

First Sunday of Christmas
December 31, 2023

Prelude

Three Carols

Peter Schickele

Greetings

Rev. Colin Knapp

Psalm Reading, collectively

Psalm 148

1 Hallelujah!

Praise the Lord from the heavens;

praise God in the heights.

2 Praise the Lord all you angels;

sing praises, all you heavenly host.

3 Praise the Lord, sun and moon;

sing praises, all you shining stars.

4 Praise the Lord, heaven of heavens,

sing praises, you waters above the heavens.

5 Let them praise the name of the Lord;

who gave the command and they were created,

6 who made them stand fast for ever and ever,

who gave them a law which shall not pass away.

7 Praise the Lord from the earth,

you sea-monsters and all deeps;

8 fire and hail, snow and fog,

tempestuous wind, doing God's will;

9 mountains and all hills,

fruit trees and all cedars;

10 wild beasts and all cattle,

creeping things and wingèd birds;

11 sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,

princes and all rulers of the world;

12 young men and young women,

old and young together.

13 Let them praise the name of the Lord,

whose name only is exalted,

whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

14 **The Lord has raised up strength for this people and praise for**

all loyal servants,

the children of Israel, a people who are near to the Lord. **Hallelujah!**

*Opening Hymn

Good Christian Friends Rejoice

p. 5 & 6

***Opening Prayer**

Sandy Swanson

Confession

Rev. Colin Knapp

God of love and compassion
you have come into our world, into our very lives
and yet we have not recognized you.
Forgive our lack of insight
and open our eyes to see you here and now,
that we may receive your grace
through Jesus our Christ. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Children of God,
it is clear that Jesus Christ came to help us.
He is our Savior in all our distress,
and it is his presence that saves us.
Declare with me the good news of the gospel:
In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Response

Love Has Come

p. 7

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

One: This is the Word of God for us, the people of God. All: Thanks be to God

Solo

*The Gifts You've Given to My Life
Marcella Richardson*

Greg Gilpin

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:22-40

One: This is the Word of God for us, the people of God. All: Thanks be to God

Children's Message

Maureen Deahl

Hymn

In the Bleak Midwinter

p. 8

New Testament Reading

Galatians 4:4-7

One: This is the Word of God for us, the people of God. All: Thanks be to God

Hymn

The First Nowell (stzs. 1, 2, 4)

p. 9 & 10

Prayer for the Offering

Sandy Swanson

***Doxology**

*Praise God from Whom all blessings flow, praise God all creatures here below, Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise God above you heavenly host, Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

Prayers of the People Loving God, **Hear our Prayer**

Lord's Prayer *All are encouraged to pray the Lord's Prayer in the manner of their choosing, included below is one version:*

Our Father (Mother, Creator), who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Announcements

Closing Hymn *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* (stzs. 1, 2, 4, 5) p. 11 & 12

***Benediction** Rev. Colin Knapp

Postlude *Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine* David Paxton

Prayers from Last Sunday:

Nursery Care during worship is available for children ages 5 and under. Please see an usher for location. Today's Nursery Attendants are Katherine Obed & Otto Huber.

Today's Liturgist is Sandy Swanson. Ushers are Bruce Cox and James Jones. Our Online Worship Coordinators are Delena Wilkerson, Chuck Behensky, and David Taylor-Glass. Our Sextons are Claudia Divis and Leslie Lauderdale. **We give our thanks** for their important contributions to our worship gathering.

A deacon will be available for **healing prayer** every Sunday, after worship, in the front pew.

Announcements

Pilgrim Annual Meeting

Saturday, January 27, 2024, 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Pilgrim Congregational Church will hold its annual business meeting on January 27 at 9-11 am, by Zoom. The zoom link can be found in the January Tidings and the What's Happening.

You are invited to participate and to guide important Church matters, including the church's 2024 budget, election of officers and Council members and more. We will also hear more about plans to celebrate Pilgrim's 150th anniversary. Council looks forward to seeing you there.

