



# CHRISTMAS EVE

Wednesday, December 24, 2025  
6:00 and 8:00pm

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# GATHERING AS THE CHURCH

*Asterisks (\*) indicate an invitation to stand as you are able.*

## PRESERVICE MUSIC

Once In Royal David's City

Alleluia!

Once in royal David's city  
stood a lowly cattle shed  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed.

Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from Heaven,  
he is God and Lord of all.

And his shelter was a stable  
and his cradle was a stall.

With the poor and meek and lowly lived  
on earth our Savior Holy.

Alleluia!

And our eyes at last shall see him  
through his own redeeming love.

Not in that poor lowly stable,  
but with God in heaven above.

When like stars his children crowned  
all in white shall gather round.

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander

Music: *Irby*, Henry J. Gauntlett; Arr. Alan Schlichting © 2014 Alan Schlichting

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## The First Nowell

The first Nowell the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,  
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Nowell! Born is the King of Israel.

They looked 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.

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

Nowell! Born is the King of Israel.

Words: Trad. English Carol

Music: *The First Nowell*, Trad. English Carol; Arr. Mack Wilberg

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## Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella

French Carol; Arr. Richard Ellsasser © 1967 Harold Flammer, Inc.

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## INTROIT

## Sussex Carol

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.

Words and Music: English Carol

### \* CALL TO WORSHIP

For you who are seeking truth and a story worth telling,  
**there is room here for you.**  
For you who are seeking rest from weary days,  
**there is a seat here for you.**  
For you who are looking for a sign that God is among us,  
**these candles are here for you.**  
For you who are filled with joy and cannot help but sing,  
**there is a melody here for you.**  
Come in. You are at home in God's house.  
Love was born tonight and there is love here for you.  
**We gather in the wonder of this night**  
**to witness the coming of the light of the world.**

### \* PROCESSION

O Come, All Ye Faithful

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,**  
**O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.**  
**Come and adore 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.**

**True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal,**  
**lo, he shuns not the Virgin's womb;**  
**Son of the Father, begotten, not created;**  
**O come, let us adore him,**  
**O come, let us adore him,**  
**O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;**  
**O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!**  
**Glory to God, all glory in the highest;**  
**O come, let us adore him,**  
**O come, let us adore him,**  
**O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,**  
**Jesus, to thee be all glory given.**  
**Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:**  
**O come, let us adore him,**  
**O come, let us adore him,**  
**O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

Words: John F. Wade; trans. Frederick Oakley and others

Music: *Adeste Fideles*, John F. Wade; Arr. David Willcocks

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## LIGHTING THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE

Unto us a child is born,  
unto us a son is given!

**God has brought light  
into every darkness.**

The promises of God are fulfilled!

Wonderful Counselor! Mighty God! Everlasting Father! Prince of Peace!

**We hear, even today, a chorus of angels  
bringing good news of great joy to all the people.**

We light the Candle of Christ—

witness to the Savior who is Christ the Lord.

**Glory to God in the highest Heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors.**

## SUNG RESPONSE

Jesus Came Down

Je-sus came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; he  
came down that we may have love, hal-le - lu - jah for ev - er - more.

The musical notation is written on two staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody features several triplet markings over the words 'Je-sus', 'he', 'came down', and 'hal-le - lu - jah'.

Words: Cameroon Traditional

Music: Cameroon Traditional; Trans. and Arr. John L. Bell

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## THE CHRISTMAS STORY

### ANTHEM

O Holy Night

O holy night! the stars are brightly shining,  
it is the night of our dear Savior's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,  
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.  
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices!  
O night divine! O night, when Christ was born.

Truly he taught us to love one another.  
His law is love and his gospel is peace.  
Chains shall he break for the slave is our brother,  
and in his name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
let all within us praise his holy name.  
Christ is the Lord, then ever, ever praise we,  
his power and glory evermore proclaim!

Words: Placide Cappeau; Trans. John Sullivan Dwight

Music: Adolphe Adam

## LUKE 2:1-5

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

*All sing:*

**O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie;  
above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.**

Words: Phillips Brooks

Music: *St. Louis*, Lewis H. Redner

## LUKE 2:6-7

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

*All sing:*

**Away in a manger,  
no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus  
laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the sky  
looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus,  
asleep on the hay.**

Words: Anon.

Music: *Away in a Manger*, James R. Murray



## LUKE 2:8-12

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.”

*All sing:*

**The first Noel, the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,  
on a cold winter’s night that was so deep.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,  
born is the King of Israel.**

Words: Trad. English Carol

Music: *The First Noel*, Trad. English Carol; Harm. Christmas Carols New and Old

## LUKE 2:13-14

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

*All sing:*

**Angels we have heard on high  
sweetly singing o’er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply  
echoing their joyous strains.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

Words: Trad. French Carol; Trans. Crown of Jesus, alt.

