



Christmas Eve  
December 24, 2022  
2:00 PM



## GATHERING

*(Silence during the Prelude is requested in preparation for worship.)*

### *About the Prelude*

The Prelude is a musical offering to help move the hearts and minds of the gathering community from the daily struggles of life to the worship of God. The set of organ chorales by J.G. Walther is on the hymn, "We should praise Christ highly," a Christmas hymn written by Martin Luther. A translation of one of the verses reads, "The heavenly choir above rejoices greatly and the angels sing, 'Praise God!' The poor shepherds are told of the Shepherd and creator of the entire world."

### PRELUDE

Fanfare & Verses on "Adeste Fideles"

Paul Fey & David Willcocks

God Rest You Merry Gentlemen David Willcocks

Christum wir sollen loben schon

Johann Gottfried Walther

Prelude on "Angels, From the Realms of Glory

Hal H. Hopson

"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came Hal H. Hopson

Joy to the World Hal H. Hopson

The First Noel David Willcocks

### CHORAL INTROIT

Christmas Bells are Ringing Robert Leaf

Christmas bells are ringing; children's voices singing,

"Glory to the newborn king. Alleluia!"

Now the world rejoices: Join our happy voices.

Christians, make a joyful noise, Alleluia!

This our happy song: "We to God belong."

Sing his praises loud and strong. Alleluia!

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

#### *Call to Worship*

This is a time we praise God and let God know we are glad to be together.

Let us worship God!

*(Those who are able may stand.)*

Joy to the World, the Lord is come.

**Let earth receive her king!**

Let every heart prepare him room

And heaven and nature sing!

**And heaven and nature sing!**

**And heaven and nature sing!**

## **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

**Holy child of Bethlehem,  
you are the hope of the world,  
the song of the angels,  
the treasure of our hearts  
and the glory of God among us.  
Call us to worship you in places  
where your love is born anew.  
On this holy night  
draw us into the mystery of your love.  
Send us out to serve you,  
sharing good news of great joy  
and praising God through you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

## **\*HYMN**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES

**O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!  
Come, and behold Him, Born the King of angels!  
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!**

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;  
Word of the Father, Now in flesh appearing!  
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!**

**Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation!  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all Glory in the highest!  
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!**

## **CALL TO CONFESSION**

Loving God, you sent your love to us in the birth of your son.

**Let us show our love by confessing our sins to God  
and one another.**

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

From its Roman Catholic origins, this 18th-century hymn has spread to worldwide use by many denominations in both Latin and vernacular versions. Once popular with a wide range of hymn texts, this tune is now firmly associated with this Christmas text from which it is named. TEXT and MUSIC: John Francis Wade, c. 1743.

*Call to and Prayer of Confession*

The minister invites us to say, "I'm sorry, God."  
We will try to follow God and do the right thing. But when we don't, we ask God to forgive us. We try to help people in God's world. But when we don't do enough, we can tell God we are sorry. This is what "confession" means.

*Assurance of Pardon*

God says, "I forgive you and I love you."

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of grace,  
You brought your light into the world  
through Jesus Christ.  
We know that we often forget that light  
in the excitement of this time; forgive us Lord.  
Remind us of your amazing love,  
and help us to share that love  
at home and in the world. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

*(The liturgist pours water, which reminds us of our baptism.)*

Behold, I bring good news of a great joy;  
for to you is born in the city of David,  
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel,  
**in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.**

## *THE WORD IN SCRIPTURE AND SONG*

### THE PROPHECY

### SCRIPTURE

Hear the Word of God! **Our ears are open.**

**Isaiah 9:2, 6-7** (*Old Testament, page 638 in your pew Bible*)

### *THE VERY FIRST CHRISTMAS*

### THE SETTING

**ANTHEM**      Prayer of the Christmas Animals      Hal H. Hopson  
*Avery Michael, Halford Wyatt, and Hattie Lowrance, soloists*

