

First Sunday of Christmas
December 31, 2023
11:00 AM

My eyes have seen
your salvation.

Luke 2:30

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.

PRELUDE

Away in a Manger
I Wonder as I Wander
Let All Mortal Flesh
What Child Is This
Do You Hear What I Hear
Breath of Heaven

arr. Sam Levine

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Let us worship God!

(Those who are able may stand.)

**The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.
Jesus Christ is our life and light.
In his name and in his power we pray.**

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

**All glory to you, great God,
for the gift of your Son,
light in darkness
and hope of the world,
whom you sent to save us.
With singing angels
let us praise your name
and tell the earth his story,
that all may believe, rejoice, and bow down,
acknowledging your love
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

*The Cross and Bible lead the procession,
symbolic of the centrality in worship of
Jesus Christ—the Living Word, and the Bible—the written Word.*

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN 147

THE FIRST NOWELL

The First Nowell

About Hymn 147

"Nowell" is the English form of the French "noel," a shout of joy formerly used at Christmas (as in Chaucer's "Franklin's Tale"), a clue that the word is older than its first printing. It may have Latin and French roots related to "born" (*natus* | *né*) as well to "news" (*nova* | *nouvelle*). TEXT: English carol; *Some Ancient Christmas Carols*, 2nd ed., 1823, alt.; MUSIC: English carol; *Sandy's Christmas Carols*, 1833.

CALL TO CONFESSION

For God so loved the world
that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
may not perish, but may have eternal life.

Indeed, God did not send the Son
into the world to condemn the world,
but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 3:16-17

In faith and penitence,
let us confess our sin before God and one another.

*Call to and Prayer
of Confession*

A call to confession expresses God's initiative in calling for repentance and promising forgiveness in Christ. As members of Christ's body, we confess the reality of sin, captivity, and brokenness in personal and common life and ask for God's saving grace.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Generous God,
you give us the greatest gift of all, yourself,
but we often find it hard to take notice;
we are caught up with our own gifts, given and received.
**Forgive us, generous God,
for the casual way we treat your gift of love.
Cast out our sin and enter in,
be born in us today.**

(Silent confession)

Kyrie *(Singing together Hymn 115, verse 3)*

MUELLER

About the Kyrie

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**

The Kyrie (Greek "kyrios" [Lord]) is a corporate musical prayer for grace.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Friends, believe the Good News:
**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!
Alleluia! Amen!**

***The Peace**

Since God in Christ has forgiven us,
let us also forgive one another.

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

*(Please exchange the peace with the words,
"The peace of Christ be with you.")*

*Assurance of
Pardon*

A declaration of forgiveness proclaims the good news of God's mercy and offers the assurance of pardon in Jesus' name. The liturgist pours water into the font, which reminds us of the grace and cleansing of our Baptism, and the baptismal call to new life in Christ.

The Act of Praise brings together the choir and congregation to sing God's praise in response to the Assurance of Pardon as the last phrase.

Prayer for Illumination

A Prayer for Illumination calls on the Holy Spirit to empower the reading, understanding, proclaiming, and living of God's word. This sense of utter reliance on the illumination of the Spirit is an important and distinctive mark of the Reformed tradition.

About Psalm 148, Hymn 679

Originally this text was more than twice as long as the present version because it followed Psalm 148 in directing additional parts of the created order to praise God. This wide-ranging text is set here to a suitably expansive and well-crafted 17th-century chorale melody. TEXT: Stopford A. Brooke, 1881; Music: Jakob Hintze, 1678.

***ACT OF PRAISE** *(Hymn 113, all sing)*

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!**

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

(Everyone is asked to sign the Friendship pad located on the center aisle-end of each pew).

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE

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

Isaiah 61:10-62, 3Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

(Old Testament, page 692 in your pew Bible)

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

Psalm 148

SALZBURG

*(Hymn 679, Verse one sung by cantor
Verse two sung by congregation & cantor)*

Luke 2:22-40

(New Testament, page 59 in your pew Bible)

SERMON

“Looking Forward”

Donovan Drake

(A moment for meditation)

***HYMN 545** Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace LAND OF REST

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation;
in him all things in heaven and on earth were created,
things visible and invisible.**

**All things have been created through him and for him.
He himself is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.**

**He is head of the body, the church;
he is the beginning, the firstborn of the dead,
so that he might come to have first place in everything.**

**For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through him God was pleased to reconcile all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
by making peace through the blood of his cross. Amen.**

(Colossians 1:15-20)

***HYMN 132** Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

IN DULCI JUBILO

About Hymn 132

Carols using two languages, like this one dating from at least the 14th century, belong to a special group called "macaronic," the original languages here being German and Latin. Though the present version is only in English, it is sung to the traditional German folk melody.
TEXT: Medieval Latin;
MUSIC: German folk melody, 14th cent.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

THANKSGIVING

OFFERING

Anthem Shepherd's Pipe Carol John Rutter

Going through the hills on a night all starry
On the way to Bethlehem,
Far away I heard a shepherd boy piping
On the way to Bethlehem.