Music: *Gloria*, French Carol Melody; Arr. Edward Shippen Barnes; Harm. Austin C. Lovelace

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## LUKE 2:15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

*All sing, standing:*

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
let every heart prepare him room,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.**

**Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ;  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

Words: Isaac Watts

Music: *Antioch*, Lowell Mason; Adapt. George Frideric Handel

## **WELCOME**

## **SERMON**

# **FEASTING AT GOD'S TABLE**

## **INVITATION TO THE TABLE**

*You are invited to meet the Christ Child in this Holy Feast and therein to have your deepest hunger satisfied. Everyone, without exception, is invited to come to the Lord's Table. You do not have to be a member of a church to come; all are welcome!*

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Compassionate God,  
trusting in your love for us,  
we bring our prayers of confession.

**God of grace and truth,**  
you give the gift of yourself,  
but we are often caught up  
in our own gifts given and received.

**You offer us new life**  
in the baby born in Bethlehem,  
but we cloak that birth in sentiment  
and ignore the cost of new life.

**You shine in the world,**  
but we dwell on the darkness;  
you came to us in flesh and blood,  
but we often fail to see you  
in the human lives around us.

**Forgive what we have been,**  
shape who we are,  
and direct who we shall be.

**Amen.**

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Do not be afraid!  
Hear the good news of great joy for all people:  
a savior has been born this night for you!  
Nothing in the past, present, or future  
can stand between us and God.  
This is the good news:  
God has heard our confession.  
In the name of Jesus Christ,  
you are forgiven.  
**In the name of Jesus Christ,**  
**you are forgiven.**  
**Glory to God!**  
**Amen.**

*All sing:*

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

Words: Phillips Brooks

Music: *St. Louis*, Lewis H. Redner

## OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

*To our guests: Your presence today is itself a gift to God and to this church. Please do not feel obligated to make an offering. We believe that all we have and all we are is a gift from God, and so we give joyfully to participate in God's good work in the world. When you make a gift to First Church this Christmas, your gift is a response to that greatest gift God has given to us. If you would like to make a gift to our Christmas Offering in support of the work of Impacto Comunitario, please be sure to write "Christmas Offering" on your gift and place it in the plate as it passes.*

## OFFERTORY

### Christmas Child

Bells ring out in the winter's stillness bearing news of a promised birth;  
bringing light to a world in darkness, God's own Son revealed on earth.  
Christmas child, lying at Bethlehem, Gift of God, given this day;  
hear the bells ringing out their message: Christus natus hodie.  
Bright the star in the night sky shining over Bethlehem where he lies,  
born to live and to die a mortal, yet as King of kings to rise.  
Shepherds kneeling in adoration humbly worship the newborn King;  
angel voices in tuneful chorus joyful alleluias sing.  
Sing, rejoice at our Saviour's coming, church bells ring, merry organs play;  
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Christus natus hodie.  
Glory to God in the highest! Today Christ is born!

Words and Music: John Rutter © 2025 Collegium Music Publications, Oxford University Press

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## \* PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING

Musical score for the hymn "Presentation of the Offering". The score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. The melody is a simple, flowing tune. The lyrics are: "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here be-low; praise God a-bove, ye heaven-ly host; praise God, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost. This, this is Christ the King, Em-man-u-el whom pro-phets sing; haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Ma-ry."

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise God, all crea - tures  
here be-low; praise God a-bove, ye heaven-ly host; praise God, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost.  
This, this is Christ the King, Em - man - u - el whom pro - phets sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Ma - ry.

Words: Thomas Ken and William C. Dix, alt.

Music: *Greensleeves*, 16th Cent. English Melody

## \* THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

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

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,

always and everywhere to give thanks to you,

Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.

You created light out of darkness

and brought forth life on the earth.

You formed us in your image

and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed,

your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity,

made covenant to be our sovereign God,

and spoke to us through your prophets.

In the fullness of time

you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to be our Savior,

and at his birth the angels sang

glory to you in the highest and peace to your people on earth.

And so, we bow in holy splendor before the wonder of your incarnation,  
and join with the heavenly host in their unending hymn,  
praising and glorifying you, singing:

*Intro (first time only)*

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of hosts, all praise be given!  
Bles - sed is the one who came, bring - ing love and light di - vine.

All your glo - ry fills the earth; all your pow - er fills the heavens.  
Bles - sed is the King who comes in the bread and in the wine.

Glo - - - - - ri-a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!

Glo - - - - - ri-a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!

*Please be seated. Pastor continues leading the prayer, recalling the acts of Christ.*

...And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,  
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving  
as a holy and living sacrifice,  
in union with Christ's offering for us  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

*Intro*

Christ has died, Christ is ris - en Christ will come to earth a - gain.

Great the myst - 'ry of God's grace; great the myst - 'ry of our faith.

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

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

*Pastor continues leading the prayer, asking God to pour out God's Holy Spirit on us and this meal.*

...Through your Son Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,  
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God,  
now and forever.

Amen.

*All sing:*

*Intro*

Glo - - - - - ri-a, in ex-cel-sis De-o!

Glo - - - - - ri-a, in ex-cel-sis De - o!

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our God in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
your will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
Forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For yours is the kingdom,  
the power,  
and the glory, forever.  
Amen.

## RECEIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

*We invite you to receive communion by coming forward when directed. The minister will place the bread in your open hand, saying, "The body of Christ given for you," to which you respond, "Amen." You will then move to the server with the tray. Help yourself to a cup from the tray as the server says, "The blood of Christ, shed for you," to which you respond, "Amen." Move to the altar rail or to your seat to eat and drink.*

## HYMNS DURING RECEIVING

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!”  
Joyful, all ye nations rise,  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with th’angelic host proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Christ, by highest heaven adored;  
Christ the everlasting Lord;  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a virgin’s womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
hail th’incarnate Deity,  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
risen with healing in his wings.  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
born that we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth,  
born to give us second birth.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Words: Charles Wesley, alt. George Whitefield

Music: *Mendelssohn*, Felix Mendelssohn

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high  
sweetly singing o’er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply  
echoing their joyous strains.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

**Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
which inspire your heavenly song?  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

**Come to Bethlehem and see  
Christ whose birth the angels sing,  
come, adore on bended knee,  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

**See him in a manger laid,  
whom the choirs of angels praise,  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,  
while our hearts in love we raise.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

Words: Trad. French Carol; Trans. Crown of Jesus, alt.

Music: *Gloria*, French Carol Melody; Arr. Edward Shippen Barnes; Harm. Austin C. Lovelace

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## What Child Is This

**What child is this who, laid to rest,  
on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,  
while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the babe, the son of Mary.**

**Why lies he in such mean estate  
where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here  
the silent Word is pleading.  
This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the babe, the son of Mary.**

**So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,  
come, peasant, king, to own him;  
the King of kings salvation brings,  
let loving hearts enthrone him.  
This, this is Christ the King,  
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the babe, the son of Mary.**

Words: William C. Dix

Music: *Greensleeves*, 16th Cent. English Melody

## Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

**Infant holy, infant lowly,  
for his bed a cattle stall;  
oxen lowing, little knowing,  
Christ the babe is Lord of all.  
Swift are winging angels singing,  
noels ringing, tidings bringing:  
Christ the babe is Lord of all.**

**Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping  
vigil till the morning new  
saw the glory, heard the story,  
tidings of a gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,  
praises voicing, greet the morrow:  
Christ the babe was born for you.**

Words: Polish Carol; Trans. Edith M. G. Reed

Music: *W Zlobie Lezy*, Polish Carol; Arr. Edith M. G. Reed

## GOING FORTH

### \* THE LIGHT SHINES

**In the beginning was the Word  
and the Word was with God  
and the Word was God.  
The Word was with God in the beginning.  
Everything came into being through the Word,  
and without the Word nothing came into being.  
What came into being through the Word was life,  
and the life was the light for all people.  
The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it.**



## \* CLOSING CAROL

## Silent Night, Holy Night

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.

Words: Joseph Mor, alt; Stanzas 1, 2, and 3 trans. John F. Young

Music: *Stille Nacht*, Franz Gruber

*After the pastors carry the light out, the congregation may leave quietly. As we leave tonight, we carry the light of Christ into the world with songs of faith on our lips and love of God in our hearts.*

## WORSHIP LEADERS

*Preacher:* Reverend Taylor Fuerst

*Liturgists* Reverend Cathy Stone and Reverend John Hathaway

*Music:* Scott Davis

## GREAT THANKSGIVING MUSICAL SETTING

Words: Unknown origin, revised Daniel Benedict and Dean McIntyre

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# CHRISTMAS OFFERING

**This Christmas, strengthen connection and share hope, dignity, and love with families through Impacto Comunitario, a United Methodist community ministry in west San Antonio.**

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, we invite you to participate in our Christmas Offering to benefit Impacto Comunitario as it provides practical support and life-changing care to those who need it most. Impacto is a United Methodist ministry of hope, dignity, and love in West San Antonio, which exists to reach hearts and meet needs.

Every week, Impacto serves over 200 households—children, single moms, immigrants, and families who rely on the generosity of supporters to receive essential items such as diapers, clothes, a warm meal, education, and health support. They offer English classes, GED and computer-skills instruction, adult education, community health-worker training, and practical resources for families, including food, diapers, and baby supplies for new mothers.

By giving to our Christmas Offering, you are providing relief to a mother who worries about whether she can care for her newborn; you are offering a child the compassion of warmth and nourishment; and you are giving families a chance to build a brighter future through education and community support. We believe that each gift—no matter how small—offers stability, care, and dignity to those who need these most. In a season when many are struggling, your contribution becomes a tangible expression of God's love and hope.

You can make a gift by dropping a check marked "Christmas Offering" in the offering basket, by mailing your offering to the church office, or by giving online when you select "005-Christmas Offering" from the drop-down menu or use the QR code provided here.



## THANK YOU!



**COMUNITARIO**

Your generosity ensures Impacto Comunitario can continue to offer nourishment, stability, and dignity to support families facing hunger or crisis. Learn more about Impacto Comunitario at <https://www.facebook.com/divinegraceumc>.