

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

617 North Elm Street, Greensboro, North Carolina • fpcgreensboro.org



CHRISTMAS EVE
Candlelight and Communion Service
December 24, 2024 • 5:30 p.m.

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WE ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

VOLUNTARY: Carols of the Season

John Alexander, organ

WELCOME.....Jill Duffield

CALL TO WORSHIP AND LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Matt Bussell and Rebekah Diehl

Leader: For unto us a child was born,
For this world ... Jesus, who is Christ our Lord.

**All: Salvation was proclaimed,
Hope and freedom for all were promised.**

Leader: Jesus, Christ our Lord, meet us this day,
For we wait on you.
Renew the joy of our salvation.

(Silence is observed. The Advent candles are lit.)

**All: Jesus, Christ our Lord,
With your salvation, transform this world.**

* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL: No. 133 – O Come, All Ye Faithful..... ADESTE FIDELES

* CALL TO CONFESSION *and* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Leader: O God, you search us out and know us,
and all that we are is open to you.
We confess that we have sinned.

All: In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

Leader: When we make no room for Christ,
and fail to welcome him into our lives,

All: In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

Leader: When we follow shooting stars
and squander our gifts in Herod's court,

All: In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

Leader: When we seek to cut down those
who might rise above us,

All: In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

Leader: When we sanitize your birth place
and erase from memory the poor and displaced,

All: In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

Leader: When we sing sweet sentiments over Christ's birth,
and fail to rejoice over his everyday presence,

All: In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

Leader: We turn to you, O Christ,
perfect union of Spirit and flesh;

**All: We renounce evil;
We claim your love;
We pray to be made whole.**

* ASSURANCE OF PARDON

* THE PEACE

Leader: Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

* CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: Angels We Have Heard on High GLORIA



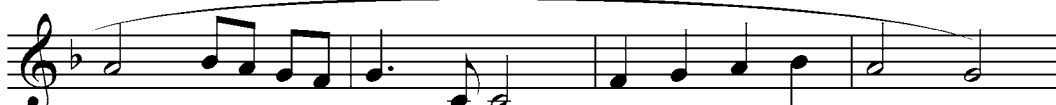
1. An - gels we have heard on high sweet - ly sing - ing
2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee! Why your joy - ous
3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the
4. See Him in a man - ger laid whom the an - gels



o'er the plains, and the moun - tains in re - ply
 strains pro - long! What the glad - some tid - ings be
 an - gels sing; Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee
 praise a - bove; Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid,



ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains. *Glo* - - - -
 which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
 Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.
 while we raise our hearts in love.



- - - - - *ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o,*



Glo - - - - - *ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.*

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON: *Isaiah 9:2-7*Bonnie McAlister

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM: A Great and Mighty Wonder..... Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

arranged by James Whitbourn (b. 1963)

Chancel Choir

A great and mighty wonder, a full and holy cure.

The virgin bears the infant with virgin honour pure.

Repeat the hymn again! "To God on high be glory, and peace on earth to men!"

The Word becomes incarnate and yet remains on high.

And cherubim sing anthems to shepherds from the sky.

Repeat the hymn again! "To God on high be glory, and peace on earth to men!"

While thus they sing your monarch, those bright angelic bands,

rejoice, ye vales and mountains, ye oceans clap your hands.

Repeat the hymn again! "To God on high be glory, and peace on earth to men!"

Since all he comes to ransom, by all be he adored,

The infant born in Beth'lem the Saviour and the Lord. Repeat the hymn again!

"To God on high be glory, and peace on earth to men!"

SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON: *Luke 2:1-14*

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

SERMONJill Duffield

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

* CAROL OF RESPONSE: No. 145 – What Child Is This? GREENSLEEVES

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLEJill Duffield

GREAT THANKSGIVINGMatt Bussell

One: The Lord be with you.

Many: **And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Many: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

One: We remember how Christ came – from the vast expanses of heaven to a world that barely made room for him, fragile and vulnerable and tiny – ... Therefore we join our voices with the choirs of heaven and with all the faithful of every time and place who forever praise God's name:



1. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord,
2. Bless - ed is he who comes



God of pow - er and might, heav - en and earth are
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the



full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

One: We remember too, Christ of the upper room, gathered with his friends ... We remember with pain Christ's body broken, and with wild joy his rising again, and with faithful hope await his return. Proclaiming the mystery of faith:



Christ has died; Christ is ris-en; Christ will come a - gain.



Christ has died; Christ is ris-en; Christ will come a - gain.

One: Light of the world, we give thanks that you came among us, with healing in your touch, compassion in your voice, and grace in your power ... and we would meet each other in heaven's light, and call each other beloved as you do us.



A - men, a - men, a - men.

