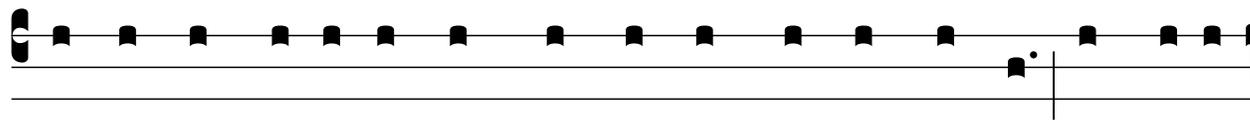
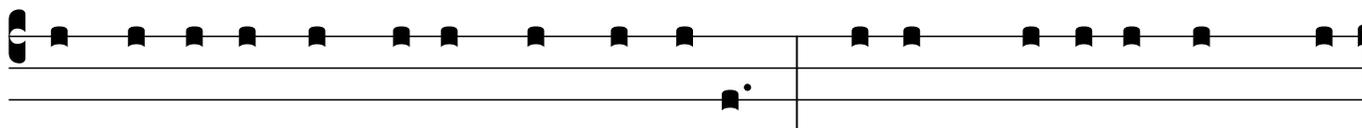


# Ecclesiasticus 43:1-22

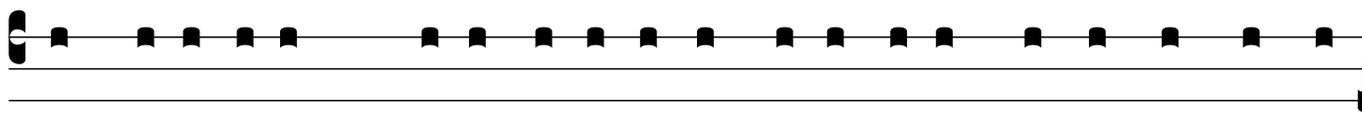
*New Year's Eve 5*



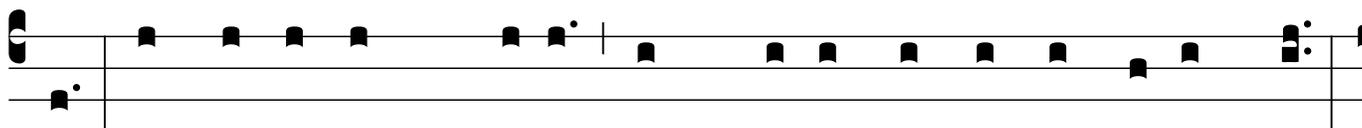
**T**he pride of the higher realms is the clear vault of the sky, as glo-ri-



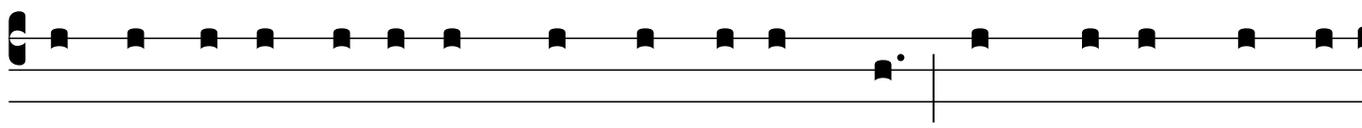
ous to be-hold as the sight of the heavens. The sun, when it appears, pro-



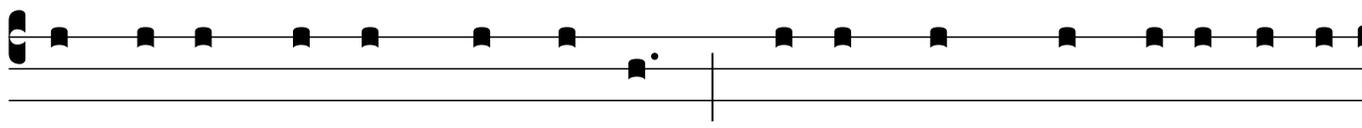
claims as it ris-es what a marvel-ous instrument it is, the work of the Most



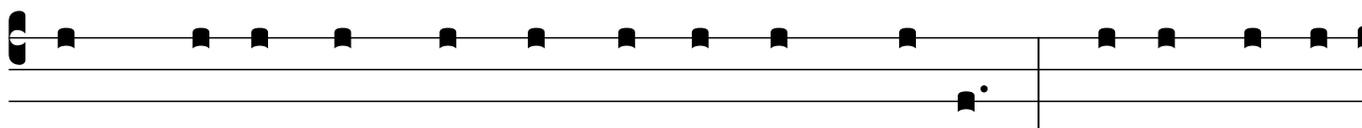
High. At noon it parches the land, and who can withstand its burning heat?



