



First Presbyterian Church of Athens

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!

January 4, 2026
10:00 a.m.
Second Sunday of Christmas

GATHERING IN THE NAME OF GOD

Greeting

Psalm 118:24

This is the day the Lord has made; **let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

Prelude

Noël

Louis-Claude Daquin

Words of Welcome and Concerns of the Church

*Song of Gathering

Hymn 474, Stanza 1

**O splendor of God's glory bright,
from light eternal bringing light;
thou light of life, light's living spring,
true day, all days illumining.**

Call to Worship

John proclaims, "Look! Here is the Lamb of God!"

What does this mean? We want to know.

Come and see what Jesus is all about.

We open our minds and hearts to the Word.

*Hymn 63

As with Gladness Men of Old

DIX

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

God of grace and mercy, we who have seen the signs of Jesus' presence in the world still fall into doubt and despair. We put our trust in ourselves and in the powers of the world, in material goods and in finite and fallible people. In our fear we act out against our neighbors, and hurt those most in need of our help. Restore our faith, O God. Forgive us for our failings and make us one with our beloved siblings throughout creation.

*Silent Prayer

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

*Assurance of Pardon

**Those who are able may stand.*

Welcome to all who are worshipping with us. As we enter a holy space this morning, please silence your cell phone.

Please sign and pass the Fellowship Pad, making note of new and old friends, check in on Facebook, and follow us on Instagram (firstpresathensga).

The first three stanzas of *As with Gladness Men of Old* use parallels between the coming of the Maghi and the spiritual lives of the singers, summed up in a prayer in the fourth stanza.

At “The Peace,” worshipers are invited to greet each other by saying, “The peace of Christ be with you,” and responding, “And also with you.”

Children are invited to remain in the Sanctuary on Communion Sundays.

O Word of God Incarnate celebrates attributes of Christ that are revealed through holy Scripture, which serves as a lantern, a char, and a compass for the church in seeking to know Christ better. The setting of the tune comes from Felix Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*.

Scholars debate whether this powerfully poetic text is an early Christian hymn which Paul is quoting or his own composition. It is one of the best-known and most influential passages in the Pauline corpus.



You may mail your check, set up an automatic gift through your bank, or donate online using this QR code or at firstpresathens.org/giving. Thank you for your generosity.

*Congregational Response

Jacques Berthier



*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.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

Congregational Prayer for Illumination

Hymn 68, Stanza 3

**O Jesus, while the star of grace impels us on to seek your face,
let not our slothful hearts refuse the guidance of your light to use.**

First Lesson

Psalms 66:1-5, page 517

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

Second Lesson

John 1:35-51, page 969

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

Sermon

Come and See

Dr. Ryan Baer

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

*Hymn 327

O Word of God Incarnate

MUNICH

*Affirmation of Faith

Philippians 2:5-11

**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.**

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

A New Year Carol

Benjamin Britten

Here we bring new water from the well so clear,
For to worship God with, this happy New Year.

*Refrain: Sing levy dew, sing levy dew, the water and the wine;
The seven bright gold wires and the bugles that do shine.*

Sing reign of Fair Maid, with gold upon her toe,
Open you the West Door and turn the Old Year go. *Refrain*
Sing reign of Fair Maid, with gold upon her chin,
Open you the East Door, and let the New Year in. *Refrain*

*Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Hymn 592

There are different interpretations of the text of the anthem, including a traditions of children collecting fresh water from a well on New Year's Day to sprinkle on people as they sang the carol. The words "levy dew" may come from a Welsh phrase meaning "a cry to God," or in French, "raise to God," which refers to raising communion elements.

The musical setting of the communion liturgy is based on the hymn tune *Picardy*, arranged by Kimberly Bracken Long.