Women's Retreat for All Who Identify As Women

Friday, February 2 - Sunday, February 4, 2024

"Be sure to register for this year's retreat for those identifying as Women. It will take place from February 2 - 4 at the peaceful Pilgrim Park in Princeton, Illinois. We will have plenty of great get to know you fellowship as well as structured devotions, a movie, free time, and a Sunday morning service. Cost is \$183 per person Double (\$198 per person Single, \$173 per person Triple) Includes 2 nights lodging and 5 meals. Please register at the following link. Payment is by check with Women's Retreat in the memo field or by Tithe.ly, dropdown Women's Retreat. Final deadline for registration is January 19. Questions should be addressed to Leslie Sutphen (sutphenl@yahoo.com or 773-251-8996)."

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and

voice; give ye heed to what we say:
 voice; now ye hear of end - less bliss:
 voice; now ye need not fear the grave:

Je - sus Christ is born to - day; ox and ass be -
 Je - sus Christ was born for this! He has o - pened
 Je - sus Christ was born to save! Calls you one and

Glory to God 132

TEXT: Medieval Latin; trans. and para. John Mason Neale, 1853, alt.

MUSIC (IN DULCI JUBILO 6.6.7.7.7.8.5.5): German folk melody, 14th cent.; harm. David Hugh Jones, 1953; harm. © 1955, ren. 1983 John Ribble (admin. Westminster John Knox Press)

10



fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

The musical notation for measures 10-12 is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the staff.

13



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!

The musical notation for measures 13-15 is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the staff.

Love Has Come

110

Capo 3: (D) F (Bm7) Dm7 (Em7) Gm7 (A) C

1 Love has come: a light in the dark - ness!
 2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der.
 3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us!

(D) F (Bm7) Dm7 (Em) Gm (A7) C7 (D) F

Love shines forth in the Beth - le - hem skies. See, all
 Love is God now a - sleep in the hay. See the
 Love is life ev - er - last - ing and free. Love is

(A) C (D) F (Bm) Dm (D) F (A) C (G) B \flat (D) F

heav - en has come to pro - claim it; hear how their song of
 glow in the eyes of his moth - er; what is the name her
 Je - sus with - in and a - mong us. Love is the peace our

(Em7) Gm7 (F \sharp 7) A7 (G) B \flat (A) C (Bm) Dm (A7) C7

joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to you, a
 heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the name she
 hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the gift of

(D) F (A) C (G) B \flat (A) C (D) F (A) C (A7) C7 (Dsus) Fsus (D) F

Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
 whis - pers. Love! Love! Je - sus, Em - man - u - el.
 Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Here is a chance to sing a familiar French carol tune with new words, the most important clearly being "Love." The senses "seen and heard" (as in Acts 4:20 and elsewhere) organize the first two stanzas, while the third holds the summary statement: "Love is the gift of Christmas."

TEXT: Ken Bible, 1996
 MUSIC: French melody; arr. Eric T. Myers, 2012
 Text © 1996 LNWhymns.com (admin. Music Services)
 Music Arr. © 2012 Eric T. Myers

BRING A TORCH
 9.9.10.9.9.8

CCLI# 1296903

In the Bleak Midwinter 144



1 In the bleak mid-win - ter, frost - y wind made moan;
 2 Our God, heaven can - not hold him, nor earth sus - tain;
 3 An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there;
 4 What can I give him, poor as I am?

earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
 heaven and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;
 cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim thronged the air;
 If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb;

snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
 but his moth - er on - ly, in her maid - en bliss,
 if I were a wise man, I would do my part;

in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
 the Lord God in - car - nate, Je - sus Christ.
 wor - shipped the be - lov - ed with a kiss.
 yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

Though this text describes winter weather in England rather than in Palestine, the poet is using familiar surroundings as a means of making the Nativity more immediate and personal. The tune name honors a Gloucestershire village near the composer's birthplace in Cheltenham.

TEXT: Christina Rossetti, c. 1872, alt.
 MUSIC: Gustav Holst, 1906

CRANHAM
 Irregular

147

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.