One: Holy Spirit, presence of Christ in and among us,
Rest yourself in these gifts of bread and cup that they may be
sure signs of God's love for us, forgiveness and life abundant ...
And now we join together in the prayer Christ himself has taught
us, saying

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father 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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION.....Jill Duffield

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

*We invite all who trust in the Lord, including children, to receive communion.
Communion will be served by intinction (dipping a piece of bread in the cup)
in the front of the sanctuary. The ushers will release you row by row to be served.
If you are unable to come forward please raise your hand and an elder will come to you.
All of our breads are gluten free.*

COMMUNION MUSIC: On Christmas Night..... arr. Philip Ledger
Chancel Choir

On Christmas night all Christians sing,
To hear the news the angels bring-
News of great joy, news of great mirth,
News of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should all on earth be so sad,
Since our redeemer made us glad,
When from our sin he set us free,
All for to gain our liberty?

When sin departs before his grace,
Then life and health come in its place;
Angels with all and with joy may sing,
All for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light,
Which made the angels sing this night:
'Glory to God and peace to all,
Now and forevermore, Amen.'

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION.....Matt Bussell

CALL FOR THE OFFERING

*You may also participate in the offering by giving online at fpcgreensboro.org/give
or by mailing your gift to the church at 617 N. Elm St., Greensboro, NC 27401.*

OFFERTORY: Come Adore the Humble Kingarr. Matt Boswell, Matt Papa
Rejoice Ensemble

Come adore the humble King
Lowly in the manger
Fall before His majesty
Hail the little Savior
Hope, what hope no tongue could tell
God has come with us to dwell
His name is Emmanuel
O praise the humble King

Come adore in humble state
He the song of angels
Join the wise who call His name
And with all creation
Who, oh, who would condescend
God unknown now calls us friend
Love that none could comprehend
O praise the humble King

Come adore the King who came
To our world to save us
Born to heal our prideful race
Crown us with forgiveness
Fall, oh fall, before the one
Who in mercy left His throne
Christ the Lord, God's only Son
His glories now we sing
O praise the humble King

Come adore, come adore
Come adore the King
Bow before, come adore
The Name above all names *[Repeat]*

* CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: Angels From the Realms of Glory

REGENT SQUARE



All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther,



Spir - it, Son, Ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing



To th'e - ter - nal_ Three in One: Come and wor - ship,



come and wor - ship, Wor - ship Christ, the new - born King!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

CELEBRATION OF THE LIGHTJill Duffield

As ushers light candles from the Christ Candle, they will share that light with people on the end of each pew. We ask that you share the light of Christ with the person sitting next to you (*by holding your candle upright and the person next to you tilting their candle to the one lit*), until everyone is holding the light of Christ.

* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL: Silent Night, Holy Night..... STILLE NACHT

*After the Chancel Choir sings a verse of "Stille Nacht",
the congregation is invited to begin singing "Silent Night."*

*Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht,
Alles schläft, einsam wacht,
Nur das traute hochheiliger Paar,
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh'
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh'.*

**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, 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.**

**Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!**

* BENEDICTIONJill Duffield

* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL: No. 134 – Joy to the World! ANTIOCH

VOLUNTARY: SORTIE SUR ‘ADESTE FIDELES’..... Pierre Cochereau (1924-1984)
John Alexander, organ



* Let us rise in body or spirit.

Cover image: “Adoration of the Child,” Gerard van Honthorst (1592–1656), circa 1620.
Height 95.5 cm (37.5 in); width 131 cm (51.5 in). Oil on canvas, collection of Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy.

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WELCOME

We are grateful that the Spirit has led you to spend Christmas Eve with us.
Retreats, special classes, and programs for children & youth
are coming as we continue our 200th year!

Children of all ages are welcome in the sanctuary.
Special Christmas Eve worship bags are provided and do not need to be returned.

CHRISTMAS MORNING, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25 AND SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29

One service: 10 a.m. worship in the Sanctuary. Children of all ages are welcome
in the sanctuary, and worship activity bags are available at the entrances.

HOLY COMMUNION

We invite all who trust in the Lord, including children, to receive communion.
Communion will be served by intinction (dipping a piece of bread in the cup)
in the front of the sanctuary. The ushers will release you row by row to be served.
If you are unable to come forward please raise your hand and an elder will come to you.
All of our breads are gluten free.

THIS EVENING'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Jill Duffield, *Senior Pastor*
Matt Bussell, *Associate Pastor for Outreach and Mission*
Bonnie McAlister, *Lay Reader*
John Alexander, *Director of Music Ministry and Principal Organist*
Will Edwards, *Director of Music for Rejoice!*
Rejoice! Ensemble
Chancel Choir

O Come, All Ye Faithful 133

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant; O come
 2 True God from true God, Light from light e - ter - nal, born
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels; sing in ex - ul - ta - tion; sing,
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing; Je -

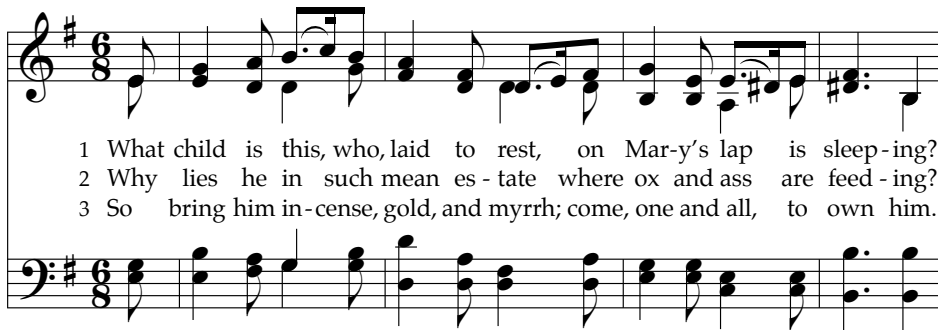
ye; O come ye to Beth - le - hem! Come, and be - hold him,
 of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes; ver - y God, be -
 all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove! Glo - ry to God, all
 sus, to thee be all glo - ry given; Word of the Fa - ther,

