



ASCENSION  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PUBLIC WORSHIP • DECEMBER 8, 2024  
THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT



THE WORD

**CALL TO WORSHIP • Psalm 66:8-9**

Bless our God, O peoples;  
let the sound of his praise be heard,  
who has kept our soul among the living  
and has not let our feet slip.

# Angels We Have Heard On High

Traditional French Carol • Public Domain

Alto

The musical score is written for an Alto voice part in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is simple and homophonic, with lyrics written below the notes. The score consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are: 'An-gels we have heard on high, sweet-ly sing-ing o'er the plains, and the moun-tains in re-ply ech-o back their joy-ous strains. Glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o, glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o.' The lyrics are hyphenated to fit the notes. The score ends with a double bar line.

An-gels we have heard on high, sweet-ly sing-ing  
o'er the plains, and the moun-tains in re-ply  
ech-o back their joy-ous strains. Glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis  
De-o, glo-ri-a in ex-cel-sis De-o.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?  
Say what may the tidings be, which inspire your heavenly song?

*(Chorus)*

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord the newborn King.

*(Chorus)*

## PRAYER OF INVOCATION

He is risen!

*He is risen indeed!*

Let us pray...

## **CALL TO CONFESSION OF SIN • 2 Corinthians 5:20b**

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

## **CONFESSION OF SIN**

*Blessed Trinity, you dwell in the sheer delight of eternal communion. You are the Lord of joy, and you have made us and blessed us to share your joy in relationship with you. But we have sought our happiness apart from you, in the things you have made, in the works of our own hands, in anything and everything but you. Nevertheless, Lord Jesus, it was your pleasure to welcome us back into your own joy, even though it meant your death to do so. Even though we don't deserve it, please forgive us and restore to us the joy of your salvation. Make your own joy to be our strength. Grant that our greatest delight would be in knowing you and making you known, to the glory of your Blessed Name. Amen.*

(silent confession)

## **ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS • 2 Corinthians 5:21**

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

May the peace of Christ be with you.

*And also with you!*

## **OFFERING • Luke 6:38**

*"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."*

## **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.*

## **OLD TESTAMENT READING • Micah 5:2, 4-5a**

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to be ruler in Israel,  
whose coming forth is from of old,  
from ancient days...

- 4 And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of Yahweh,  
in the majesty of the name of Yahweh his God.  
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth.
- 5 And he shall be their peace.

The Word of the Lord.  
*Thanks be to God!*

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

The Lord be with you.  
*And also with you.*  
Let us pray...

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. O Christ, begotten of the Father before all time, born in a stable at Bethlehem, may your church be a sign of hope and glory.  
*Lord, have mercy.*

O Christ, truly risen from the dead, our Alpha and Omega, may the whole world live in peace and justice, according to your will.  
*Lord, have mercy.*

O Christ, truly God and truly human, born to a people in fulfillment of promise, fulfill the needs and desires of those who are sick or sorrowful.  
*Lord, have mercy.*

All powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace.  
*Teach us to proclaim the good news of your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.*

And now we join together with the Beloved Son in the prayer he taught us:  
*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.*

# Away In A Manger

Text: Martin Luther, Tim Sauerwein

Music: James R. Murray • Public Domain

A musical score for the hymn 'Away In A Manger'. It consists of three staves of music in 3/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The second staff begins with a measure rest and a '6' above it, indicating the start of the second line of music. The third staff begins with a measure rest and a '12' above it, indicating the start of the third line of music. The music ends with a double bar line.

A - way in a man - ger, no crib for His bed, the  
The an - gels pro - claimed it, the pro - phets fore - told, but  
It was his strange glo - ry to make Him - self low, my  
lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head. The an - gels in heav - en looked  
how can God be what a man - ger can hold? Cre - a - tor and mas - ter, oh  
sor - rows to share and my bur - dens to know. Be near me, Lord Je - sus, pro -  
down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.  
how can it be that God was a ba - by and lay there for me?  
- tect and de - fend, my Help - er, my Broth - er, my Sav - ior and Friend.

# O Little Town Of Bethlehem

Text: Phillip Brooks • Music: Lewis H. Redner • Public Domain

Tenor

The musical score is written for a Tenor voice in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of seven staves of music. The lyrics are: "O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie; a - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by: yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night." The score includes bar numbers 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, and 16. The key signature has one flat (F major), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is written in a single system with a treble clef and a common time signature.