*Prayer of Dedication

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Lord's Table

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

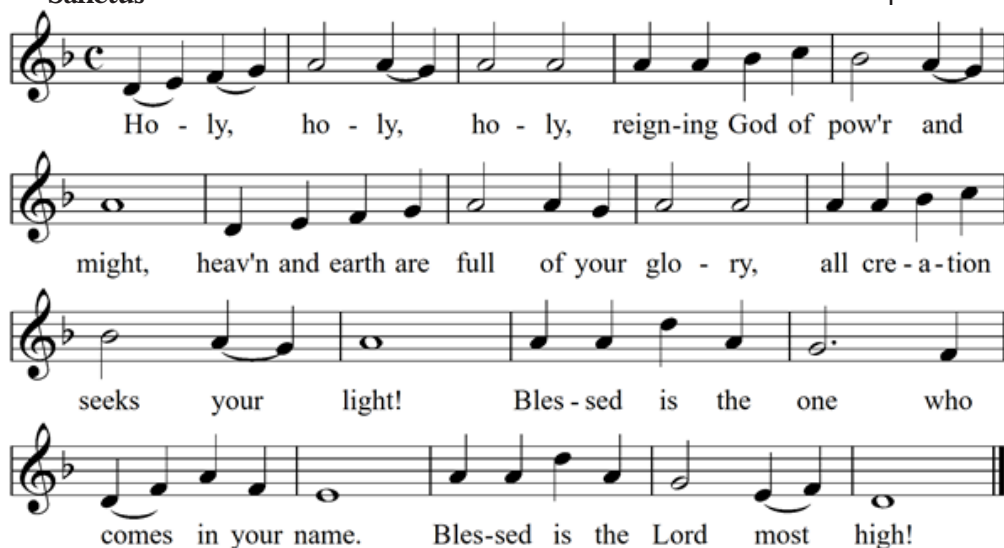
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

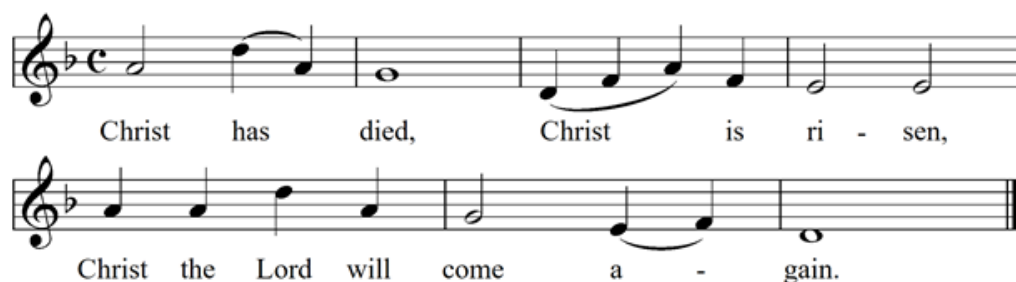
It is right to give our thanks and praise....

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



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

O Sing a Song of Bethlehem, written by a noted Presbyterian hymn scholar, employs place names and sensory images (light, fragrance, wind) to sketch the

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.

Breaking of the Bread and Giving of the Cup

Communion of the People

Prayer after Communion

SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD

***Hymn 308** *O Sing a Song of Bethlehem* KINGSFOLD

***Charge and Benediction**

***Congregational Response** Hymn 68, stanza 4
To God the Father, God the Son, and Holy Spirit, three in one, may every tongue and nation raise an endless song of thankful praise.

Postlude *In You Is Gladness* Johann Sebastian Bach

A special word of welcome to our guests: thank you for joining us for worship this morning. Please fill out the Fellowship Pad so that we may be in touch. We are delighted you are here and look forward to seeing you again.

Nurseries for children 4 years old and younger, available from 9:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m., are located next to the Children’s Ministry Suite and are accessible down the stairs in the Atrium and through the glass door.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

WORSHIP LEADERS

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

USHERS

Jimbo LaBoon III, John Simpson, Mary Peace

FLOWERS

The Sanctuary flowers are given to the glory of God and in celebration of the fifty-fourth wedding anniversary of Ron and Svea Bogue.

JANUARY FLOWER TEAM

Denise LaBoon (chair),
Ethelyn Simpson, Isabelle Wallace

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIAN

Bryan Owens

SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Justin Winstanley

TO AID IN WORSHIP

If you need to leave the sanctuary during the service, a live video feed is available in the Atrium and online on Facebook and YouTube.