*All creation sings this holy night.  
Hear the joyful, ringing song.  
Birds and beasts all join the praising throng.  
Come to see the wondrous sight.*

And now before the Child they seek,  
A lamb to Him does speak:  
“How proud to share Your name I am;  
As prophets said of old,  
For You who are the One foretold  
Must bear the name of Lamb.” *Refrain*

And now before the Child they seek,  
A donkey to Him does speak:  
“Twas on my back Your mother rode  
To Bethlehem this day,  
And on a coming palm-strewn day  
I’ll gladly bear Your load.” *Refrain*

And now before the Child they seek,  
A dove to Him does speak:  
“And I, a simple cooing dove,  
My praise will never cease  
That I will be Your sign of peace  
and symbol of Your love.” *Refrain*

## THE BIRTH OF JESUS

**Luke 2:1-7** (*New Testament, page 58 in your pew Bible*)

## THE ANGELS VISIT THE SHEPHERDS

**Luke 2:8-14** (*New Testament, page 58 in your pew Bible*)

**\*HYMN**

Angels We Have Heard on High

GLORIA

**Angels we have heard on high,  
sweetly singing o’er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply  
echoing their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
which inspire your heavenly song?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

*The Birth of Jesus*

We tell this story from Luke and Matthew so we remember that Jesus came as a child.

God is with us always. This story reminds us of God’s BIG love.

**Come to Bethlehem and see  
him whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee  
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

### **THE SHEPHERDS COME TO THE MANGER**

**Luke 2:15-20** (*New Testament, page 58 in your pew Bible*)

**ANTHEM**                      Hodie Christus natus est                      Michael Bedford

*Hodie Christus natus est!  
Hodie Christus natus east!  
Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo!  
Hodie Christus natus est! Alleluia!*

The angels sang to the shepherds three,  
As they knelt on bended knee,  
“Christ is born this holy morn!  
Hurry to Bethlehem and see!”  
The shepherds left the hillside bare,  
Traveled over the meadows fair,  
Till in awe the Child they saw,  
Lying in a manger there. *Hodie Christus...*

May we, like those three shepherds poor,  
Come, the Christ Child to adore;  
May we here, ev’ry year,  
Worship within the church’s door.  
Then may we, with joyful call,  
Carry the news outside this hall;  
Thus we’ll share, ev’rywhere,  
God’s great gift to one and all. *Hodie Christus...*

### **THE KINGS PRESENT THEIR GIFTS TO JESUS**

**Matthew 2:1-2, 9b-11**

*(New Testament, page 2 in your pew Bible)*

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

**\*HYMN**

**KINGS OF ORIENT**

**We Three Kings of Orient Are**

**We three kings of Orient are;  
bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
following yonder star.**

*O star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright,  
westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to thy perfect light!*

**Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,  
gold I bring to crown him again,  
King forever, ceasing never over us all to reign.  
*O star of wonder . . .***

*We Three Kings of Orient Are*  
Although Christians had begun by the 2nd century to speak of these visitors from eastern countries (Matthew 2:1-12) as "kings," perhaps because of passages like Psalm 72:10 and Isaiah 60:3, it is more accurate to think of them as magi or astrologers, the scholars of their day. TEXT and MUSIC: John Henry Hopkins, Jr., 1857.

**THANKSGIVING**

**OFFERING**

*(The children are invited to come forward as directed by the ushers, and put their gifts of food or money with the gifts from the wise men.)*

*Offering*  
Our offering today goes to Second Harvest Food Bank.

Offertory                      Prelude on "The First Noel"                      Paul Fey

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

**\*THE LORD'S PRAYER**

*(Prayed in unison, see page 35 of the hymnal for text)*

*Procession of Light*  
Let your light shine in the world with a smile, a hug, a kind word.

**PROCESSION OF LIGHT**

Silent Night, Holy Night                      STILLE NACHT

**Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright,  
Round yon virgin mother and child!  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

*Silent Night, Holy Night*  
The tradition that this carol's tune was created for guitar accompaniment at its first singing on Christmas Eve 1818 seems reliable, though a recent find shows that the text was about two years old. But there is no question that this is now a favorite Christmas carol worldwide. TEXT: Joseph Mohr, 1816; MUSIC: Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818.



