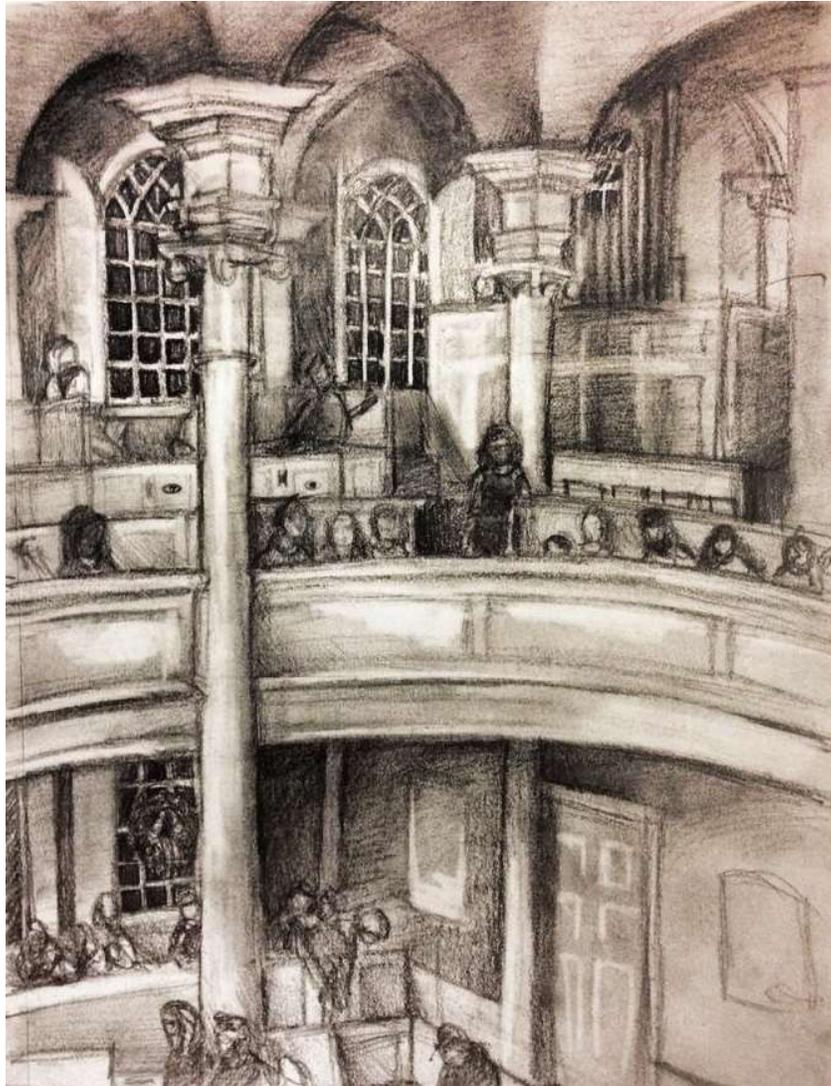


# Christmas Eve at the Old First Church



Old Bennington, Vermont  
Gathered 1762

# Christmas Eve at the Old First Church

## Old Bennington, Vermont

December 24, 2021

5:00 p.m.

*Vermont's Colonial Shrine: Welcoming all to share God's light,  
and proclaiming God's embracing love since 1806*

Kenneth A. Clarke, Minister

Gene Marie Callahan, Organist

Mary Elizabeth Groupé, Viola

Old First Church Choir

Harriet Welther, Violin

### PRELUDE

#### Christmas Remembered

*Un Flambeau, Jeannette, Isabella*

*Lo How a Rose*

*Gesu Bambino*

- traditional arr. Richard Walters

- traditional arr. Richard Walters

- Pietro Yon arr. Richard Walters

Harriet Welther, violin

*I Wonder as I Wander*

- traditional

Mary Elizabeth Groupé, viola

### \* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL      *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

1. 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!

2. Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation!  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all Glory in the highest!

#### *Refrain*

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

#### *Refrain*

### ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Stacy Carreau and Paul Goodrich

### CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)

O sing to the Lord a new song,

**FOR GOD HAS DONE MARVELOUS THINGS.**

Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth;

**BREAK FORTH INTO JOYOUS SONG AND SING PRAISES.**

So all of creation may sing new songs of gladness

**AND WALK IN THE WAY OF PEACE.**

### A MOMENT WITH THE CHILDREN

**CHOIR AND CONGREGATIONAL CAROL*****What Child Is This***

1. 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.

