



**DOUGLAS UCC**  
A JUST WORLD FOR ALL

**Order of Service for Sunday, December 31, 2023**

## **First Sunday After Christmas**

**Thank you for joining us today.**

For Announcements, Birthdays, Anniversaries, and Prayer List, [visit this week's E-Pistle here](#), where you can also subscribe to receive it by email, if you like.

**\*- stand if you wish to, and are able.**

### **Congregational Responses in Bold**

**Prelude**     *For Good*

**Peter Black**

(Please use this time for quiet reflection and preparation for worship)

### **Welcome & Announcements**

### **Lighting of Altar Candles & Ringing in the Hour**

Let us recognize the light of the world within us and ring in the hour of worship.

**Introit** (please stand) *O Little Town of Bethlehem (NC133)*

*O little town of Bethlehem how still we see you lie.*

*Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.*

*Yet in thy dark streets shines forth, the everlasting light,*

*The hope and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*For Christ is born of Mary and gathered all above.*

*While mortals sleep and angels keep their watch of wondering love.*

*O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth.*

*And praises sing and voices ring with peace to all on earth.*

## **Call to Worship**

Psalm 148

One: Praise God! Praise God from the heavens;

***Many: Praise God! Praise God in the heights!***

One: Praise God, you sun and moon;

***Many: Praise God, all you shining stars!***

One: Praise God, you highest heavens;

***Many: Praise God, you waters above the heavens!***

One: Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

***Many: Beasts of the forest and all cattle, crawling things and flying birds!***

One: Young men and women alike, old and young together!

***Many: Let us praise God whose name alone is exalted; Praise be to God!***

**Opening Hymn**    *I Am the Light of the World*

(Black New Century Hymnal No. 584)

See music at the end of this document

## **Unison Prayer**

***Still-Creating God, you make all things new and you hold out a new day and a new year for us. Yet, how often we squander the opportunities, letting our doubts overwhelm us, letting our troubles bind us, letting our fears stop us? You offer us new dreams, and we succumb to old weaknesses; you offer us hope, and we choose the comfortable. Forgive us, O God, and fill us with the joy of living and the spirit of giving as we approach the new year. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Master Teacher. Amen.***

## **Assurance of Grace and Peace**

One:            Peace be with you.

**Many:**        ***And also with you.***

One:    Let us offer one another a sign of Peace.

## **Passing the Peace**

*Jesus, Jesus, O What a Wonderful Child (NC136)*

*Jesus, Jesus, O what a wonderful child.*

*Jesus, Jesus, so holy, meek and mild.*

*New life, new hope, the child will bring,*

*listen to the angels sing*

*Glory, glory glo-ry*

*let the heavens ring. (Repeat)*

## **Words of Integration & Guidance**

**Syma Kharal**

The end of the year is much more than a time of shopping, errands and gatherings. It is a sacred time infused with light, holding the possibility for bright new beginnings as we consciously close the door to the past. It is a time when God gifts us with a bridge to leave behind what no longer serves us and to cross over onto a new and illuminated path. Before going forward, it is important to take this time to reflect on the ups and downs of the closing year. Give thanks for all the wonderful experiences that enriched your life and your soul. It's time to also think about the relationships, situations and patterns that gave you a lot of grief—whether that showed up as anger, resentment, judgment, scarcity, anxiety or any other form of negativity. Whenever we let something go, we create room for something new to enter. After releasing old emotional baggage, we are now ready to consciously create a blissful beginning for the year ahead. Let us pray, "Loving God, I surrender to you all that no longer serves me for healing, cleansing and purification. Align my vision that I may see everything from your enlightened perspective and move forward with wisdom, grace, strength and love. Amen."

# Endings & Beginnings

## **The Words of Holy Scripture**

One: A Reading of Scripture from Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

*Many: Thanks be to God.*

## **The Gospel Lesson**

One: The Holy Gospel according to Luke 2:22-40

*Many: Glory to you, O Christ.*

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

*Many: Praise to you, O Christ.*

## **Homily**

*Endings & Beginnings*

**Rev. Salvatore Sapienza**

## **Service of Release & Farewell** (see insert)

Mark Johnston, Church Council Moderator

## **Offering & Offertory**

*Grace and Gratitude*

**Jeff Spangler and Peter Black**

Composers: Olivia Newton-John and Amy Sky

## **Joys & Concerns/Tibetan Prayer Bell**

One: Thanks be to God!