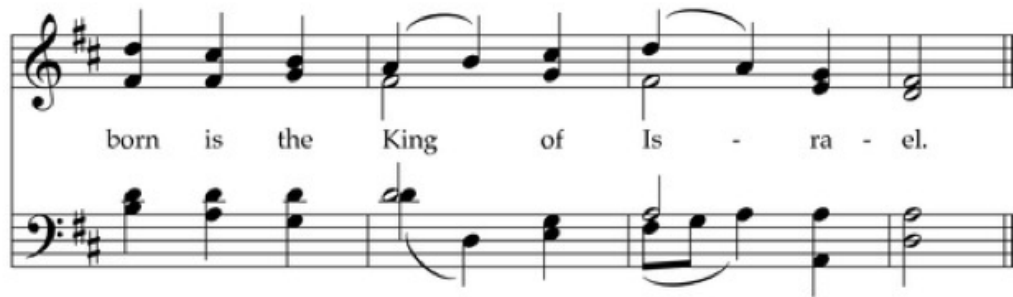
Refrain

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

"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*).

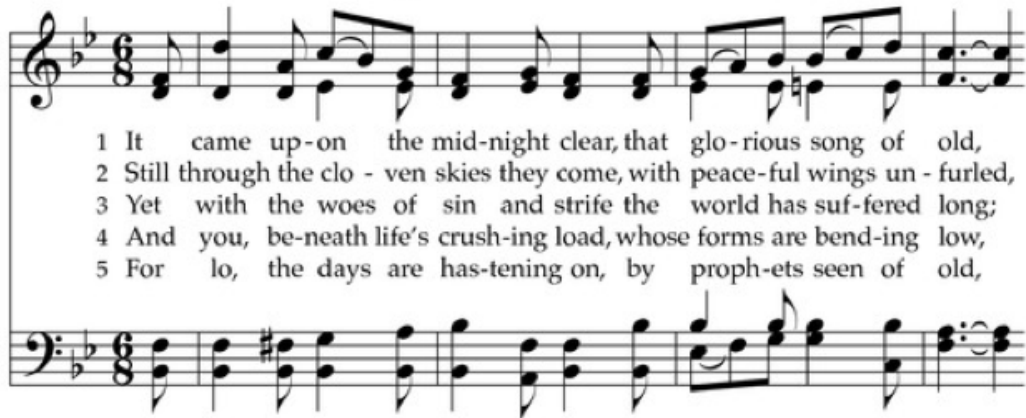
TEXT: English carol; *Some Ancient Christmas Carols*, 2nd ed., 1823, alt.
 MUSIC: English carol; *Sandys' Christmas Carols*, 1833

THE FIRST NOWELL
 Irregular

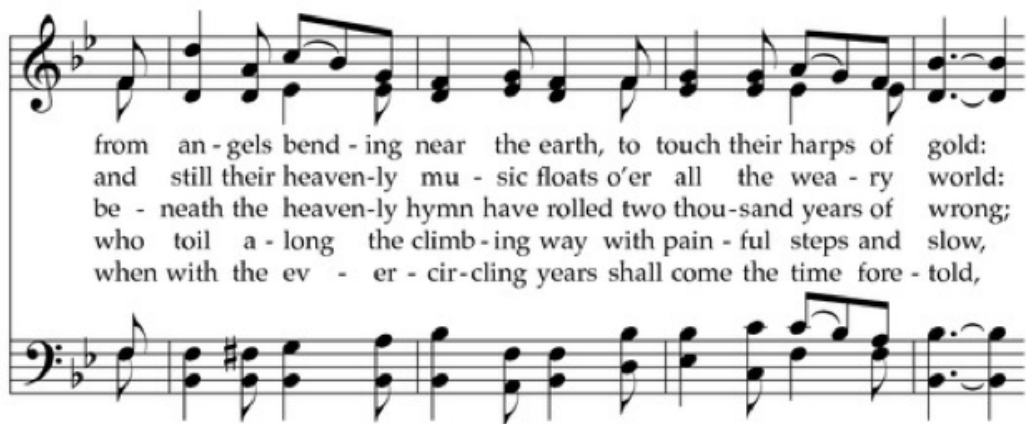


- 5 Then entered in those wise men three, 6 Then let us all with one accord
 full reverently upon their knee, sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
 and offered there in his presence that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
 their gold, and myrrh, and and with his blood our life hath bought.
 frankincense.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