2. So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh,  
 Come peasant, king to own Him;  
 The King of kings salvation brings,  
 Let loving hearts enthrone Him.  
 Raise, raise a song on high,  
 The virgin sings her lullaby.  
 Joy, joy for Christ is born,  
 The Babe, the Son of Mary.

**CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER (unison)**

We rejoice this night in the unquenchable and eternal light that shines upon all creation. In that light we acknowledge those greeds within us which have darkened our days and those selfish customs among us that have shadowed the lives and spirits of others. This night may the light of Christmas enter our hearts in spoken word, song and wonder. May the joy of Christ's birth illumine our every hour and thought until all of us, as part of God's family, shall be brought out of any darkness to holy light eternal. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

**\* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL*****Hark! The Herald Angels Sing***

1. 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 the angelic host proclaim:  
 "Christ is born in Bethlehem"

2. Christ by highest heav'n adored  
 Christ the everlasting Lord!  
 Late in time behold Him come  
 Offspring of a Virgin's womb  
 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see  
 Hail the incarnate Deity  
 Pleased as man with man to dwell  
 Jesus, our Emmanuel

***Refrain***

Hark! The herald angels sing  
 "Glory to the newborn King!"

***Refrain***

3. Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!  
 Hail the sun of righteousness!  
 Light and life to all He brings  
 Ris'n with healing in His wings  
 Mild He lays His glory by  
 Born that man no more may die  
 Born to raise the sons of earth  
 Born to give them second birth

***Refrain***

**\* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL**

***While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks***

TUNE: Winchester Old

1. While shepherds watched their flocks by night  
All seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down,  
And glory shone around.
2. "Fear not," said he, for mighty dread  
Had seized their troubled mind;  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To you and human kind.
3. Thus spoke the seraph, and forthwith  
Appeared a shining throng  
Of angels praising God, who this  
Addressed their joyful song:
4. "All glory be to God on high,  
And to the earth be peace:  
Good will to all from highest heaven  
Begin and never cease!"

**SCRIPTURE**

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Adam Tronsen, Reader

**\* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL**

***Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming***

1. Lo, how a rose e'er blooming  
From tender stem hath sprung,  
Of Jesse's lineage coming,  
By faithful prophets sung.  
It came a floweret bright,  
Amid the cold of winter,  
When half spent was the night.
2. Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
The rose I have in mind,  
With Mary we behold it,  
The virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love a-right  
She bore for us a Savior,  
When half spent was the night.

**SCRIPTURE**

Luke 2:1-20

Jessie Kuzmicki, Reader

**\* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL**

***The First Nowell***

1. The first Nowell the angel did say  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay a keeping their sheep,  
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
2. 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.

***Refrain***

*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
Born is the King of Israel.*

***Refrain***

3. 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.

***Refrain***

## OFFERING

## OFFERTORY ANTHEM

### *Night of Silence*

- words and music by Daniel Kantor, arr. John Ferguson

Cold are the people, winter of life.  
We tremble in shadows this cold endless night.  
Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping,  
Flowers that will echo the sunrise.  
Fire of hope is our only warmth,  
Weary, its flame will be dying soon.

Voice in the distance, call in the night,  
On wind you enfold us, you speak of the light,  
Gentle on the ear you whisper softly,  
Rumors of a dawn so embracing,  
Breathless love awaits darkened souls,  
Soon will we know of the morning.

Spirit among us, shine like the star,  
Your light that guides shepherds and kings from afar,  
Shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely,  
Rising in the warmth of your Son's love,  
Star unknowing of night and day,  
Spirit we wait for your loving Son.

## \* DOXOLOGY (592) AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

## CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

Near to Bethlehem

## \* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL

### *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

1. 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.

2. For Christ is born of Mary;  
And gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars, together  
Proclaim the holy birth!  
And praises sing to God the King,  
And peace to all on earth.

3. How silently, how silently,  
The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming,  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him, still  
The dear Christ enters in.

## PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (debts/debtors)

**\* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL**

*Joy to the World!*

1. 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.
2. Joy to the world! the Savior reigns:  
Let us our songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3. He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness,  
And wonders of his love,  
And wonders of his love,  
And wonders, wonders of his love.