**Many: Alleluia!**

One: O God,

**Many: Hear our prayer.**

**\*Doxology** O Come All Ye Faithful (NC135)

*O Come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,*

*O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.*

*Come and behold him, born the king of angels.*

*O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him,*

*O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

**\*Celebration of Holy Communion**

One: God be with you.

Many: *And also with you.*

One: Lift up your hearts.

Many: *We lift them up to God.*

One: Let us give thanks to God.

Many: *It is good to give God thanks & praise*

**\*Creation's Praise** *Angels We Have Heard on High* (NC125)

*Angels we have heard on high,  
sweetly singing o'er the plains  
And the mountains in reply,  
echo back their joyous strains  
Glo - - ria, in excelsis Deo,  
Glo - - ria in excelsis Deo.*

*(Please be seated)*

**Breaking of the Bread** *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* (NC131)

*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 heavens all gracious king"  
The world in solemn stillness lay  
to hear the angels sing.*

**Sharing of the Bread & Cup**

(grape juice only on both sides of the aisle)

Receive the Bread of Life. *Amen.*

The Cup of Love, the Drink of Compassion. *Amen.*

**\*The Lord's Prayer**

*Our Mother/Father, always and everywhere, 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.*

**\*Hymn of Sending**

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*  
(Black New Century Hymnal No.144)  
(Find Music at the end of this program)

**\*Benediction**

**Postlude**

*One Good Year (by Slaid Cleaves)*  
**Bob Kruse**

Keep up with the Douglas UCC community  
and the work of our service groups here:

[www.douglasucc.org](http://www.douglasucc.org)

<https://www.youtube.com/douglasucc>

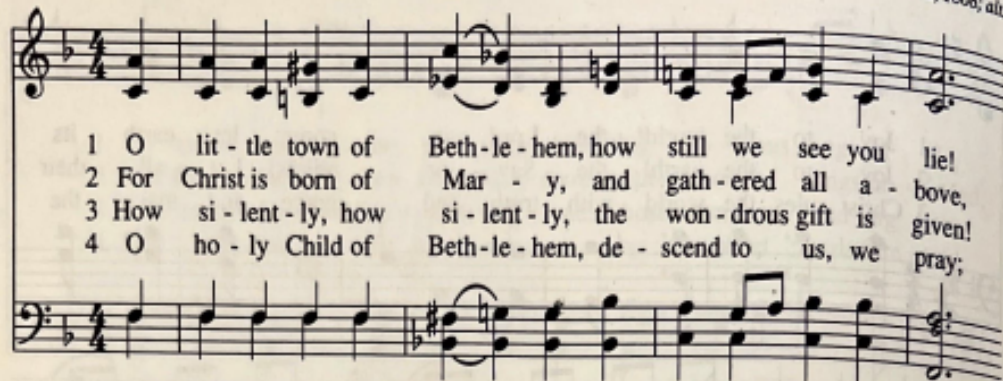
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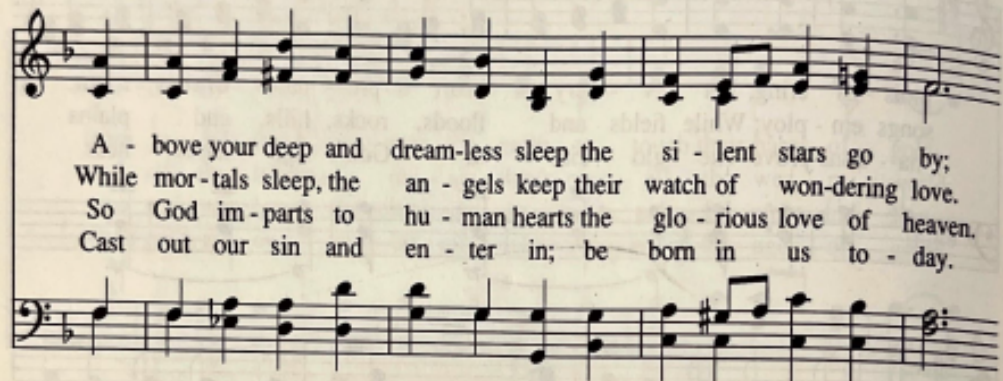
## O Little Town of Bethlehem

