

# Christmas Eve at the Old First Church

## Old Bennington, Vermont

December 24, 2022  
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      Old First Church Choir  
Mary Elizabeth Groupé, Viola      Francois Secordel, Violin  
Perri Morris, Cello

### PRELUDE

*Sheep May Safely Graze*      - J.S. Bach arr. Duncan  
Mary Elizabeth Groupe, viola

*Noel*      - Claude Louis D'Aquin  
Francois Secordel, violin  
Perri Morris, cello

*O Holy Night*      - Adolph-Charles Adam  
Francois Secordel, violin      arr. A.L. Christopherson  
Perri Morris, cello

*Et in terra pax*      - John Purifoy  
Old First Church Choir

### \* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL

#### *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

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|---|---|
| 1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,<br>O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!<br>Come and behold Him, born the King of angels! | 2. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!<br>Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!<br>Glory to God, all Glory in the highest! |
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#### *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

Susan Congdon and Betsy Ehrenfreund

### 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

#### \*CONGREGATIONAL CAROL

#### *What Child Is This*

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| 1. What Child is this, who, laid to rest,<br>on Mary's lap is sleeping?<br>Whom angels greet with anthems sweet<br>while shepherds watch are keeping?<br>This, this is Christ the King,<br>Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;<br>Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,<br>The Babe, the Son of Mary! | 2. So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh,<br>come, one and all, to own Him;<br>the King of kings salvation brings;<br>let loving hearts enthrone Him.<br>Raise, raise a song on high,<br>The virgin sings her lullaby.<br>Joy, joy for Christ is born,<br>The Babe, the Son of Mary. |
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#### 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*

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| 1. Hark the herald angels sing<br>"Glory to the newborn King!<br>Peace on earth and mercy mild<br>God and sinners reconciled"<br>joyful, all ye nations rise<br>join the triumph of the skies<br>with the angelic host proclaim:<br>"Christ is born in Bethlehem" | 2. Christ by highest heav'n adored<br>Christ the everlasting Lord!<br>Late in time behold Him come<br>offspring of a Virgin's womb<br>veiled in flesh the Godhead see<br>hail the incarnate Deity<br>pleased as man with man to dwell<br>Jesus, our Emmanuel |
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#### *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*

### SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 52:7-10

Kristin Roessner, Reader

**\* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL**

*See Amid the Winter's Snow*

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| 1. See amid the winter's snow,<br>born for us on earth below,<br>see, the gentle lamb appears,<br>promised from eternal years. | 2. Say, you holy shepherds, say,<br>tell your joyful news today.<br>Why have you now left your sheep<br>on the lonely mountain steep? |
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**Refrain:**

Hail that ever-blessed morn,  
hail redemption's happy dawn,  
sing through all Jerusalem:  
Christ is born in Bethlehem.

**Refrain**

3. "As we watched at dead of night,  
there appeared a wondrous light;  
angels singing 'Peace on earth'  
told us of the Savior's birth."

**Refrain**

**SCRIPTURE**

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Adam Tronsen, Reader

**\* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL**

*In the Bleak Midwinter*

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| 1. In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,<br>earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;<br>snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,<br>in the bleak midwinter, long ago.                         | 3. Angels and archangels, may have gathered there,<br>cherubim and seraphim, thronged the air;<br>but His mother only, in her maiden bliss,<br>worshiped the beloved, with a kiss. |
| 2. Our God, heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain;<br>Heaven and earth shall flee away, when He comes to reign:<br>in the bleak midwinter, a stable place sufficed<br>the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ. | 4. What can I give Him, poor as I am?<br>If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;<br>if I were a wise man, I would do my part;<br>yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.     |

**SCRIPTURE**

Luke 2:1-20

Jessie Kuzmicki, Reader

**\* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL**

*The First Nowell*

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| 1. The first Nowell the angel did say<br>was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;<br>in fields where they lay a keeping their sheep,<br>on a cold winter's night that was so deep. | 2. They looked up and saw a star<br>shining in the east, beyond them far;<br>and to the earth it gave great light,<br>and so it continued both day and night. |
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**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**

*The Midnight Rose*  
Old First Church Choir  
Francois Secordel, violin

- Richard Storrs Willis  
arr. Brad Nix and Wanda Cooley

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

**CHRISTMAS MEDITATION**

**\* CONGREGATIONAL CAROL**

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

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| 1. O little town of Bethlehem,<br>how still we see thee lie!<br>Above thy deep and dreamless sleep<br>the silent stars go by;<br>yet in thy dark streets shineth<br>the everlasting light;<br>the hopes and fears of all the years<br>are met in thee tonight. | 2. For Christ is born of Mary;<br>and gathered all above,<br>while mortals sleep, the angels keep<br>their watch of wondering love.<br>O morning stars, together<br>proclaim the holy birth!<br>And praises sing to God the King,<br>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!*

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| 1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come:<br>let earth receive her King;<br>let every heart prepare him room,<br>and heaven and nature sing,<br>and heaven and nature sing,<br>and heaven, and heaven and nature sing. | 2. Joy to the world! the Savior reigns:<br>let us our songs employ;<br>while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains<br>repeat the sounding joy,<br>repeat the sounding joy,<br>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.



\*stand if able

***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.

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 260<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, Hoosick Falls, Cambridge, Greenwich, 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 Joyce Goeke, Darlene Munson, Larry and Pat Ross.

This Christmas we are especially thankful for the skills and participation of our church choir: John Carson, Lucy Carson-Gardner, Jim Dilley, Susan Kachmar, Wayne Kachmar, Carol Poppe, Peter Subers, its director and our organist Gene Marie Callahan, our violist Mary Elizabeth Groupé, cellist Perri Morris and violinist Francois Secordel.

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!*