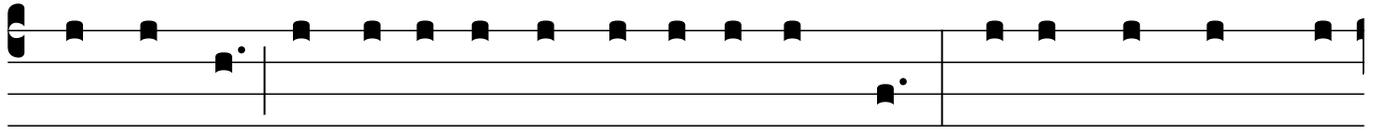
A man tending a furnace works in burning heat, but three times as hot



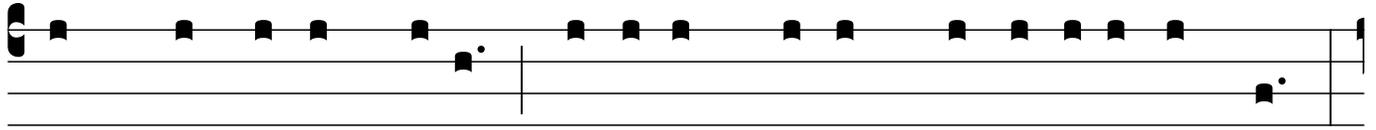
is the sun scorching the mountains; when it breathes out fier-y va-pors



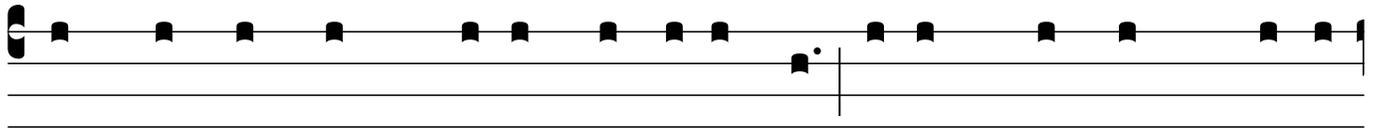
and when it shines forth its rays, it blinds the eyes. Great is the Lord



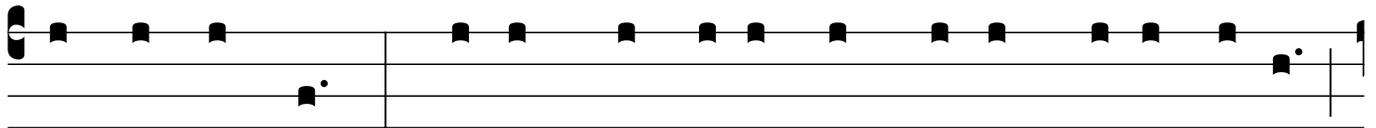
who made it; at his orders it hurries on its course. It is the moon that



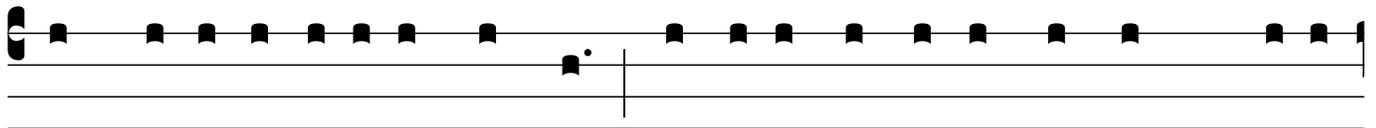
marks the changing seasons, gov-erning the times, an ev-erlast-ing sign.