O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee  
lie; a - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the  
si - lent stars go by: yet in thy dark streets  
shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light; the  
hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to -  
night.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth!  
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in the world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin and enter in; be born to us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

## NEW TESTAMENT READING • Ephesians 2:11-22

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup> remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup> by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, <sup>16</sup> and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. <sup>17</sup> And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God!*

## SERMON • “The Good News of the Church”

“God is in the business of creating community.” (J. B. Torrance)

“If this world was made by a triune God, relationships of love are what life is really all about.” (T. Keller)

“True unity, like all good gifts, is from above; bestowed rather than contrived, a blessing far more than an achievement.” (D. Kidner)

“Church is not what we do; it is what God does.” (E. Peterson)

“Christian brotherhood is not an ideal, but a divine reality...”

“Our community with one another consists solely in what Christ has done to us...”

“Jesus Christ alone is our unity. ‘He is our peace.’ Through him alone do we have access to one another, joy in one another, and fellowship with one another...”

“Let him who until now has had the privilege of living a common Christian life with other Christians praise God’s grace from the bottom of his heart. Let him thank God on his knees and declare: It is grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brethren...”

“Even when sin and misunderstanding burden the communal life, is not the sinning brother still a brother, with whom I, too, stand under the Word of Christ? Will not his sin be a constant occasion for me to give thanks that both of us may live in the forgiving love of God in Jesus Christ? Thus the very hour of disillusionment with my brother becomes incomparably salutary, because it so thoroughly teaches me that neither of us can ever live by our own words and deeds, but only by that one Word and Deed which really binds us together—the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ.” (D. Bonhoeffer)

“That which unites all true Christians is always more than that which separates them.” (H. Bavinck)



THE UPPER ROOM



**CONFESSION OF FAITH • The Apostles' Creed**

What do you believe?

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.*

*And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell.\* The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he shall come to judge the living and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic† church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

**PASSING OF THE PEACE • Colossians 3:15**

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

(Greet one another with the words, “*The peace of Christ be with you.*”)

**INVITATION TO THE LORD’S TABLE AND PRAYER**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION • 1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

**THE MYSTERIUM FIDEI • 1 Corinthians 11:26; 5:7-8**

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.

*Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.*

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

*Therefore let us keep the feast.*

The gifts of God for the people of God.

**GIVING OF THE BREAD AND CUP**

(All who confess faith in Jesus Christ may partake of this Sacrament: baptized members of a congregation that proclaims the Gospel, who are at peace with God and with their brothers and sisters in Christ, and who seek God’s grace to live more faithfully for him in this world. Please come forward after the musicians. The glasses on your right contain grape juice for those who do not want wine. There are gluten-free crackers on the table. An Elder is available for prayer upon request [James 5:13-16].)

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\* When the Creed states that Jesus “descended into hell,” we understand it to mean that he suffered the holy wrath of God for the sins of his people.

† Or, “universal.”



## Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming

Text: 15th Century German Carol • Translator: Theodore Baker

Music: *Geistliche Kirchengesäng*, Köln, 1599

Harmonized by Michael Praetorius

Public Domain



1 Lo, how a Rose e'er bloom - ing From  
2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, The  
3 This Flower, whose fra - grance ten - der With



ten - der stem\_\_ hath sprung! Of Jes - se's li - neage co -  
Rose I have\_\_ in mind: With Ma - ry we be - hold  
sweet-ness fills\_\_ the air, Dis - pels with glo - rious splen -



ming As men of old\_\_ have sung. It came, a  
it, The vir - gin mo - ther kind. To show God's  
dor The dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet



flo - wer bright, A - mid the cold of win -  
love a - right She bore to men a Sa -  
ve - ry God, From sin and death He saves



ter When half - gone was\_\_ the night.  
vior When half - gone was\_\_ the night.  
us And ligh - tens ev - 'ry load.

# God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

18th Century English Carol • Public Domain

Alto

The image shows a musical score for the Alto voice part of the carol 'God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen'. The score is written on a single staff in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of 18 measures. The lyrics are: 'God rest you mer - ry gen - tle - men let no - thing you dis - may, re - mem - ber Christ our Sav - ior was born on Christ - mas day, to save us all from Sa - tan's pow'r when we were gone a - stray; O tid - ings of com - fort and joy, com - fort and joy, O tid - ings of com - fort and joy.' The lyrics are placed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. Measure numbers 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18 are marked at the beginning of their respective lines.

