



In response to God's grace, the mission of First Presbyterian Church is to create a community where people seek the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, rejoice in worship, and go forth sharing the love of Christ with Athens and the world!

December 24, 2024
6:00 and 8:00 p.m.
Nativity of the Lord

GATHERING IN THE NAME OF GOD

Welcome to all who are worshipping with us. As we enter this holy space this evening, **please silence your cell phone.** Consult an usher if you need a personal hearing device, large-print bulletin or large-print hymnal.

Prelude

In dulci jubilo

Johann Sebastian Bach

Adeste fideles

Jeanne Demessieux

Rhapsodie (on Christmas Carols)

Eugène Gigout

Contemplation on St. Louis

A.D. Miller

Shepherds Sang Their Praises O'er Him

Helmut Walcha

Prelude on 'Greensleeves'

Richard Purvis

Words of Welcome

Lighting of the Christ Candle

*Hymn 41

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

Great God, we were on the journey with Mary and Joseph, afraid and nervous about what the future would bring. We were in the fields with the shepherds, shocked and astonished at the proclamation of the angels: Unto us a child is born, a Son is given, and authority rests on him. Through our fears we are learning to sing a new song, one that declares your glory, honor, and praise. Help us, O God, to be active (*cont.*)

**Those who are able may stand.*

participants in your story, that we might enact justice in a society yearning for it and share the grace offered in the person and work of Christ. In the name of the One called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Amen.

***Silent Prayer**

Lord, have mercy. Amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

***Congregational Response**

Hymn 28, Stanza 1

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart, and soul, and voice;
give ye heed to what we say; Jesus Christ is born today;
on and about him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

***The Peace**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

First Lesson

Psalm 96, page 539

Carol

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

David Ashley White

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven’s all gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.
Still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o’er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.
O hear, the blessed angels sing!
For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song which now the angels sing.

Second Lesson

Luke 2:1-20, page 935

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Dr. Ryan Baer

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

***Hymn 44**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS

***Affirmation of Faith**

Philippians 2:5b-11

We trust in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to
the point of death—even death on a cross.
Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every
name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on
earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is
Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Christmas Eve Offering

Our Christmas Eve offering will support Jubilee Partners. Boxes of diapers (infant or adult) will benefit the Athens Area Diaper Bank. Thank you for your generosity.

Offertory

In the Bleak Midwinter

John Bertalot

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.
Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.
Angels and archangels may have gathered there, cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only in her maiden bliss, worshipped the beloved with a kiss.
What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man I would do my part; yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