Refrain

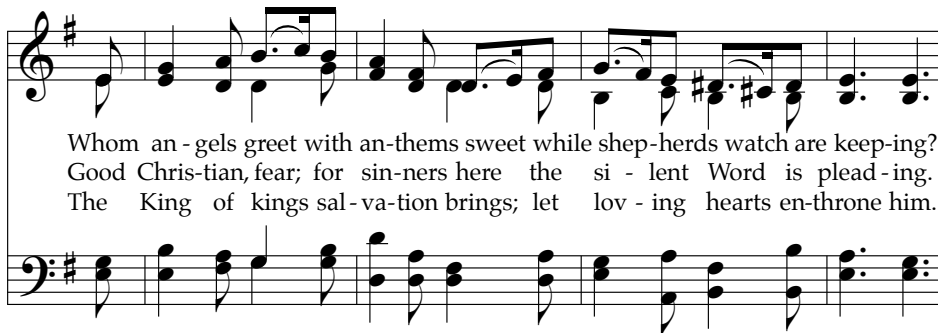
born the King of an - gels!
 got - ten, not cre - at - ed!
 glo - ry in the high - est! O come, let us a - dore him; O come, let
 now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

us a - dore him; O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord!

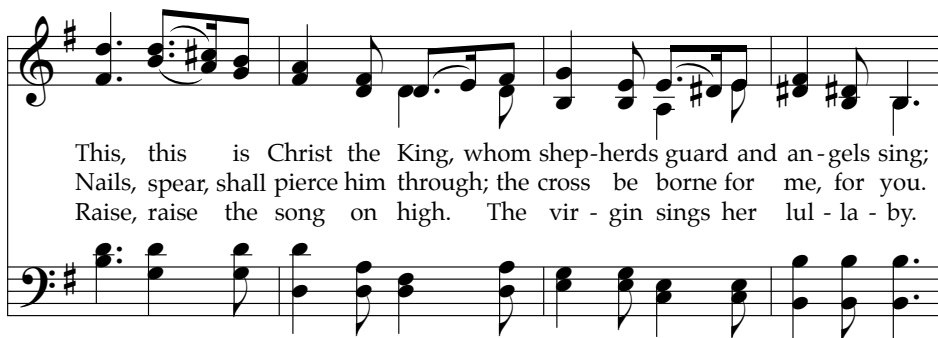
From its Roman Catholic origins, this 18th-century hymn has spread to worldwide use by many denominations in both Latin and vernacular versions. Once popular with a wide range of hymn texts, this tune is now firmly associated with this Christmas text from which it is named.



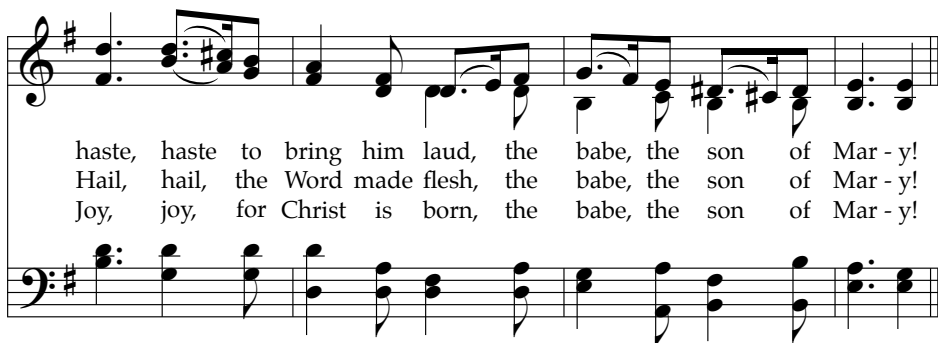
1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
 Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
 The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
 Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.
 Raise, raise the song on high. The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by.



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

This Victorian text gains scope and power by having the original second halves of stanzas two and three restored. They give a stark forward glimpse of what lies ahead for this "babe, the son of Mary!" The tune is much older, dating from Tudor England.

Joy to the World



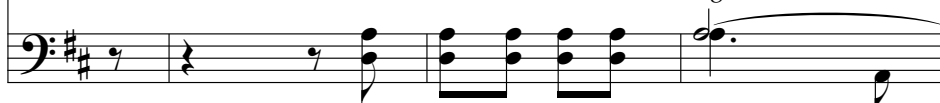
1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their songs
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na -



her king; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow
 tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness



and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
 and heaven and na - ture sing,



sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.



heaven and na - ture sing,

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.