the Lord (Ps. 69:9) that he can no longer live in relation with it. This song of longing becomes a magnet to draw future generations towards the temple.

The Music Setting

All who seek God will sing of this in the liturgical assembly. We proclaim a God of the Living who requires that we be made acceptable through a commitment to justice, achieving the harmonic reordering of society. To sing is the breath and share the air so that our proclamation may offer such hope of liberation.

- Tony Barr

While calling for chant notation, I have superimposed regular notation, to highlight the accentuation of the text, which singers seem to prefer. Even verses called for a duet, between high and low voices. They also modulate down by a full tone for variety, color, and to animate attentiveness. The accompaniment is based on

A Liturgical Text

v. 1 **God, you are my God** This is the cry of someone for whom God was ever close at hand, the God who walked hand in hand with Adam in the garden. But the title here addresses a remote, disinterested God of the desert and open spaces. Perhaps this is a call of longing to return to former times, when a united nation enjoyed the protection of a God who was more personally present at hand.

v. 1 **For you I long** The verb literally means to turn to in time of trouble. Its origins were in the word for dawn and probably meant I look for the safety of the light of dawn, as seen in Ps. 136 of the night-watch people awaiting the dawn. Dawn also means enlightenment and fulfillment.

v. 1 **My soul thirsts for you** This recalls Ps. 42-43, where the deer is the symbol of the intense longing, heartache, of the psalmist for God. The psalm later describes the soul as a parched, weary land, craving water.

v. 2 **My eyes turn to your Holy Place** This echoes the text of Isaiah describing the theophany (appearance of God) which accompanied the prophet's journey through the wilderness. The verb to turn towards also means to receive prophetic visions. It suggests the psalmist has already seen God, or wishes to see God, through the cultic acts, signs and institutions of the temple liturgy.

v. 2 **To see your power and glory** A liturgical code for the name of the Ark of the Covenant, in which God's presence resided (1 Sam 4:21, Ps. 24:7, Ps. 132:7).

v. 3 **What is my life without your love** Any life without being able to acclaim God's covenant in liturgy is worse than death itself. To be unable to share in God's steadfast love is far more terrifying than physical death.

v. 3 **My lips are constant...my whole life in blessing you...my hands raised as I sing your name.** These gestures refer to the temple activities of corporate worship. Only in community can Covenant be recalled and celebrated. Only in the assembly can God be named, only in the song of the believers.

v. 5 **You fill me from your banquet** This recalls the messianic banquet of Ps. 23. It is the vision of Ps. 72 of a creation restored by a person who had remained faithful to the Covenant. Their reward, according to Ps. 95, would be to enjoy God's abundance and God's rest.

v. 6 **I remember you as I lie on my bed** This is not sleep-time but the watches of the night, the hours for keeping vigils in anticipation of the Lord's dawn. In earlier times, night was to be feared because of the beasts which prowled in the darkness and the host of enemies associated with the moon (see Pss. 91 & 121).

v. 8 **Your right hand, my strength and protection.** Ps. 118 sings of God's redeeming power, symbolized in the outstretched right hand. A symbol of victory to all who hoped in the Lord.

v. 9 **Let no one try to destroy my life.** In the images which follow, the psalmist appears to be speaking the mind of God. All who pursue injustice will reap the fruits of their labors. Injustice is the undoing of creation. In the Resurrection, everything that contributed to the Fall would be wiped away. Not one, single, unjust person would remain in existence.

v. 10 **Let the just share in your happiness.** Originally, the text says then will the king rejoice in God. The king in Israel's consciousness was a remainder of the God who lived in the midst of Israel. The king represented not only God as source of all justice, but also the nation of those who had been chosen to be just in God. The King represented the justice of God on earth, and all who abode by Covenant share in this responsibility.