***Hymn 53**

What Child Is This

GREENSLEEVES

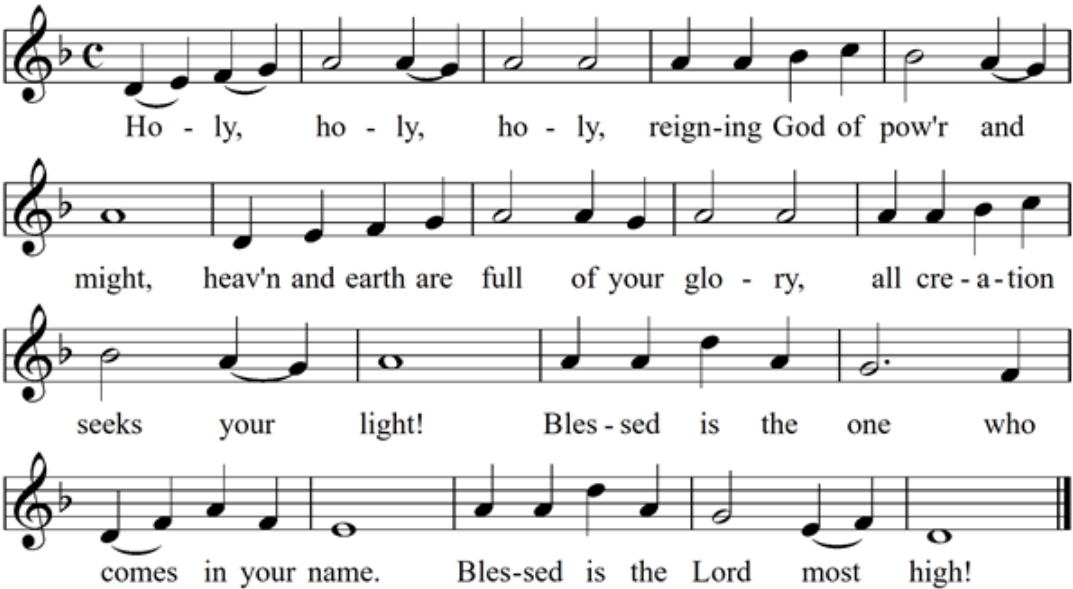
***Prayer of Dedication**

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Lord’s Table

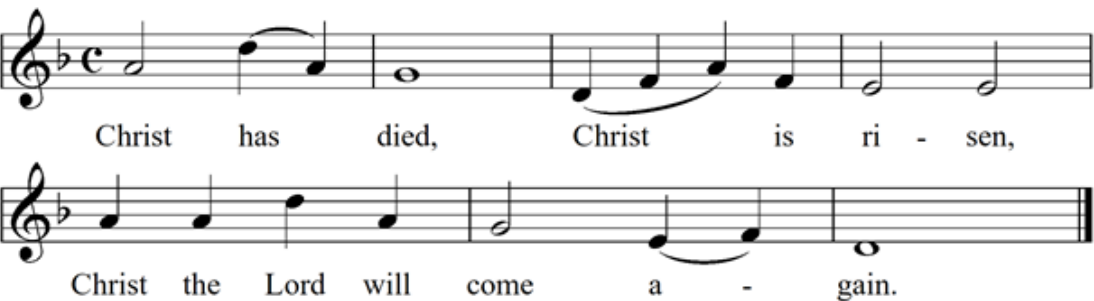
The Great Thanksgiving
The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise...

Sanctus



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, reign-ing God of pow'r and
might, heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry, all cre - a - tion
seeks your light! Bles - sed is the one who
comes in your name. Bles-sed is the Lord most high!

Memorial Acclamation



Christ has died, Christ is ri - sen,
Christ the Lord will come a - gain.

Great Amen



Breaking of the Bread and Giving of the Cup

Communion of the People

Prayer after Communion

The Lord's Prayer Hymnal, p. 16
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.

SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD

Lighting of the Candles

When lighting your candle, please tilt the unlighted candle toward the flame of the lighted candle.

Hymn 60 *Silent Night, Holy Night* STILLE NACHT

Benediction

***Hymn 40** *Joy to the World!* ANTIOCH

***Postlude** *Adeste fideles* Herbert Sumsion

As you exit the building, please extinguish your candle and place it in one of the baskets on the sanctuary porch.

Texts and music for hymns and sung responses reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-714861

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

The poinsettias are given to the glory of God and in memory and honor of our loved ones. We thank the Flower Committee for decorating our church and sanctuary during Advent and Christmas.

WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor*
The Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard, *Associate Pastor*
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*
Dr. Bob Burton, *Guitar*

USHERS

6:00 p.m. John Simpson, Jimbo LaBoon III, Carl Bergmann, Randy Dudley, Ed Ferguson, Keith Oelke, Bo Thurston, Jeffrey Trapnell
8:00 p.m. Hailey Campbell, Zoe Campbell, Benjamin Crim

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIANS

Aiden Dowling, Bryan Owens,
Justin Winstanley

PLEASE SEE FIRSTPRESATHENS.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

41

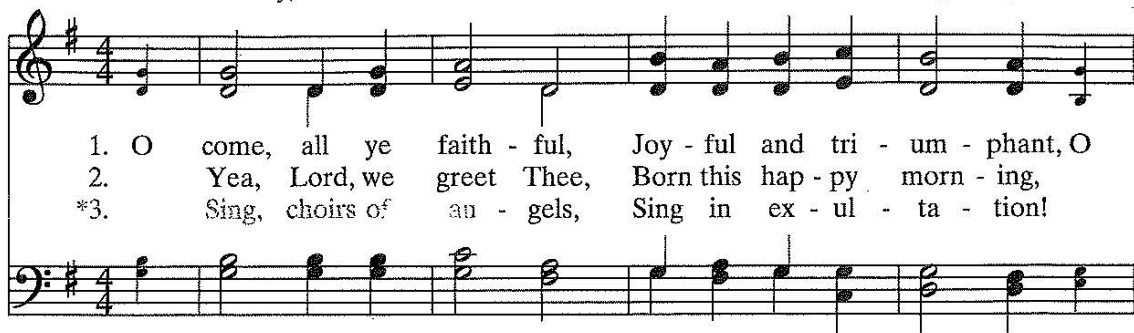
ADESTE FIDELES 6.6.10.5.6 with refrain

John Francis Wade (c. 1740–1743)