God rest you mer - ry gen - tle - men let  
no - thing you dis - may, re - mem - ber Christ our  
Sav - ior was born on Christ - mas day, to  
save us all from Sa - tan's pow'r when we were gone a -  
stray; O tid - ings of com - fort and  
joy, com - fort and joy, O tid - ings of  
com - fort and joy.

From God our heavenly Father a blessed angel came;  
and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same;  
how that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name;  
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy!  
O tidings of comfort and joy!

"Fear not, then," said the angel, "Let nothing you affright.  
This day is born a Savior of a pure virgin bright,  
to free all those who trust in him from Satan's power and might."  
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy!  
O tidings of comfort and joy!

The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced much in mind,  
and left their flocks a-feeding in tempest, storm and wind,  
and went to Bethlehem straightway the Son of God to find;  
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy!  
O tidings of comfort and joy!

# The First Noel

Traditional English Carol • Public Domain

Alto

The first Noel the an - gel did  
say was to cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields where they  
lay; in fields where they lay keep - ing thier  
sheep on a cold win - ter's night that was so  
deep. No - el, No - el, No - el, No - el,  
born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for the Alto voice part of the carol 'The First Noel'. It consists of six staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff starts with 'Alto' on the left. The lyrics are: 'The first Noel the an - gel did say was to cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields where they lay; in fields where they lay keep - ing thier sheep on a cold win - ter's night that was so deep. No - el, No - el, No - el, No - el, born is the King of Is - ra - el.' The lyrics are hyphenated to fit the musical phrasing. The score ends with a double bar line.

They lookéd up and saw a star  
shining in the east, beyond them far;  
and to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night.

*(Chorus)*

And by the light of that same star,  
three wise men came from country far;  
to seek for a King was their intent,  
and to follow the star wherever it went.

*(Chorus)*

Then let us all with one accord  
sing praises to our heavenly Lord;  
that hath made heaven and earth of naught,  
and with his blood mankind hath bought.

*(Chorus)*

## BENEDICTION • Ephesians 6:23-24

Peace be to you, brothers and sisters, and love with faith,  
from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

~

**Community Setup & "Prefreshments"** • 8:45am Sundays. Coffee/tea/donuts are available at 9:30.

**After Worship Today** • Join us at 11:30 for Sunday School (kids) and Sermon Discussion (adults).

**Missionary Christmas Cards** • We'll collect these today (see Samuel Waltner).

**Advent Choir Practice** • 6:30pm tonight at the Costa home.

### Midweek Meetings:

- 8:15am Tue. Men's Study - contact: Eric Costa (rev.eric.costa@gmail.com)
- 1:30pm Wed. Women's Study - contact: Cheryl Boden (cheryl@westuniongardens.com)
- 6:30pm Wed. Youth Group - contact: Tim Sery (fiby2020@gmail.com)
- 9am Thu. Women's Study - contact: Audrey Jaques (audreyelainejaques@gmail.com)

**Christmas Eve Service** • 7pm Tue., Dec. 24.

**Men's Retreat** • Feb. 28 - Mar. 2 on the Sandy River. Contact: Rob Stevenson.

**Shepherding Meetings** • The Elders want to check in with the members of the church. We like to use these questions to kickstart our conversations: 1) *What are you thankful for?* 2) *Where are you seeing the grace of God at work in your life?* 3) *How can we as Elders (or the Deacons) serve you?* To schedule a shepherding meeting, contact Eric (rev.eric.costa@gmail.com).

**Email Newsletter** • Visit [ascensionpc.org/newsletter](http://ascensionpc.org/newsletter) to subscribe to weekly announcements.

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### PRAY FOR THE MINISTRIES & MISSIONARIES WE SUPPORT

Our Denomination, the Presbyterian Church in America (pcanet.org)

Our Presbytery (pacificnorthwestpresbytery.com)

Tomo Ito / Sacred Road Ministries at Warm Springs (sacredroadministries.org)

Brian & Faith Janssen, Missionaries in Taiwan with OMF (omf.org/asia/taiwan)

Betsy L., Missionary in Spain with Serge (serge.org)

Love INC, Hillsboro (loveincgreaterhillsboro.org)

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(Drop this contact card in the offering, or hand it to the Pastor.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email / Phone

- I am a visitor.
- I want to know more about being a Christian.
- I would like to get coffee with the Pastor.
- Please send me the email newsletter.
- Please use this info for the photo directory.