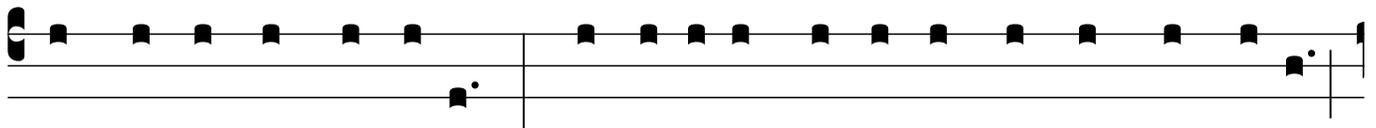
From the moon comes the sign for festal days, a light that wanes when it



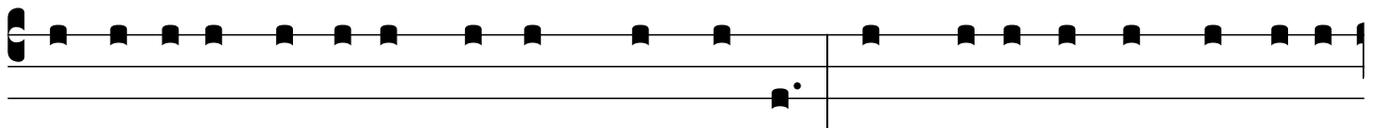
completes its course. The new moon, as its name suggests, re-news it-self;



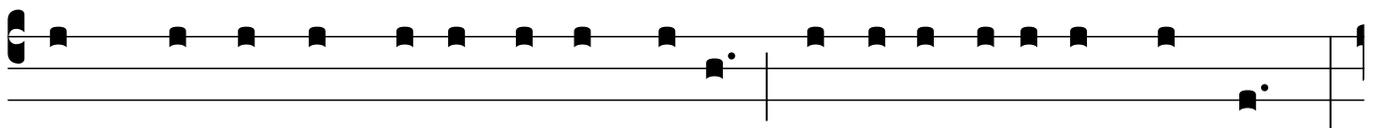
how marvel-ous it is in this change, a beacon to the hosts on high shin-ing



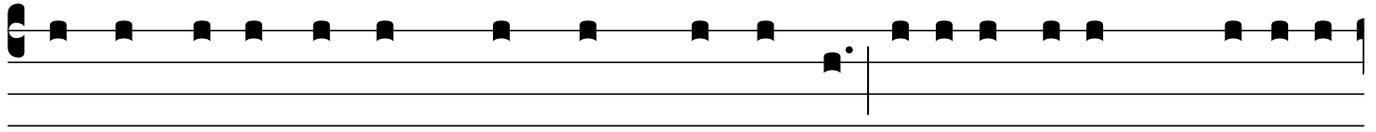
in the vault of the heavens! The glo-ry of the stars is the beauty of heaven,



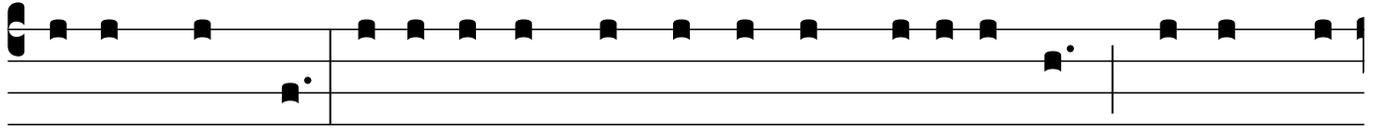
a glit-ter-ing array in the heights of the Lord. On the orders of the Ho-ly



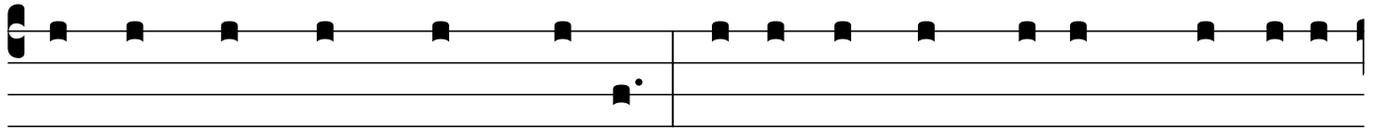
One they stand in their appointed plac-es; they nev-er re-lax in their watches.