Available in the Narthex or from an usher:

- **Personal hearing receivers** usable anywhere in the sanctuary
- **Large-print** hymnals, Bibles, bulletins, and hymnsheets
- **Sermons** from the previous six weeks

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Prayer requests can be submitted to the church office, 706-543-4338, by the Prayer Request link on our church website (firstpresathens.org) or on the prayer cards in the Fellowship Pads.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wednesday@First Spring 2026

Everyone is invited to participate in LIFT our program that combines dinner, study, play, and prayer with our church friends of all ages. LIFT stands for Living in Faith Together and one of the great gifts unique to the church is the opportunity to grow alongside people from different generations. LIFT presents us with monthly gatherings for fellowship, study, and fun – all around the dinner table with friends of different ages.

This spring, we will gather for LIFT on **January 7, February 4, March 4, and May 6** from 5:30–6:30 p.m. and all are invited to participate! Please RSVP for dinner in the Atrium, online at tinyurl.com/WedAtFirst, or by contacting the church office (e-mail frontdesk@firstpresathens.org or call 706-543-4338) by Mondays at 12:00 p.m. Price is \$12/person and a \$45/family max (complimentary for children 5 and under).

Food Sunday, January 11

You may bring donations of **white rice (1–2 lb bags), single-serving snack foods (chips, cereal bars, dried fruits/nuts, etc.), and dry pinto beans/black eyed peas** to church on **Sunday, January 11**. You may also bring food to church office until **Friday, January 9**. Thanks for your donations in December – our neighbors in need are grateful!

2026–27 Weekday School

First Pres Weekday School registration for Fall 2026 begins for in-house students on Tuesday, January 13. On Friday, January 16 at noon, community registration begins. Our Weekday School is a half day church preschool serving 3 months through 5 years. Questions? Call our director, Elaine Johnson, at (706) 206-8180 or e-mail elaine@firstpresathens.org.

Shakespeare with Friends Class

Join us on Wednesday afternoons starting January 7 as Ron Bogue leads a class through a reading and discussion of Virgil's *Aeneid*. The class will meet weekly for 10 weeks through March 11 at 4:30 p.m. in the Staff Conference Room.

New Members First Things Class

Join us for our next FirstThings gathering on **Sunday, January 25** from **12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** This will be a time to get better acquainted, meet the church staff, and talk about what makes First Presbyterian Church of Athens unique.

On **Sunday, February 1**, new members will meet with the Session (our governing board) at **10:00 a.m.** to be received into membership and will be introduced to the congregation at the 11 :00 a.m. service. To RSVP, please call the church office (706-543-4338) or e-mail Paulo Santos at paulo@firstpresathens.org by **Tuesday, January 20**.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, January 4 - Communion Sunday

10:00 a.m. Worship Service, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching

Monday, January 5

8:30 a.m. Men's Small Group Meeting, Library

2:00 p.m. Circle Two, Staff Conference Room

Tuesday, January 6

8:00 a.m. Weeday School Classes Resume

1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room

2:00 p.m. Circle 3/4

7:00 p.m. Circle Six, Home of Ann Dunn

Wednesday, January 7

4:30 p.m. Shakespeare with Friends Class, Staff Conference Room or Zoom (ID: 706-543-1820)

5:30 p.m. Wed@First Supper, Fellowship Hall

6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

Thursday, January 8

5:00 p.m. Administration Commission Meeting, Staff Conference Room

Friday, January 9

2:00 p.m. Memorial Service for Peggy Randolph, Sanctuary

5:00 p.m. Reception for Peggy Randolph, Atrium

Sunday, January 11

8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services

9:45 a.m. Sunday School

12:15 p.m. Young Adult Sunday Brunch

4:00 p.m. Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Room 203

4:00 p.m. St. Andrews Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

4:50 p.m. Youth Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

5:30 p.m. Youth Group, The PIT

Be a part of the 2026 MLK Day of Service in Athens!

Monday, January 19

What a great way to start off 2026 by joining other members of First Presbyterian and the Athens Community by honoring Martin Luther King and helping to make Athens a more beautiful and welcoming place to live! You can see more information about volunteering opportunities and register at tinyurl.com/FPCMLKDay.

