

The _____
First Congregational Church
of Woodstock _____

*Declaring, "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today,
and forever." Hebrews 13:8*

December 24th, 2020

Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 2020

Seven o'clock

Prelude

Welcome

Pastor Doug Warren

Advent Candle Lighting

Emery Family

Call to Worship

Leader: Tonight, we remember that the whole world lay in deep darkness for millennia. People walked in darkness without hope except for the promise given by the Maker of Light.

Congregation: Lord God, we need Your light!

Leader: God is faithful to keep all of His promises. He has sent us His light.

Congregation: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

Leader: Fully God and Fully Man, Jesus came to accomplish what no one else could do for us. We come now to worship God together.

Congregation: Lord Jesus, we praise You!

Invocation

Scripture Reading #1

Isaiah 9: 6 – 7

⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about. Luke 2:15

1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant,
 2. God of God, Light of Light;
 3. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
 4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing:

O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem; come and be - hold him
 lo, he ab - hors not the Vir - gin's womb: ver - y God, be -
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove; glo - ry to God
 Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry giv'n; Word of the Fa - ther,

REFRAIN

born the King of an - gels;
 got - ten, not cre - a - ted; O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let
 in the high - est;
 late in flesh ap - pear - ing;

us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

❖ Hymn

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Number 194

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

194

*"The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,"
declares the LORD. Is. 59:20*

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som - cap - tive
 2. O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes, on
 3. O come, thou Rod of Jes - se, free thine own from Sa - tan's
 4. O come, thou Day-spring from on high, and cheer us by thy
 5. O come, thou Key of Da - vid, come and o - pen wide our

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here,
 Si - nai's height, in an - cient times didst give the law
 • tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple save,
 draw - ing nigh; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,
 heav'n - ly home; make safe the way that leads on high,

REFRAIN
 un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
 • and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -
 and death's dark shad - ows put to flight.
 and close the path to mis er - y.

man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Scripture Reading #3

Luke 2: 1 – 20

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

A great company of the heavenly host [was] praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:13, 14

1. Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born King;
2. Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord!
3. Hail the heav'n - born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righ - teous - ness!

peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
Late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb.
Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh the God - head see; hail th'in - car - nate De - i - ty,
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that man no more may die,

with th'an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
pleased as man with men to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.
born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them sec - ond birth.

REFRAIN

Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King."

Charles Wesley, 1739, 1753; alt.

MENDELSSOHN 7.7.7.7.D.ref.
Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, 1840
Arr. by William H. Cummings, 1856

Scripture Reading #4

John 1: 1 – 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Christmas Eve Offertory

Immanuel by Michael Card

❖ Hymn

Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come

Number 195

Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Ps. 98:4

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth re - ceive her
 2. Joy to the earth! The Sav - ior reigns: let men their songs em -
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest the
 4. He rules the world with truth and graçe, and makes the na - tions

King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 ploy; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow
 prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
 and heav'n and na - ture sing,

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.
 heav'n and na - ture sing,

“The Birth of Jesus Is Good News!”