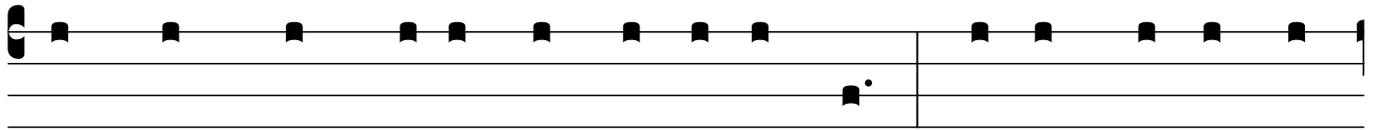
Look at the rainbow and praise him who made it; it is exceedingly beautiful



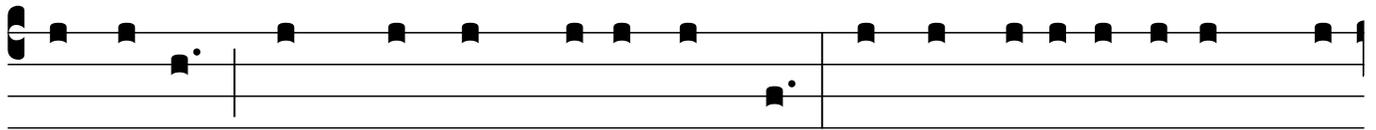
in its brightness. It encircles the sky with its glorious arc; the hands of



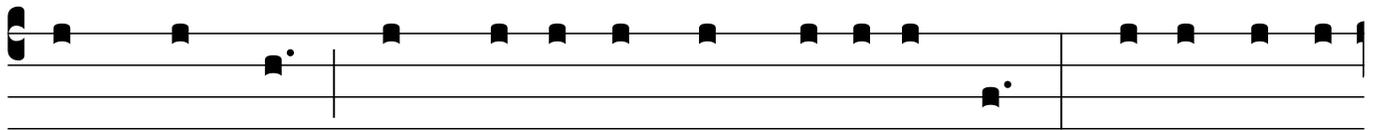
the Most High have stretched it out. By his command he sends the driving



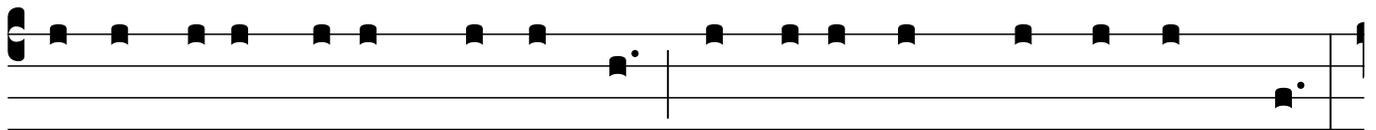
snow and speeds the lightnings of his judgment. Therefore the storehouses



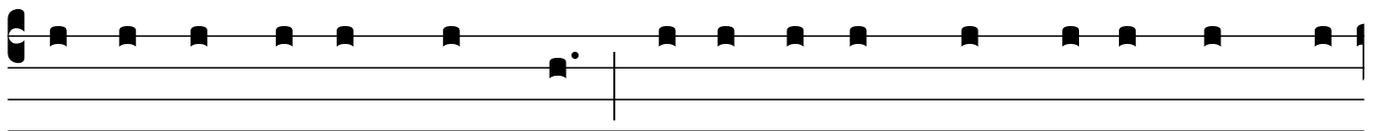
are opened, and the clouds fly out like birds. In his majesty he gives the



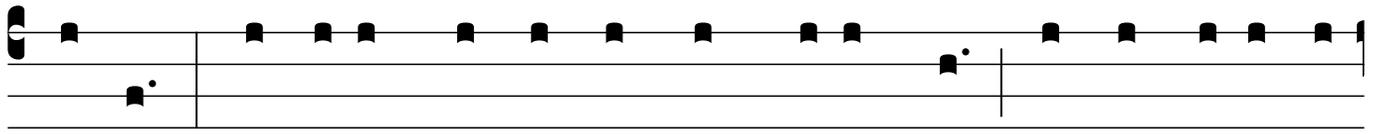
clouds their strength, and the hailstones are broken in pieces. The voice of his



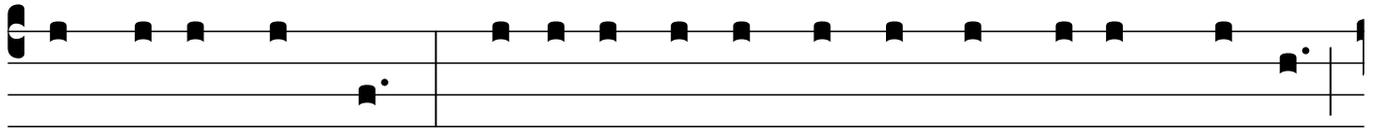
thunder causes the earth to tremble; when he appears, the mountains shake.