After registering for a spot, please e-mail Whitney at whitney@firstpresathens.org so she can connect you with other FPC members volunteering with the same project.

The Athens MLK Day of Service is an annual celebration in support of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and commitment to service. In 1994, Congress made the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday an official day of service. Athens, Georgia is one of the thousands of cities across the United States that decided to make this "A Day On and Not a Day Off."

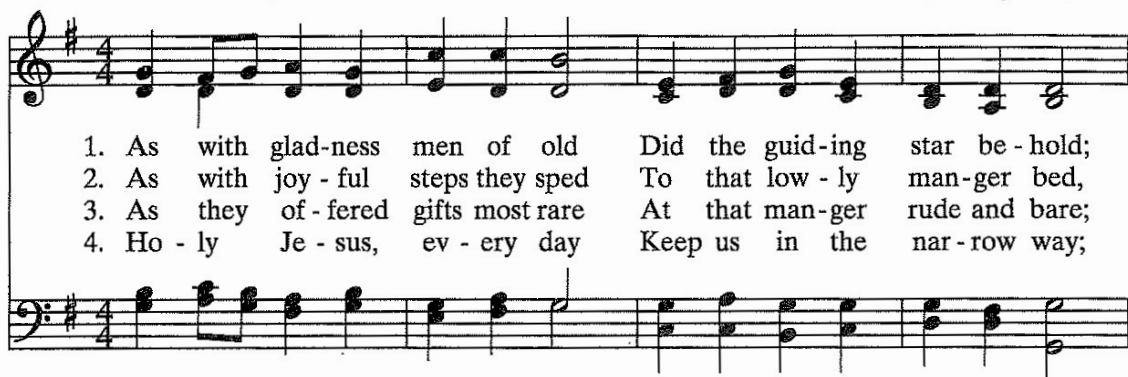
As with Gladness Men of Old

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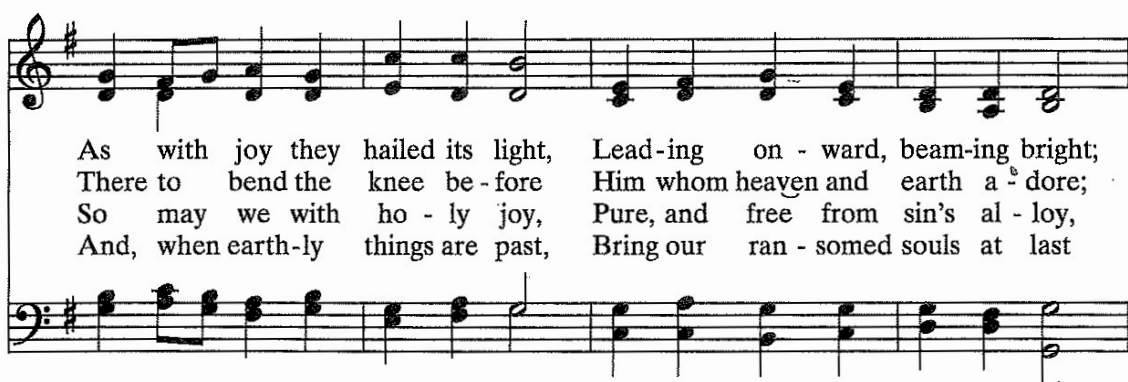
DIX 7.7.7.7.7