*Joy to the World*

While Isaac Watts did not write this text strictly for Christmas use, he did purposely cast his paraphrase of Psalm 98:4-9 in Christian terms, titling it "The Messiah's coming and kingdom." So "the Lord" here is Jesus Christ, rather than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.  
TEXT: Isaac Watts, 1719;  
MUSIC: George Frederick Handel, 1742.

The *Benediction* is a blessing to remind us that God loves us and that we are to go out into the world and share with our friends and family about God.

*About the Postlude*

The Postlude is considered the final Alleluia of worship. The Orgelbüchlein Chorale on "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" (Hymn 132), not only has the Soprano and Bass voices in canon, but also the Alto and Tenor voices, while BWV 729 may be representative of how Bach would have accompanied congregational singing of the hymn.

**Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight,  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia;  
Christ the Savior is born,  
Christ the Savior is born."**

**Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.**

**SENDING**

**\*HYMN**

Joy to the World!

ANTIOCH

**Joy to the world! the Lord is come:  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and heaven and nature sing.**

**He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders of His love.**

**\*BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

J.S. Bach

"In dulci jubilo" BWV 608 and BWV 729

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*\*(Those who are able may stand.)*

## SERVICE NOTES

**WORSHIP LEADERS:** Sophie Maness, Executive Director of Family Ministries; the fifth and sixth graders leading through Word and action in our worship service today are:

Reading Liturgy:

Hattie Lowrance  
Madelyn Michael  
Avery Michael  
Kate Cassetty

Dress Up Parts:

John Boaz  
McLean Baker  
Caroline Fend  
Reed Pennington  
Ben Lee  
Reid Maggart  
Trip Tompkins

They will show us the way to the Christ child.

**USHERS:** Robert Thompson.

**MUSICIANS:** Alleluia Choir (Susan Ramsey & Colby White, leaders); Gloria Choir (Ally Hard, director); Jubilate Choir (Roberta Rodgers, director); Chiming Children (Colby White, director); John W. Semingson, Director of Music Ministries; Dale Nickell, Organist and Associate Director of Music Ministries.

**THE CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING** this afternoon will be cans of food for Second Harvest Food Bank, which we invite children to bring to the manger during the Offertory. Monetary gifts may be brought as well, and placed in the basket by the manger or in the offering plate. These monies, too, will be given to Second Harvest.

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INFORMATION: The  
music used in the  
service this morning is  
copyrighted under  
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on the cover:

**JOHN AUGUST SWANSON** was born January 11, 1938 in El Monte, California, and died September 23, 2021, in Los Angeles. He painted in oil, watercolor, acrylic, and mixed media, and was an independent printmaker of limited edition serigraphs, lithographs, etchings, and other prints.

His art reflected his strong heritage of storytelling, inherited from his Mexican mother and Swedish father. John Swanson's narratives are direct and easily understood. He addressed human values, cultural roots, and the quest for self-discovery through visual images. These include Bible stories and celebrations, circuses, concerts, and operas. He optimistically embraced life and spiritual transformation.

*I wanted to capture the people that are bringing gifts. They are the poor people in the region all bringing their meager offerings to share with the homeless holy family: firewood, eggs, bread, flour, a cow with milk, water, and fruit; even a child has come to serenade them.*

--John August Swanson

Planned in 2017 as a companion piece to *The Annunciation*, this Nativity giclee has been sized to match that piece, and has warmer skin tones, gradations, and additional details in the plants and sky from Swanson's other serigraphs, paintings, and sketches.

Completed: October, 2022  
by the John August Swanson Studio



3900 West End Avenue  
Nashville, Tennessee 37205-1899  
615.292.5526 | [www.nashvillewpc.church](http://www.nashvillewpc.church)