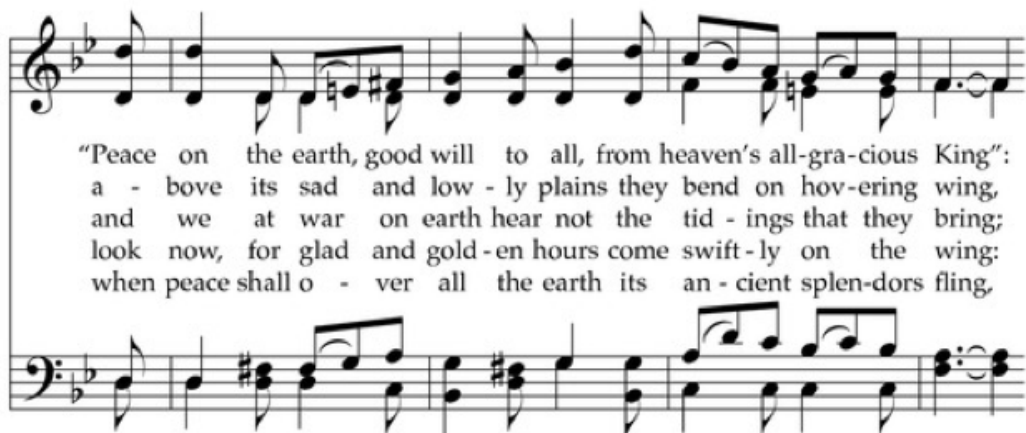
123 It Came Upon the Midnight Clear



1 It came up-on the mid-night clear, that glo-rious song of old,
 2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come, with peace-ful wings un - furled,
 3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suf-fered long;
 4 And you, be-neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low,
 5 For lo, the days are has-tening on, by proph-ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
 and still their heaven-ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world:
 be - neath the heaven-ly hymn have rolled two thou-sand years of wrong;
 who toil a - long the climb-ing way with pain - ful steps and slow,
 when with the ev - er - cir-cling years shall come the time fore - told,

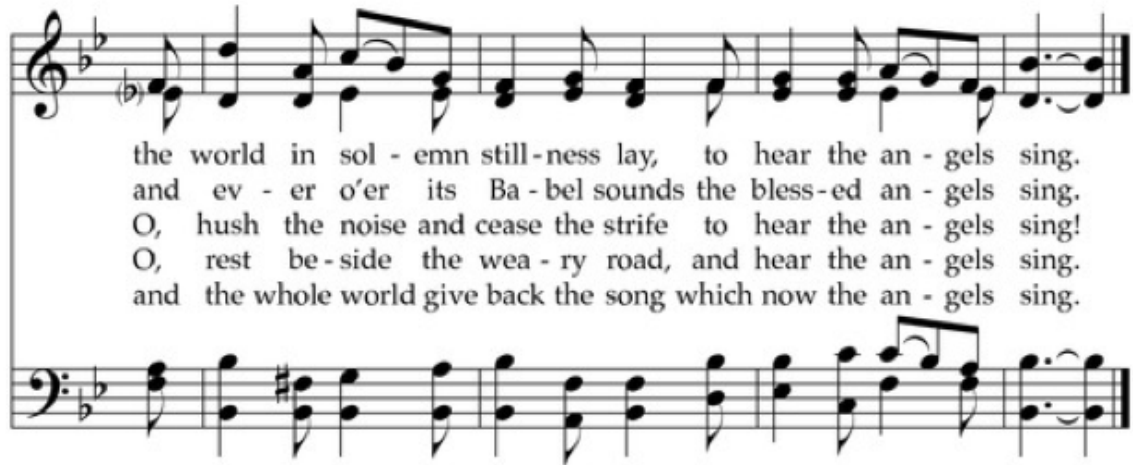


"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all-gra-cious King":
 a - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov-ering wing,
 and we at war on earth hear not the tid - ings that they bring;
 look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;
 when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen-dors fling,

The "it" of the first line of this text by a Unitarian minister does not refer to the birth of Jesus, but to "that glorious song of old," the angelic tidings of peace on earth. The restored third stanza laments how often the noise of human strife has obscured that message.

TEXT: Edmund Hamilton Sears, 1849, alt.
 MUSIC: Richard Storrs Willis, 1850

CAROL
 CMD
 (alternate tune: NOEL)



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