John 20: 30 – 31

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

❖ Hymn

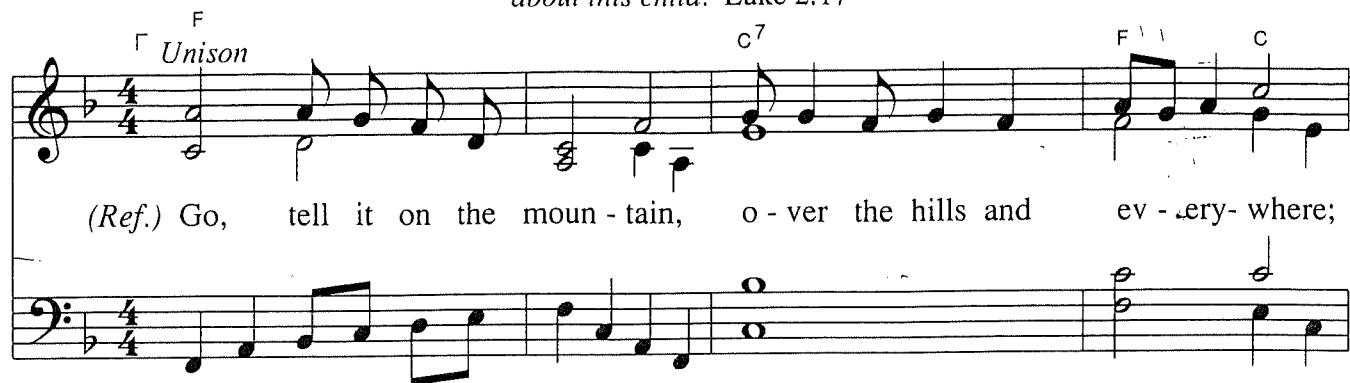
Go Tell It on the Mountain

Number 224

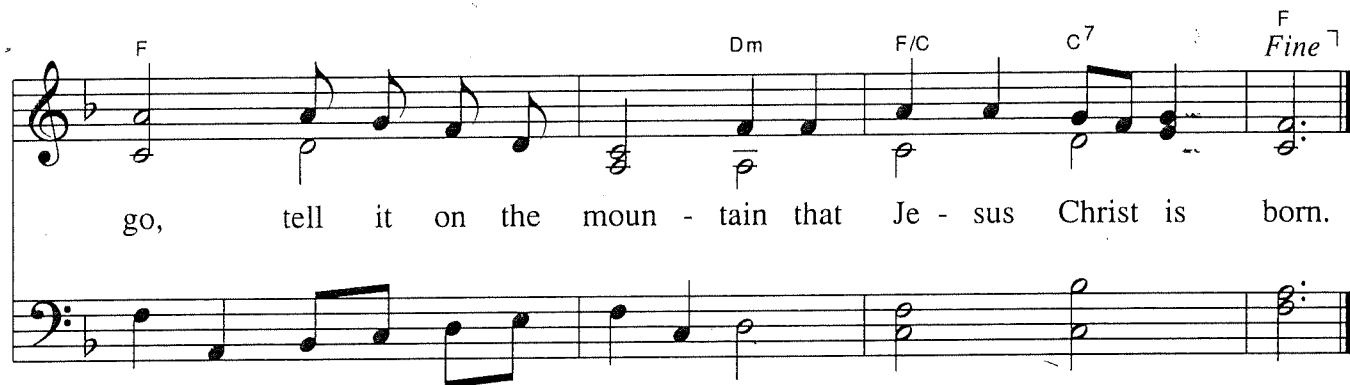
Go, Tell It on the Mountain

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child. Luke 2:17

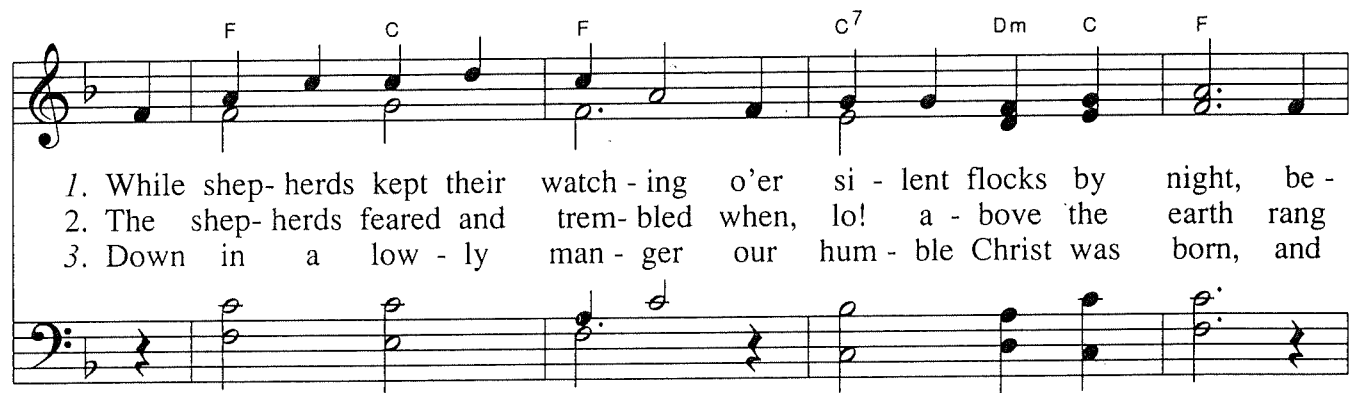
Unison



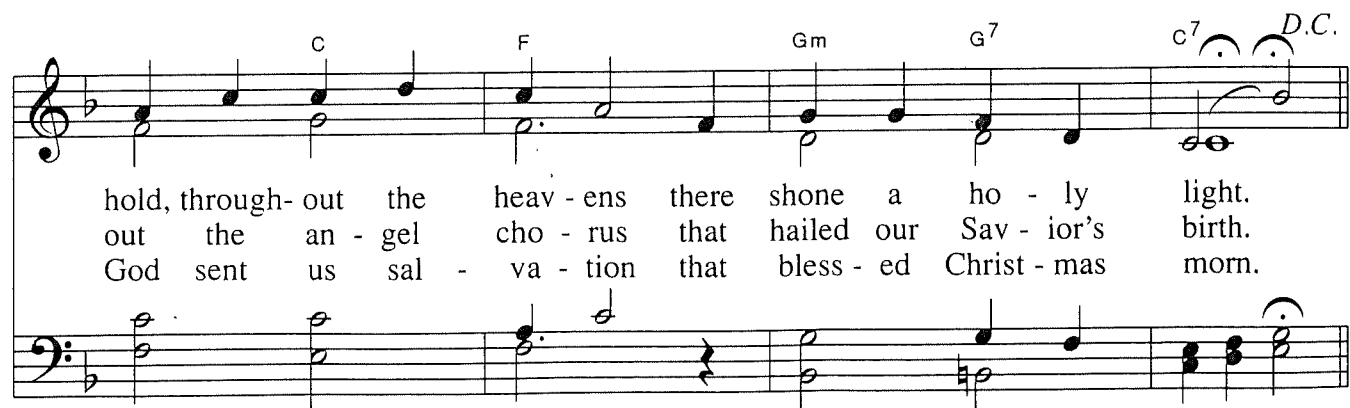
(Ref.) Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev-ery-where;



go, tell it on the moun-tain that Je-sus Christ is born.



1. While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si-lent flocks by night, be-
 2. The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo! a-bove the earth rang