Trans. Frederick Oakeley, 1841

John Francis Wade (c. 1740–1743)

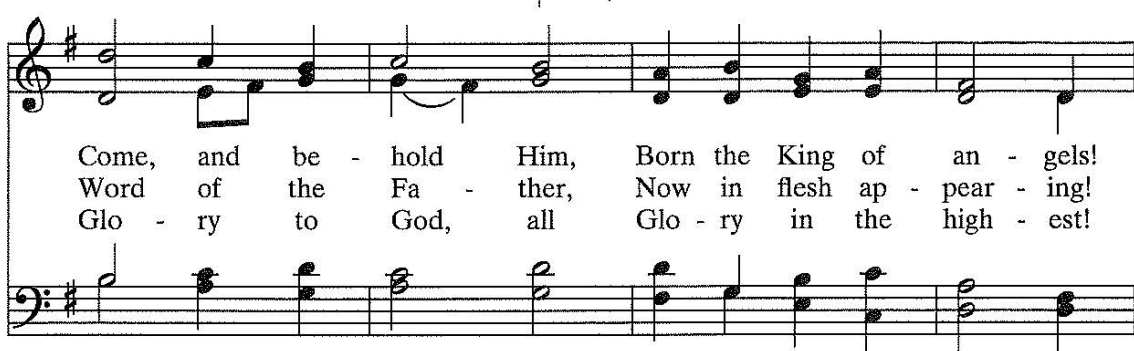
Harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906



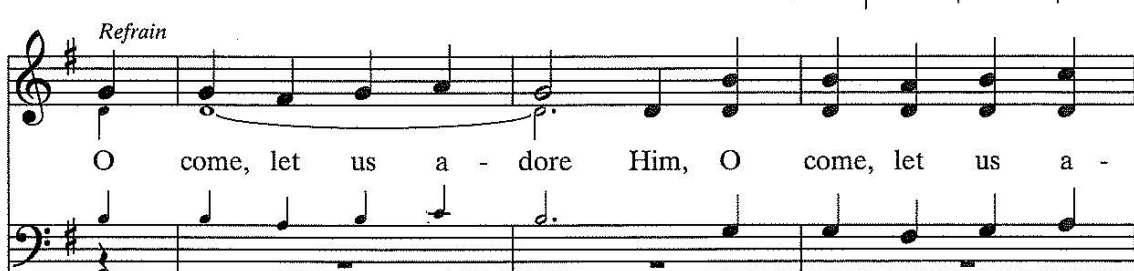
1. O come, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
2. Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, Born this hap - py morn - ing,
*3. Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul - ta - tion!



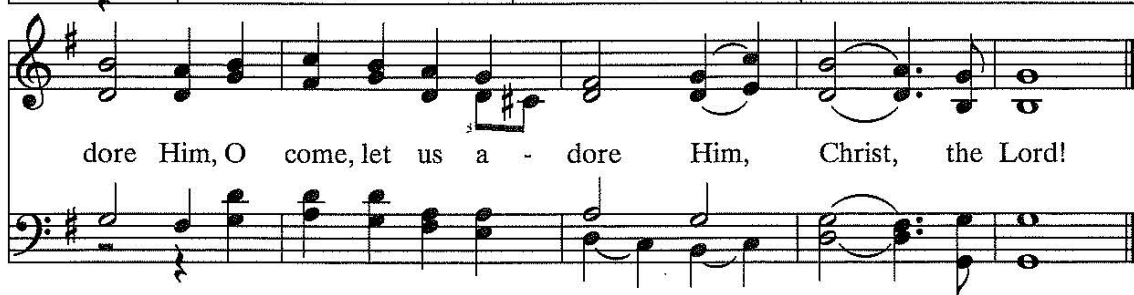
come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem!
Je - sus, to Thee be all glo - ry given;
Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove!



Come, and be - hold Him, Born the King of an - gels!
Word of the Fa - ther, Now in flesh ap - pear - ing!
Glo - ry to God, all Glo - ry in the high - est!