William Chatterton Dix, c. 1858

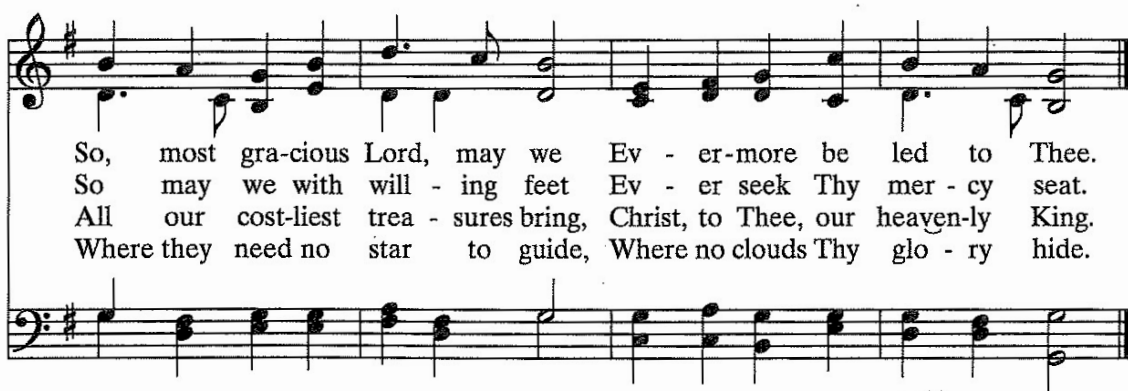
Conrad Kocher, 1838
Abr. William Henry Monk, 1861
Harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906



1. As with glad-ness men of old Did the guid-ing star be-hold;
2. As with joy-ful steps they sped To that low-ly man-ger bed,
3. As they of-fered gifts most rare At that man-ger rude and bare;
4. Ho-ly Je-sus, ev-ery day Keep us in the nar-row way;



As with joy they hailed its light, Lead-ing on-ward, beam-ing bright;
There to bend the knee be-fore Him whom heaven and earth a-dore;
So may we with ho-ly joy, Pure, and free from sin's al-loy,
And, when earth-ly things are past, Bring our ran-somed souls at last



So, most gra-cious Lord, may we Ev-er-more be led to Thee.
So may we with will-ing feet Ev-er seek Thy mer-cy seat.
All our cost-liest trea-sures bring, Christ, to Thee, our heav-en-ly King.
Where they need no star to guide, Where no clouds Thy glo-ry hide.

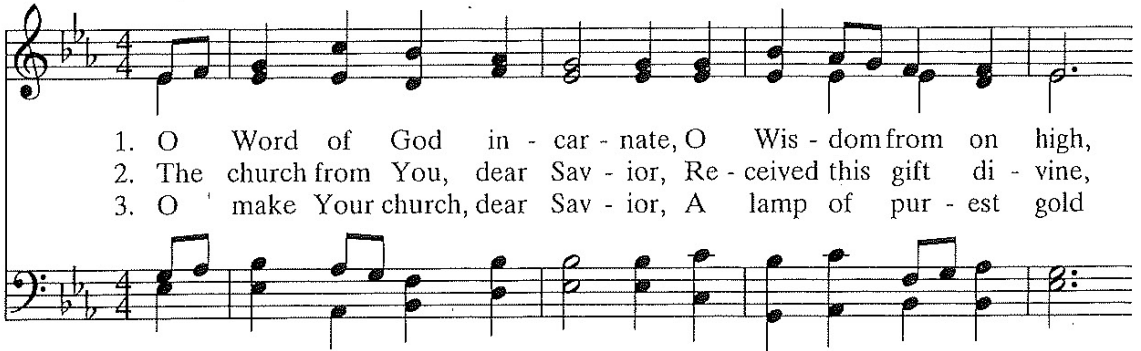
O Word of God Incarnate

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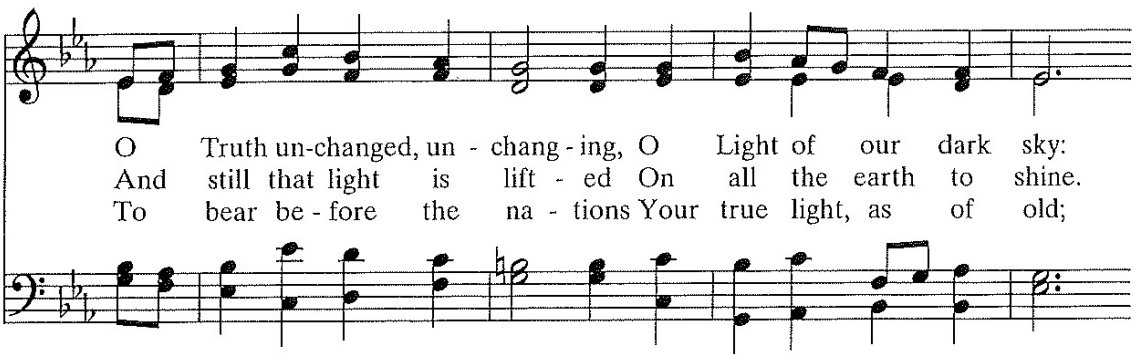
MUNICH 7.6.7.6 D