**\* BENEDICTION**

**\* OUTDOOR CANDLELIGHT CAROL**

Weather permitting, the congregation will gather to sing *Silent Night* in a circle outside the church tonight. Candles will be available outside.

*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.



\*stand if able

We welcome all of you to this annual Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols, a tradition we are proud to host here at Old First Church. We are glad you have made it part of your Advent/Christmas season this year and we hope this service of worship tonight both enriches your life and glorifies God. The “Old First” Congregational Church was first gathered on December 3, 1762, and is thus celebrating its 259<sup>th</sup> anniversary during this Advent season. The term, “gathered,” signified that the church was composed of all who chose to be part of its communion, regardless of where they lived. People still gather here from a wide area, including Bennington, North Bennington, Shaftsbury, Pownal, Arlington, Peterborough, New Hampshire, Averill Park, Hoosick Falls, Cambridge, White Creek, Melrose and Albany, New York. If you have no other church affiliation, we invite you to do the same. Livestream and later recorded content of our worship services--including the Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols--can be found and enjoyed at any time online by going to <http://oldfirstchurchbenn.org/worship/worship-here-and-now/> which brings you to our church website section entitled “Worship Here and Now”. From there look for the live stream link contained on that page.

Tonight’s ushers are Nancy Andrews, Wayne Kachmar, Larry and Pat Ross.

This Christmas we are especially thankful for the skills and participation of our church choir: John Carson, Jim Dilley, Susan Kachmar, Carol Poppe, its director and our organist Gene Marie Callahan, our violist Mary Elizabeth Groupé and our violinist Harriet Welther.

The sketch on the front cover is by Sarah Jane White, a graduated member of the Bennington Children’s Chorus. Sarah sketched this scene at our Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols 2013. Our thanks to her for permission to reprint her work as part of tonight’s order of service.

*God’s grace to all this Advent-Christmas season!*

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CCLI # 3009679

The Old First Church thanks Peter and Monique Geannelis for providing the wreaths in the sanctuary and to the following who have provided memorial Poinsettias:

**In Memory Of:**

Our loved ones  
Family and loved ones  
Loved ones  
David Carreau and Steven Bell  
Dorothy Theberge Clarke and James F. Clarke  
Carole J. Dilley  
Hal Ehrenfreund  
Art and Kit Roberts (Grandma & Papa); Stephen Satterthwaite (Dad); Margaret Crawford (Grandma)  
George Goeke  
Terry Trahan  
Armand V. Lampron  
Our parents Nicholas and Elizabeth DeVos and Louis and Rose Guariniello  
Esther Jonas Lubesco, Rosamond Adams Guerrero, Amelia Lubesco  
Ronald P. Hall  
Leon and Lenore Hill  
Sam Hibbard  
Mr. and Mrs. Allen Fales; Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kachmar  
My sister Mary Gougen  
Leif Laertes Langford; Jim Miller  
My beloved Isobel  
Jeff Munson  
With love to the Tully family; Edna, Joe, Sophie and Gert, with love  
Our parents  
My parents  
Emma and Jesse Seibeet  
Ed Post  
Muriel Brooks  
Our loved ones  
Our parents  
Bob Shemeth, mother Madeleine, and daughter Kimberly  
Eric Matthew Tronsen  
My stepmom June Carroll

**Given By:**

Nancy and Brad Andrews  
Sandy Bechtel  
Gene Marie Callahan  
Stacy Carreau  
James, Ken and Johanna Clarke  
Jim Dilley  
Betsy Ehrenfreund  
The Gauthier family  
Joyce Goeke  
Paul Goodrich  
Mary Elizabeth Lampron Groupé  
Lou and Marie Guariniello  
Dick and Pat Guerrero  
Patti, Matthew and Andrew  
John N. Hill  
Marietta, Wendy and Melinda  
Wayne and Susan Kachmar  
Susan Katz  
Noah and Amber Langford  
John Meyer  
Darlene Munson  
Audrey & Larry Pietrucha  
Marsha and Dave Pilachowski  
Carol Poppe and Lauren Beckerman  
Vicky Printz  
Jim Pullman  
Kristin Roessner  
Pat and Larry Ross  
Tom and Wendy Schmitt  
Valerie Shemeth  
His family  
Evie Wild