Refrain
O come, let us a - dore Him, O come, let us a -



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

*Alternate harmonization and descant for stanza 3, 42

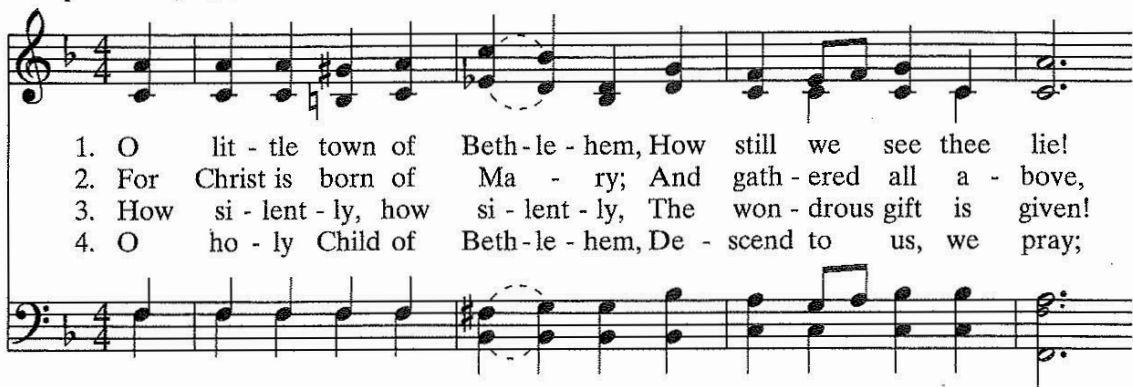
O Little Town of Bethlehem

44

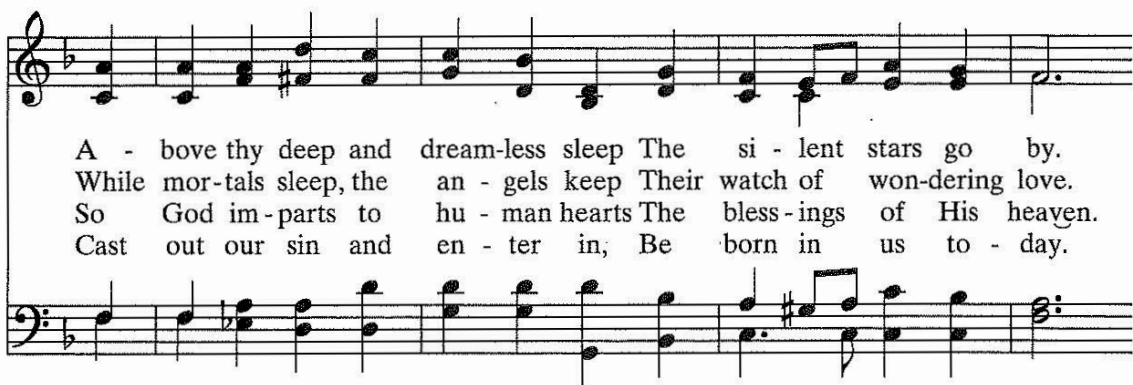
ST. LOUIS 8.6.8.6.7.6.8.6

Phillips Brooks, 1868

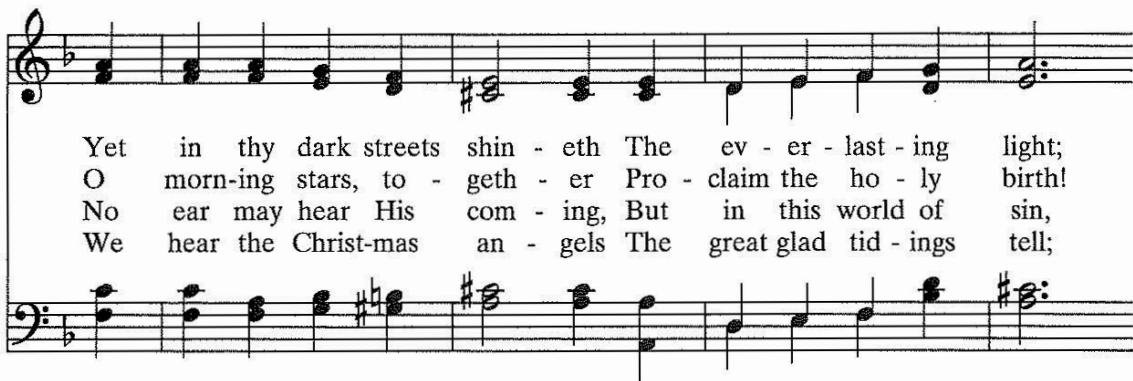
Lewis Henry Redner, 1868



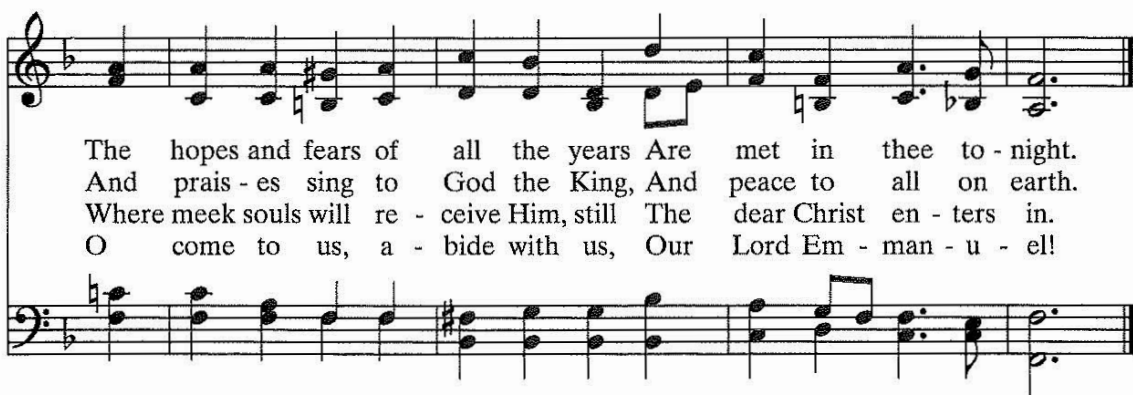
1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!
 2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry; And gath - ered all a - bove,
 3. How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, The won - drous gift is given!
 4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, De - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep The si - lent stars go by.
 While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of won - dering love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts The bless - ings of His heaven.
 Cast out our sin and en - ter in; Be born in us to - day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing light;
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er Pro - claim the ho - ly birth!
 No ear may hear His com - ing, But in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels The great glad tid - ings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to - night.
 And prais - es sing to God the King, And peace to all on earth.
 Where meek souls will re - ceive Him, still The dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Em - man - u - el!

What Child Is This

53

GREENSLEEVES 8.7.8.7 with refrain

English ballad, 16th century

William Chatterton Dix, c. 1871

Arr. *Christmas Carols New and Old*, 1871

Em D G D Em Am B

1. What Child is this, who, laid to rest, On Ma-ry'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.

Em D G D Em Am B Em^{sus4} Em

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.