*Angels in the sky brought this message nigh:
'Dance and sing for joy that Christ the newborn King
is come to bring us peace on earth,
and he's lying cradled there at Bethlehem.'*

'Tell me shepherd boy piping tunes so merrily
On the way to Bethlehem,
Who will hear your tunes on these hills so lonely,
On the way to Bethlehem?'
Angels in the sky...

'None may hear my pipes on these hills so lonely,
On the way to Bethlehem,
But a King will hear me play sweet lullabies
When I get to Bethlehem.'
Angels in the sky...

'Where is this new King, shepherd boy piping merrily,
Is he there at Bethlehem?
I will find him soon by the star shining brightly
In the sky o'er Bethlehem.'
Angels in the sky...

May I come with you, shepherd boy piping merrily,
Come with you to Bethlehem?
Pay my homage too at the new King's cradle,
Is it far to Bethlehem?'
Angels in the sky...

Doxology

A short hymn of praise to the triune God (God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit).

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God's grace elicits our heartfelt gratitude. We respond to the good news of forgiveness with joyful acclamations of praise!

About Hymn 136

Like other material from oral traditions, 19th-century African American spirituals flourished without being written down. Their refrains were their most stable parts, and narrative stanzas were often improvised to fit. These Nativity stanzas attempt to recall that tradition. TEXT: African American spiritual; MUSIC: African American spiritual.

About the Postlude

The Postlude is considered the final Alleluia of worship.

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***DOXOLOGY**

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**We thank you for this day:
for life and for one more day to love,
one more day to work for justice and peace,
one more day to try to forgive ourselves and others,
one more day to show up for our people,
one more day to walk humbly on the earth,
one more day to receive your never-ending grace,
and one more day to experience your presence,
to be with us, our God, Emmanuel.**

**For these, and all blessings,
we give you thanks, eternal, loving God,
through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.**

SENDING

***HYMN 136** Go, Tell It on the Mountain GO TELL IT

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

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

OUR MISSION

*Ordinary people testifying to the extraordinary light
found in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

“For it is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.”

(2 Corinthians 4:6-7)

TODAY@ WESTMINSTER

Worship Leaders

Preaching

Rev. Dr. Donovan Drake
Pastor and Head of Staff

Liturgist

Rev. Dr. Guy D. Griffith
*Associate Pastor of Adult Education and
Spiritual Nurture*

Lay Liturgists

11:00 AM Hamilton Proctor

Music

11:00 AM Eva Tatum, cantor and soloist

Richard Lane, guitar
Doug Leins, guitar
Frank Fish, bass
Sam Levine, woodwinds
and arrangements

Dr. John Semingson
Organist and Director of Music Ministries

Flowers

*The flowers in the Sanctuary
are given to the glory of God
and in loving memory of
family and friends
by Janet R. Hirt*



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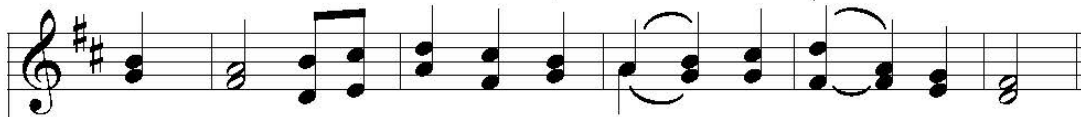
The First Nowell



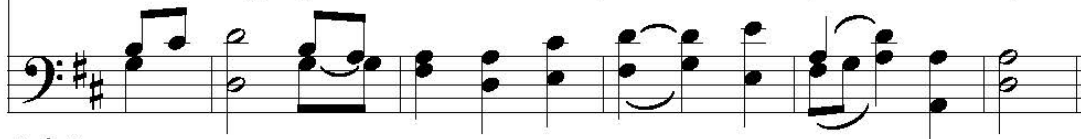
1 The first Now-ell the an-gel did say was to cer-tain poor
 2 They look - ed up and saw a star shin-ing in the
 3 And by the light of that same star three wise men
 4 This star drew nigh to the north-west; o'er Beth - le -



shep-herds in fields as they lay, in fields where they lay keep-ing
 east be-yond them far; and to the earth it gave
 came from coun - try far; to seek for a king was their
 hem it took its rest, and there it did both stop



their sheep, on a cold win-ter's night that was so deep.
 great light, and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.
 in - tent, and to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went.
 and stay, right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.