Mic. 5:2; Luke 2:4-7

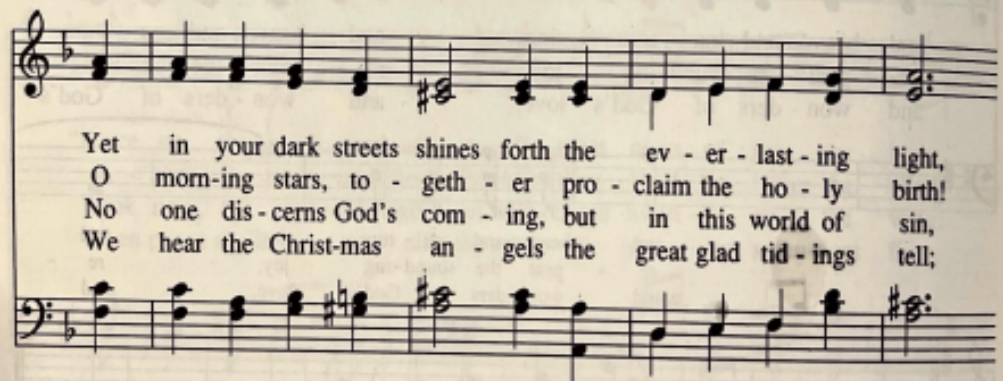
Phillips Brooks, 1868; alt.



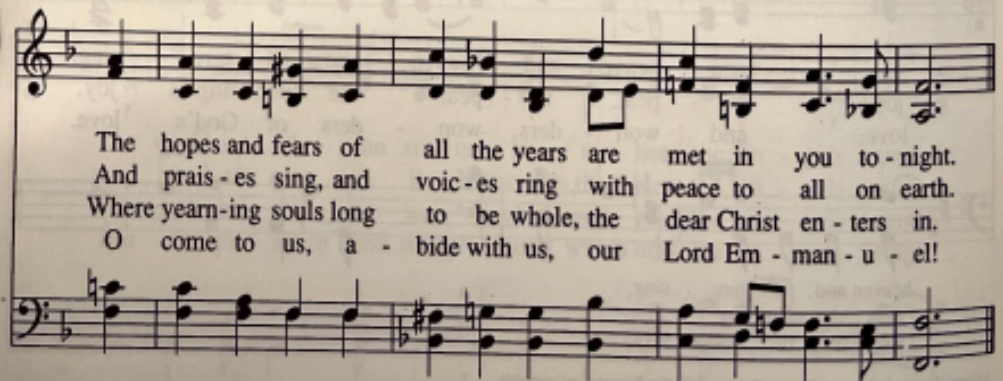
1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see you lie!  
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and gath - ered all a - bove,  
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!  
 4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove your 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 glo - rious love of heaven.  
 Cast out our sin and en - ter in; be born in us to - day.



Yet in your dark streets shines forth the ev - er - last - ing light,  
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!  
 No one dis - cerns God's 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 you to - night.  
 And prais - es sing, and voic - es ring with peace to all on earth.  
 Where yearn - ing souls long to be whole, the dear Christ en - ters in.  
 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

Inspired by a visit to Bethlehem, Phillips Brooks, minister of Holy Trinity Church, Philadelphia, wrote this hymn for the Sunday School's Christmas service. The tune was hastily sketched by the school's organist.

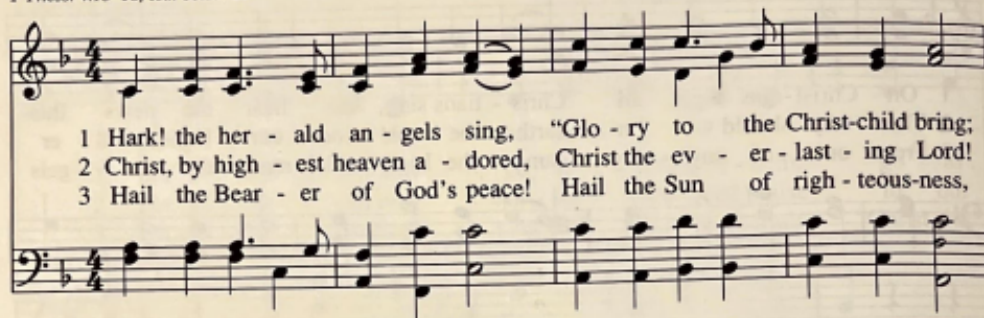
Tune: ST. LOUIS 8.6.8.6.7.6.8.6.  
 Lewis H. Redner, 1868  
 Alternate tune: FOREST GREEN