William Walsham How, 1867
As in *Psalter Hymnal*, 1987

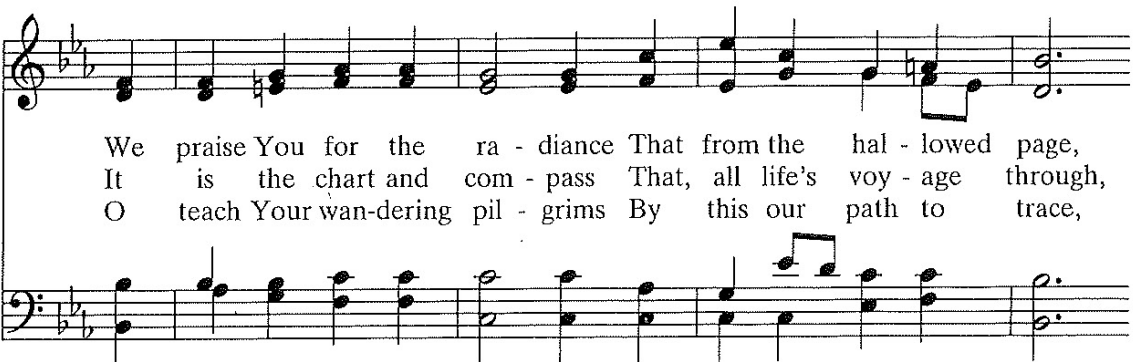
Neuvermehrtes Meiningisches Gesangbuch, 1693
Adapt. Felix Mendelssohn, 1847



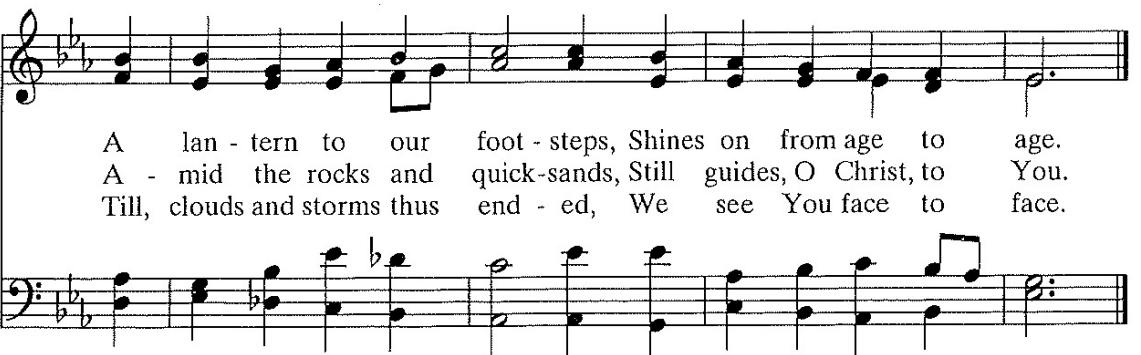
1. O Word of God in - car - nate, O Wis - dom from on high,
2. The church from You, dear Sav - ior, Re - ceived this gift di - vine,
3. O ' make Your church, dear Sav - ior, A lamp of pur - est gold



O Truth un - changed, un - chang - ing, O Light of our dark sky:
And still that light is lift - ed On all the earth to shine.
To bear be - fore the na - tions Your true light, as of old;



We praise You for the ra - diance That from the hal - lowed page,
It is the chart and com - pass That, all life's voy - age through,
O teach Your wan - dering pil - grims By this our path to trace,



A lan - tern to our foot - steps, Shines on from age to age.
A - mid the rocks and quick - sands, Still guides, O Christ, to You.
Till, clouds and storms thus end - ed, We see You face to face.

