

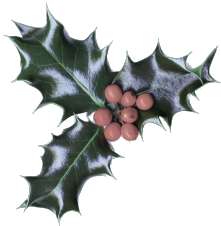
FIRST PARISH IN BEDFORD

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 2025

The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among the people,
To make music in the heart.

-Howard Thurman



PRELUDE MUSIC

All the choral and solo music for this evening's service was composed by the German composer, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750).

Gloria in excelsis Deo (in Latin), BWV 191 (1742)

- I. **Chorus:** *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all of good will.*
- II. **Post orationem:** *Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.*
Cynthia Mork, soprano & Wes Hunter, tenor
- III. **Chorus:** *As it was in the beginning, and now, and forevermore. Amen.*

BELL SOUND

OPENING WORDS AND LIGHTING OF FLAMING CHALICE AND THE ADVENT WREATH

Rev. Annie

* CAROL

Joy to the World

Handel, arr. Mason/Rutter

Congregation and Choir sing verses 1, 2 and 4; Choir only sings verse 3

Verse 1: Congregation and Choir sing:

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Verse 2: Congregation and Choir sing:

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns:
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks,
hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Verse 3: Choir only sings:

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.*

Verse 4: Congregation and Choir sing:

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.

READING: “For So the Children Come” by Sophia Lyon Fahs

Rev. Jamie

For Unto Us a Child Is Born (in German), BWV 142 (1720)

(formerly attr. to J.S. Bach, possibly composed by Johann Kuhnau (1660-1722))

I. ***Sinfonia*** (Instrumental)

WELCOME

Rev. Jamie

ANTHEM

II. **Chorus:** *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.* (Isaiah 9:6)

READING: “The Innkeeper” by Anne Dilenschneider

Rev. Annie

SOLO and ANTHEM

Hilary Walker – solo

III. *So appears your natal day,
as my duty requires,
to serve you, my Jesus.*

*But, poor as I am, I have no idea
neither know what I seek, nor what I find,
what could serve you as a gift
worthy to be a holy offering
to please you, O great God.* (based on texts from the 18th c. Lutheran Songbook)

IV. **Chorus:** *I will praise the name of God with a song,
and will magnify him with thanksgiving.* (Psalm 69:30)

READINGS from the Gospels, The Christmas Story

Luke 2:1-20

Rev. Annie

Matthew 2:1-15

Rev. Jamie

SOLO

Wes Hunter – solo

V. *Jesus, sing praise to you,
honor and glory to you!
For my fate is the most wonderful on Earth
as Thou and only Thou art mine.* (based on texts from the 18th c. Lutheran Songbook)

***CAROL**

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Willis, arr. Vernon

Let there be peace on earth,
and let it begin with me;
let there be peace on earth,
the peace that was meant to be.
With love for our planet,
Hopeful all are we.
Let us walk with each other
in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me;
let this be the moment now.
With every step I take,
let this be my solemn vow:
to take each moment and live each moment
in peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth,
and let it begin with me.

REFLECTION

Rev. Jamie

OFFERING: Proceeds benefit the Bedford Food Pantry
You can give online at uubedford.org, click “donate”

Rev. Annie

OFFERTORY

Hilary Walker – solo

- VI. **Recitative:** *Emmanuel! It is Thy will and wish
that my spirit and faith can comprehend Thee;
and even though I cannot immediately discover the joy that Thy birth rouses
I still hope that my weak stammering gives praise and honor to Thee.*
- VII. **Solo:** *Jesus, may praise be sung to you,
for it is through you that I have been redeemed.
Nothing grieves my soul,
since my heart is consoled
through your exuberant goodness. (based on texts from the 18th c. Lutheran Songbook)*
- VIII. **Chorale:** *Alleluia! Praise be to God,
We all sing out of the depths of our hearts.
For we shall never forget the great joy God created this day.
(text: vs. 5 from *Wir Christenleut* (1592) by Kaspar Fuger)*





INTRODUCTION TO THE CANDLE-LIGHTING

Rev. Jamie

INTERLUDE

Sandra LaBarge-Neuman – organ

Allemande

from Pastorale in F Major, BWV 590, No. 2 (c. 1720)
by Johann Sebastian Bach

CANDLE-LIGHTING

CAROL (please remain seated)

Silent Night

Franz Gruber (1787-1863), arr. Vernon

1. 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.

1. *Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!*
Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar,
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh,
schlaf in himmlischer Ruh.

2. 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!

2. *Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!*
Hirten erst kundgemacht
Durch der Engel Halleluja,
Tönt es laut bei Fern und Nah:
“Christ, der Retter ist da!
Christ, der Retter is da!

PEALING OF THE BELL

CLOSING WORDS: “The Work of Christmas” by Howard Thurman

Rev. Jamie

*CAROL

The First Nowell

English traditional, arr. Willcocks

1. The First Noel, the Angels 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!

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:
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel!

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:
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel,
Born is the King of Israel!





Choir

Soprano

Sara Angus
Alecia Batson
Beatrice Brunkhorst
Rachel Field
Susan Hill
Stephanie Keep
Holly Krafka
Beverley Matthews
Cynthia Mork
Bella Thomas
Lisa Tohline

Alto

Elizabeth Bailey
Susan Barnaby
Jennifer Clark
Sara Dodd
Marie Duprey
Karen Frederick
Laurie Groves
Marge Heckman
Dianne Marston
Takako Okamoto
Linda Pollitz
Luana Reed
Sue Turner
Hilary Walker

Tenor

Mike Boczenowski
Buffie Groves
Wes Hunter
Lance Levine
Peter Okamoto
Pamela Spencer
Chris Tohline

Bass

Dan Bostwick
Richie Conrad
Dean Groves
Craig Jackson
Chris Loschen
Allen Marshall
Nao Okamoto
William Rasschaert
Michael Ruderman
Benjamin Sears

Orchestra

Dianne Pettipaw – violin I, *concertmaster*
Lisa Pettipaw – violin II
Susan Gottschalk – viola
Nathan Kimball – cello
Volker Nahrman – double bass
Carol Epple – flute I
Peter Bloom – flute II
Mia Fasanello – oboe I
Jared Chapman – oboe II
Elizabeth Connors – clarinet
Elizabeth Jewell – trumpet
Sandra LaBarge-Neumann – organ
Bradford Conner – conductor

Brad Conner, the adult choir and the Music Committee would like to give a special thanks to all the guest musicians participating in this evening's service to Bob Batt, and Bob Bass for helping with Zoom transmission and in-sanctuary sound, to Ken Silber for his technical aural assistance, and to Marika McGrath and Brenda Rybicki for their ever-cheerful support and assembling of the bulletin.