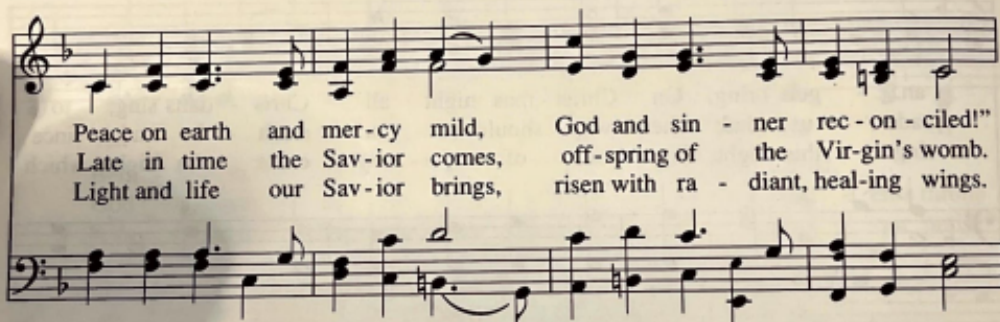
## Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Charles Wesley, 1739; alt.

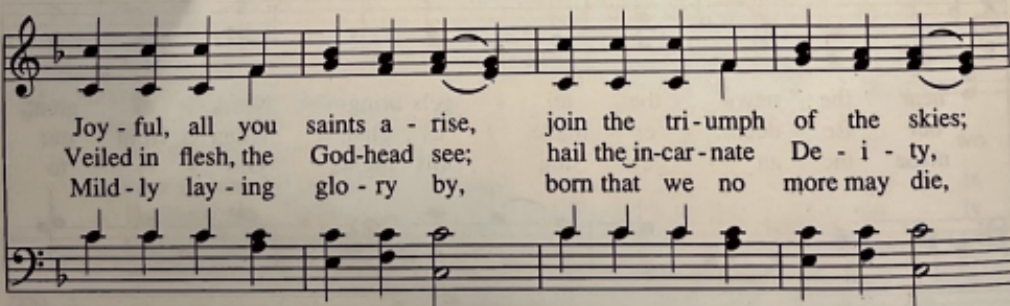
Luke 2:10-11, 25-32; 24:46-51;  
1 Thess. 4:13-18; Isa. 60:19-20



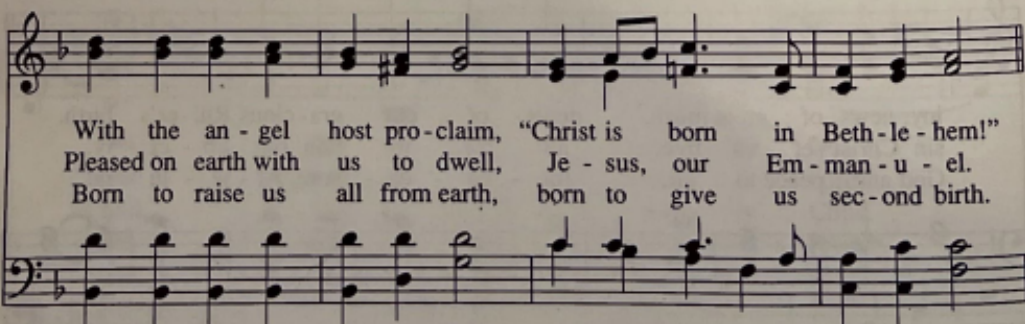
1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the Christ-child bring;  
2 Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored, Christ the ev - er - last - ing Lord!  
3 Hail the Bear - er of God's peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous-ness,



Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ner rec - on - ciled!"  
Late in time the Sav - ior comes, off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb.  
Light and life our Sav - ior brings, risen with ra - diant, heal - ing wings.



Joy - ful, all you saints a - rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;  
Veiled in flesh, the God - head see; hail the in - car - nate De - i - ty,  
Mild - ly lay - ing glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



With the an - gel host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
Pleased on earth with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.  
Born to raise us all from earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

*This hymn by Charles Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, is firmly wedded to Felix Mendelssohn's music. Composed for the four hundredth anniversary of the invention of printing, the music was adapted to this hymn fifteen years later.*

Tune: MENDELSSOHN 7.7.7.D. with refrain  
From Felix Mendelssohn's "Festgesang," 1840  
Arr. William H. Cummings, 1855