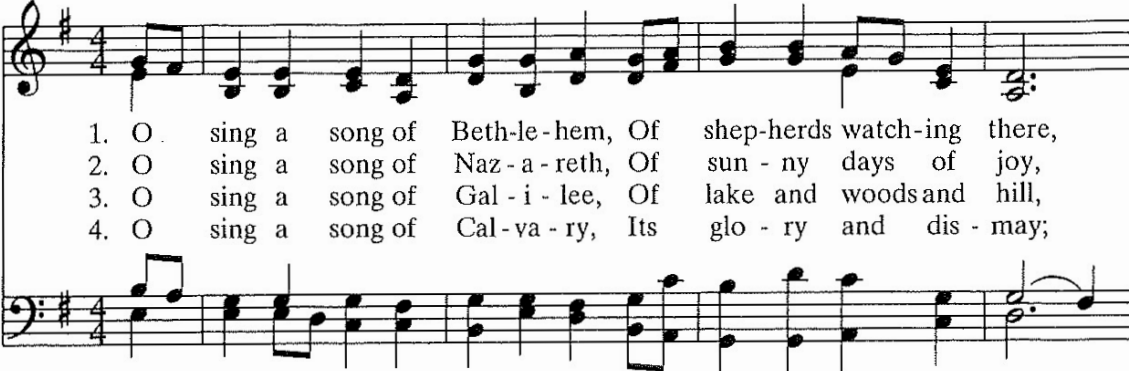
O Sing a Song of Bethlehem

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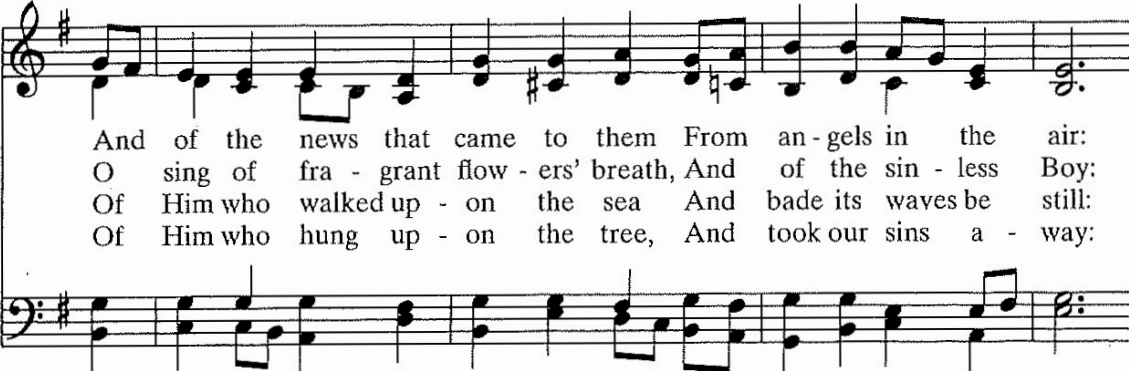
KINGSFOLD CMD

Louis FitzGerald Benson, 1899

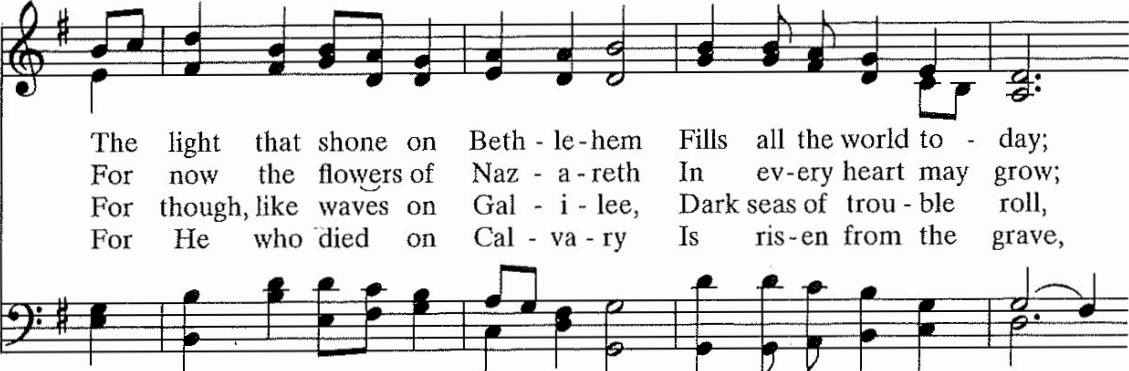
English Country Songs, 1893
Arr. and harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906