*Refrain*

Now - ell, Now - ell, Now - ell, Now - ell,



December 31, 2023


born is the King of Is - ra - el.

The image shows a musical score for the phrase "born is the King of Is - ra - el." It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. Both staves are in the key of D major (indicated by two sharps) and 4/4 time. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are placed below the treble staff. The music features a simple, hymn-like melody with a steady bass line.


- 5 Then entered in those wise men three, 6 Then let us all with one accord
full reverently upon their knee, sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
and offered there in his presence that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
their gold, and myrrh, and and with his blood our life hath bought.
frankincense. *Refrain*

679 Let the Whole Creation Cry


(Psalm 148)



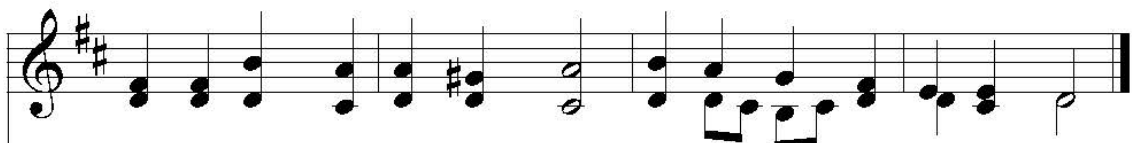
1 Let the whole cre - a - tion cry, "Glo - ry to the Lord on high."
2 Men and wom-en, young and old, raise the an-them loud and bold;



Heaven and earth, a - wake and sing, "Praise to our al - might-y King."
join with chil - dren's songs of praise; wor-ship God through length of days.




Praise God, an - gel hosts a - bove, ev - er bright and fair in love;
From the north to south-ern pole let the might-y cho - rus roll:



sun and moon, up - lift your voice; night and stars, in God re - joice!
"Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly One, glo - ry be to God a - lone!"

Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace 545

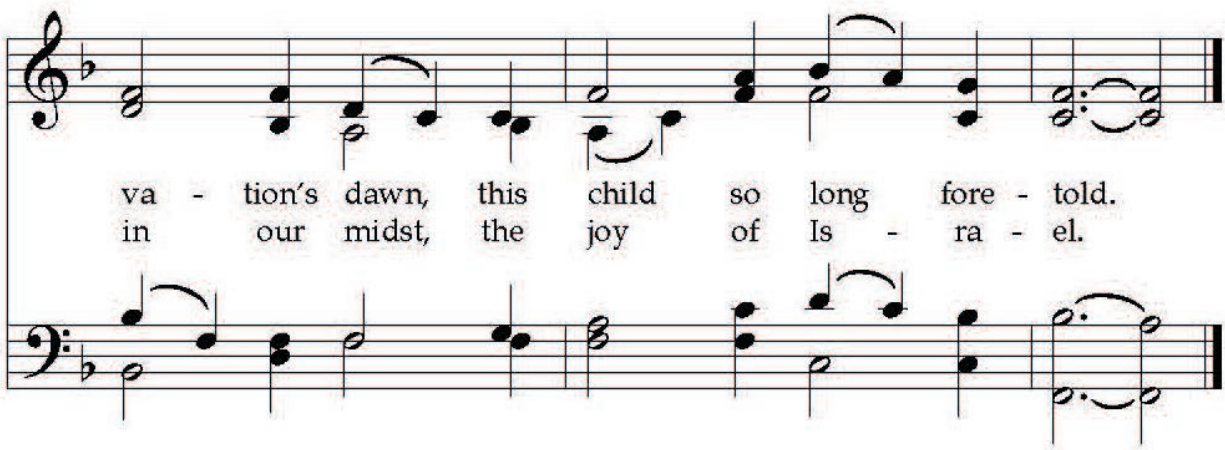
Song of Simeon



1 Lord, bid your ser - vant go in peace; your
2 This is the Sav - ior of the world, the

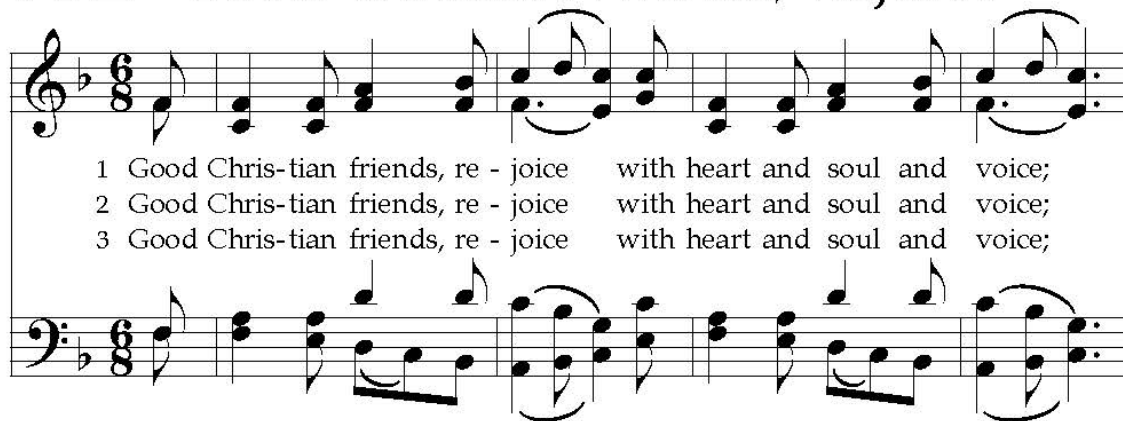


word is now ful - filled. These eyes have seen sal -
Gen - tiles' prom - ised light, God's glo - ry dwell - ing



va - tion's dawn, this child so long fore - told.
in our midst, the joy of Is - ra - el.

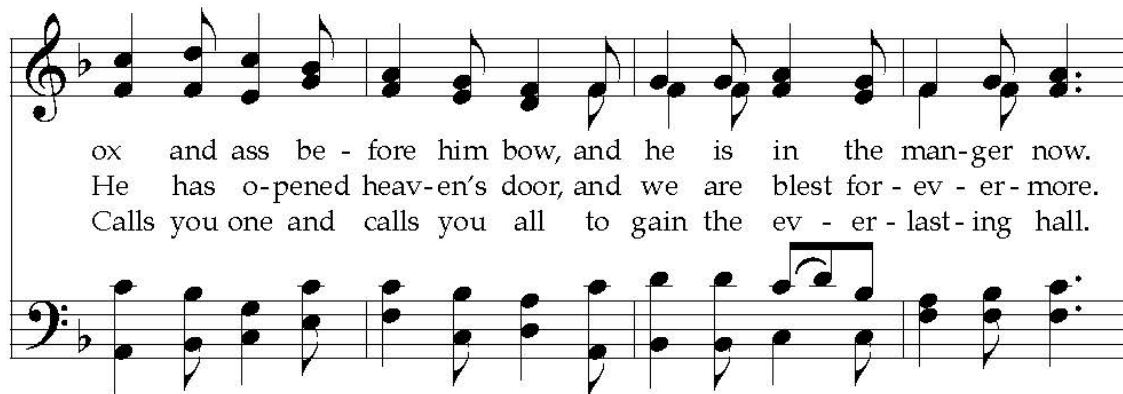
132 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice



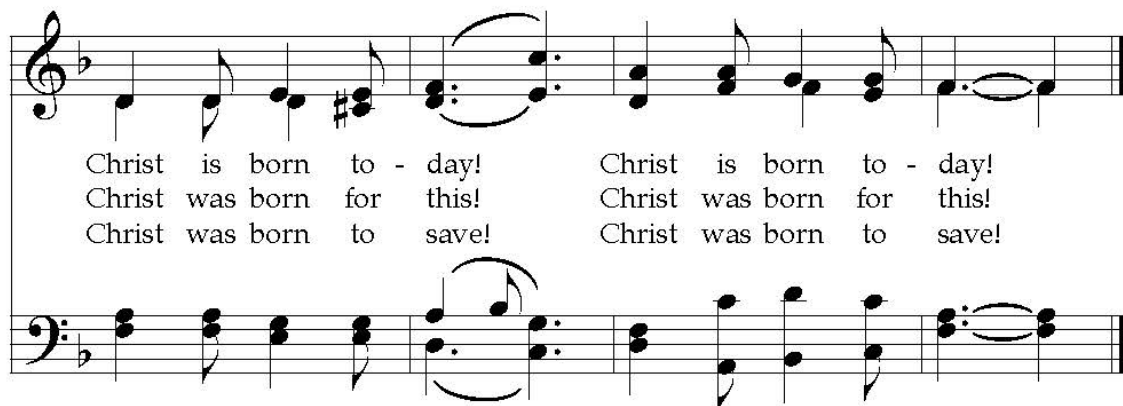
1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi - ce with heart and soul and voice;
2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi - ce with heart and soul and voice;
3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joi - ce with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!




ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



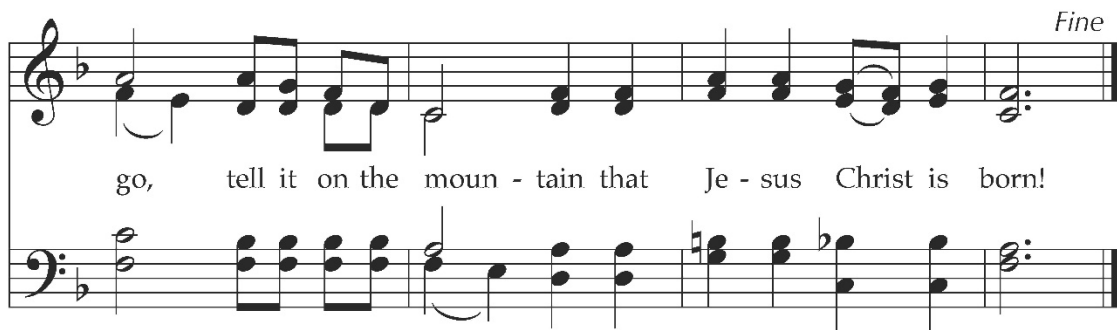
Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

136 Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain 

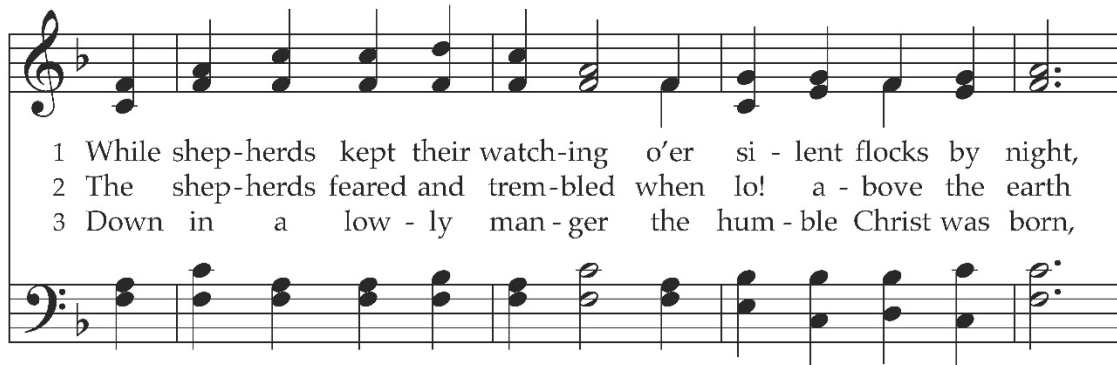


Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;

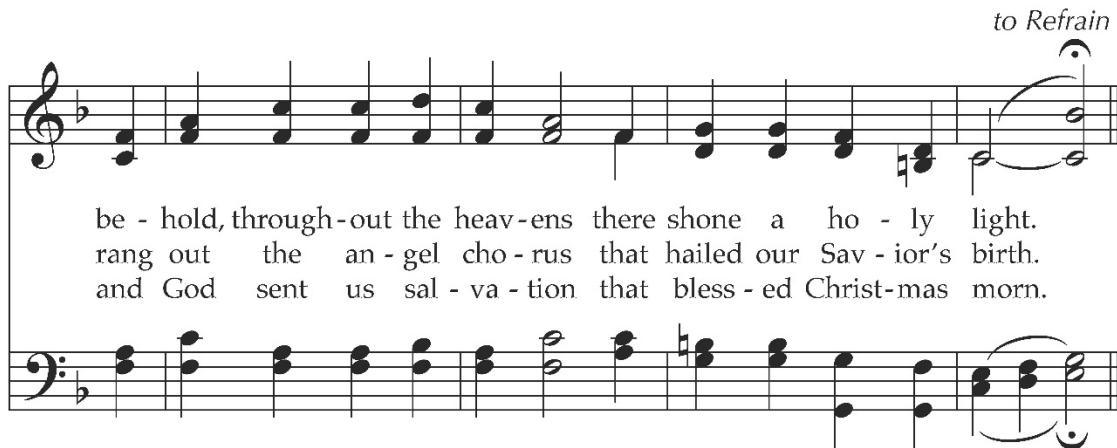


go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!

Fine



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth
 3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
 rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
 and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

to Refrain