Bm G D Em Am B

This, this is Christ the King, Whom shep-herds guard and an - gels sing;

Bm G D Em Am B Em^{sus4} Em

Haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Ma - ry!

This tune can be sung in the original mode by sharpening all C's in the soprano and alto parts.

Silent Night, Holy Night

60

STILLE NACHT Irregular

Joseph Mohr, 1818

Trans. John Freeman Young, 1863

Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright, Round yon
 2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep-herds quake at the sight, Glo - ries
 3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light Ra - diant
 4. Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Won-drous star, lend thy light; With the

vir - gin moth-er and child! Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild,
 stream from heav-en a - far, Heaven-ly hosts sing: "Al - le - lu - ia;
 beams from Thy ho-ly face, With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,
 an - gels let us sing, Al - le - lu - ia to our King;

Sleep in heav-en-ly peace, Sleep in heav-en-ly peace.
 Christ the Sav - ior is born, Christ the Sav - ior is born."
 Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at Thy birth.
 Christ the Sav - ior is born, Christ the Sav - ior is born.

1. Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
 Alles schläft, einsam wacht
 Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.
 Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
 Schlaf' in himmlischer Ruh',
 Schlaf' in himmlischer Ruh'!

2. Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
 Hirten erst kundgemacht
 Durch der Engel Alleluja,
 Tönt est laut von fern und nah:
 Christ der Retter ist da,
 Christ der Retter ist da!

3. Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
 Gottes Sohn, o wie lacht
 Lieb' aus deinem göttlichen Mund,
 Da uns schlägt die rettende Stund':
 Christ, in deiner Geburt,
 Christ, in deiner Geburt!