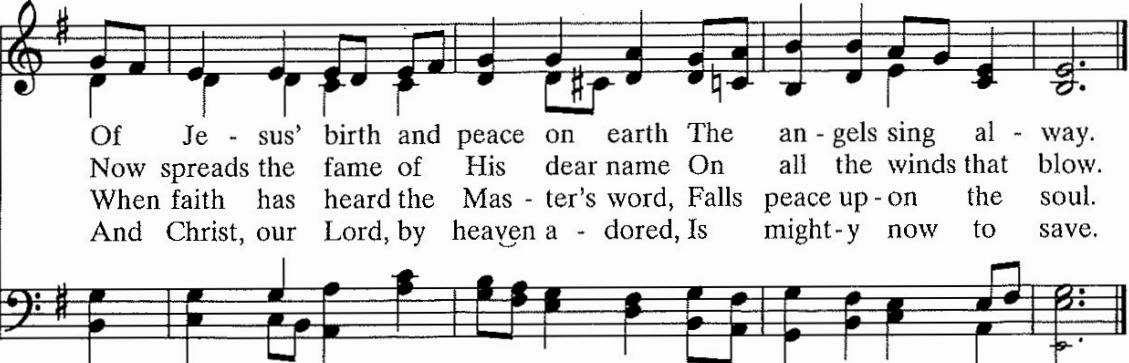
1. O sing a song of Beth-le-hem, Of shep-herds watch-ing there,
2. O sing a song of Naz-a-reth, Of sun-ny days of joy,
3. O sing a song of Gal-i-lee, Of lake and woods and hill,
4. O sing a song of Cal-va-ry, Its glo-ry and dis-may;



And of the news that came to them From an-gels in the air:
O sing of fra-grant flow-ers' breath, And of the sin-less Boy:
Of Him who walked up-on the sea And bade its waves be still:
Of Him who hung up-on the tree, And took our sins a-way:



The light that shone on Beth-le-hem Fills all the world to-day;
For now the flowers of Naz-a-reth In ev-ery heart may grow;
For though, like waves on Gal-i-lee, Dark seas of trou-ble roll,
For He who died on Cal-va-ry Is ris-en from the grave,



Of Je-sus' birth and peace on earth The an-gels sing al-way.
Now spreads the fame of His dear name On all the winds that blow.
When faith has heard the Mas-ter's word, Falls peace up-on the soul.
And Christ, our Lord, by heav-en a-dored, Is might-y now to save.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

Ryan Baer, Senior Pastor Pat Waldrup, Clerk of Session
Whitney Booth Lockard, Associate Pastor

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

CLASS OF 2028

Steven Brooks
Courtney Dantzler
Shannon Ferguson
Edward W. (Ned) Phares
Holly Sheats
Lawton Stephens
Madeline Van Dyck
John Webster

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, *Director of Children and Youth Ministries* (hannah@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Elaine Johnson, *Director of Weekday School* (elaine@firstpresathens.org)
Mr. Paulo Santos, *Office Administrator* (paulo@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Jennifer Adams, *Church Accountant* (jadams@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Joli Winstanley, *Administrative & Communications Assistant* (frontdesk@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Deanna Rollins, *Weekday School Administrative Assistant* (wds@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Rita Raines, *Nursery Coordinator*
Ms. Charlotte Chromiak, *Children's Music Assistant* (charlotte@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Madeline Van Dyck, *Parish Nurse*
Mr. Wayne Brock, *Sexton*
Mr. Justin Winstanley, *Sunday Morning Manager*
Ms. Morgan Cassidy, *Children and Youth Ministries Intern*
Mr. Devon Smith, *Children and Youth Ministries Intern*