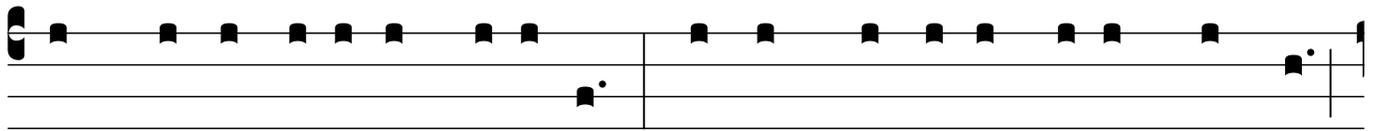
At his will the south wind blows, so do the storm from the north and the



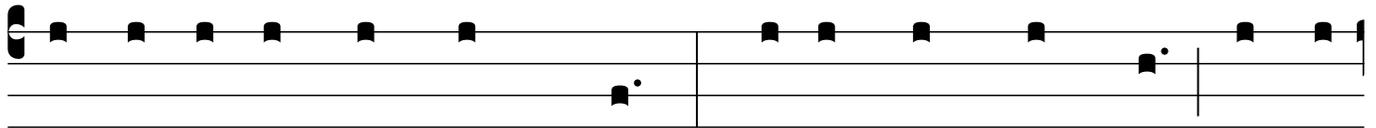
whirlwind. He scatters the snow like birds fly- ing down, and its descent is



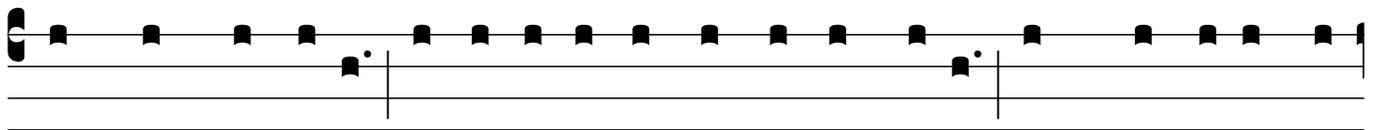
like lo-custs alighting. The eye is dazzled by the beauty of its whiteness,



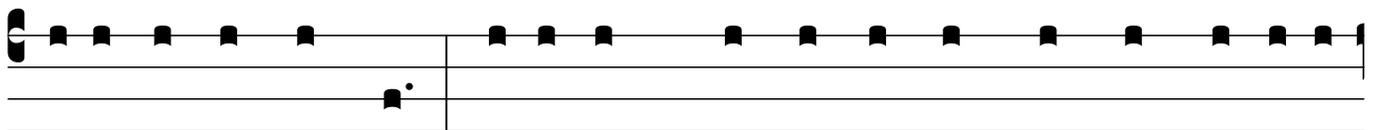
and the mind is amazed as it falls. He pours frost o-ver the earth like salt,



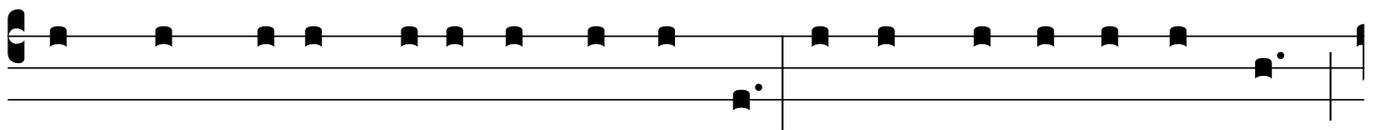
and icicles form like pointed thorns. The cold north wind blows, and ice



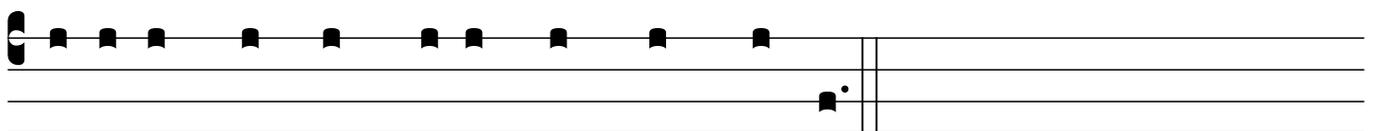
freezes on the wa-ter; it settles on every pool of wa-ter, and the wa-ter puts



it on like a breastplate. He consumes the mountains and burns up the wilder-



ness and withers the tender grass like fire. A mist quickly heals all things;



the fall-ing dew gives refreshment from the heat.