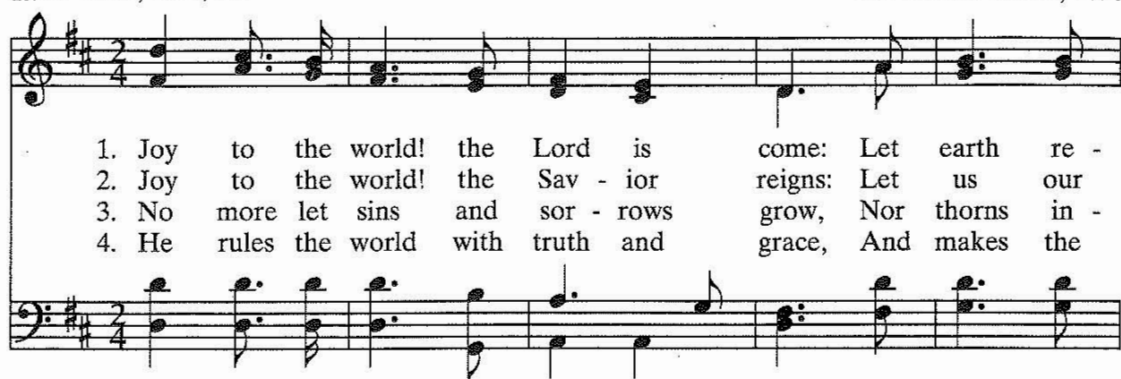
Joy to the World!

ANTIOCH CM with repeat

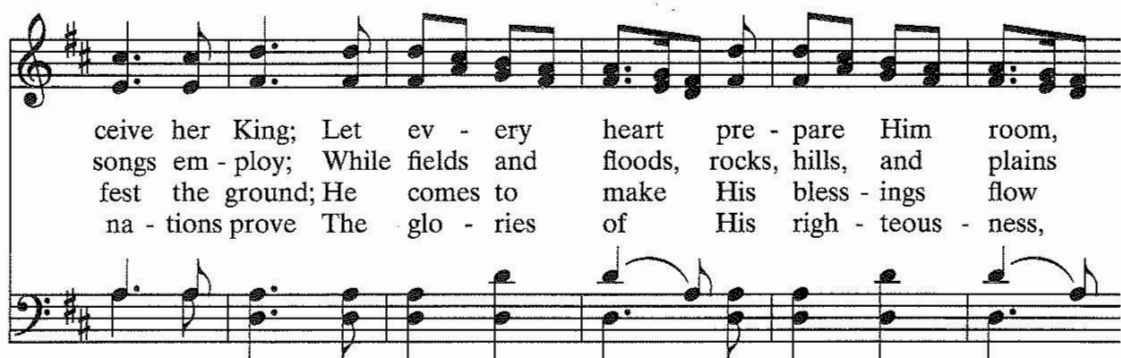
Attr. George Frederick Handel, 1742

Arr. Lowell Mason, 1836

Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.



1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come: Let earth re -
 2. Joy to the world! the Sav - ior reigns: Let us our
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, Nor thorns in -
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the



ceive her King; Let ev - ery heart pre - pare Him room,
 songs em - ploy; While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 fest the ground; He comes to make His bless - ings flow
 na - 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



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,

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

Ryan Baer, Moderator Pat Waldrup, Clerk of Session

CLASS OF 2025

Shannon Brooks
Phyllis Crowell
Denise Horton
Paul Lee
Sharon Neff
Bruce Middendorf
Randy Riner
Chuck Toney

CLASS OF 2026

Lindsay Griffeth
Dan Nadenicek
Karen Phillips
Ethelyn Simpson
Jeffrey Trapnell
Pat Tritt
John Turner
Pat Waldrup

CLASS OF 2027

Susan Baldwin
Bill Bushnell
Amy Cowsert
Matt Crim
Jay Holloway
Tom Lane
Joan Pinson
Paige Simmons

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor* (ryan@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard, *Associate Pastor* (whitney@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Margaret Davis, *Parish Associate* (margaret@firstpresathens.org)
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist* (jcoble@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Hannah Knight, *Interim Director of Children and Youth Ministries* (hannah@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Elaine Johnson, *Director of Weekday School* (elaine@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Lucy Bell Johnson, *Office Administrator* (lbell@firstpresathens.org)
Mr. Paulo Santos, *Director of Communications* (paulo@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Jennifer Adams, *Church Accountant* (jadams@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Joli Winstanley, *Receptionist* (frontdesk@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Marcy Fabris, *Weekday School Administrative Assistant* (wds@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Rita Raines, *Nursery Coordinator*
Mrs. Charlotte Chromiak, *Children's Music Assistant* (charlotteposs@gmail.com)
Mrs. Madeline Van Dyck, *Parish Nurse*
Mr. Wayne Brock, *Sexton*