 3. Down in a low-ly man-ger our hum-ble Christ was born, and



hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho-ly light.
 out the an-gel cho-rus that hailed our Sav-ior's birth.
 God sent us sal-va-tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

³⁷ On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

⁴⁰ When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.” ⁴¹ Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Is the Christ to come from Galilee? ⁴² Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” ⁴³ So there was a division among the people over him.

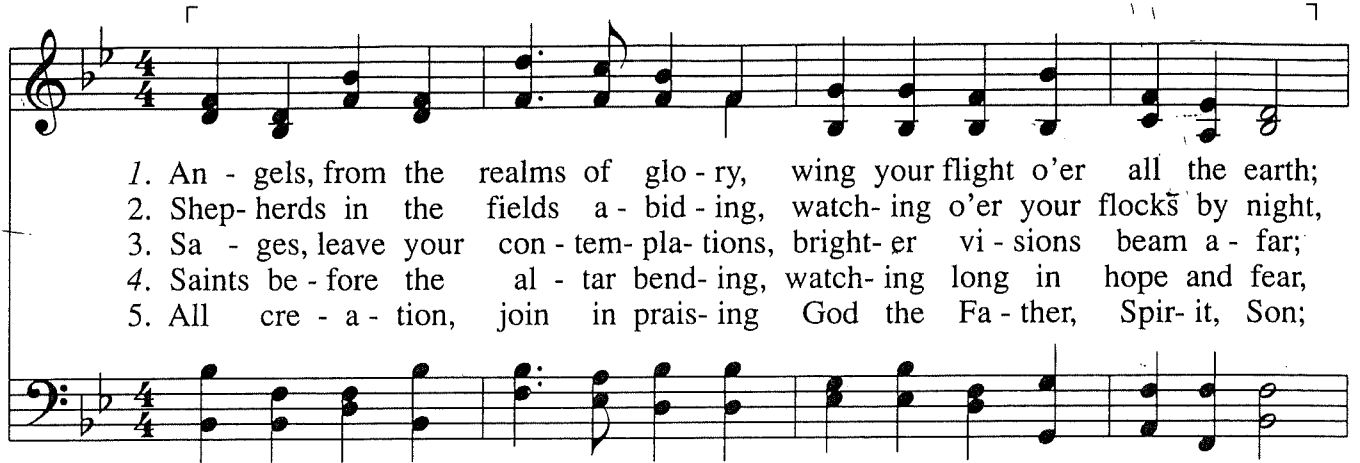
❖ Hymn

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

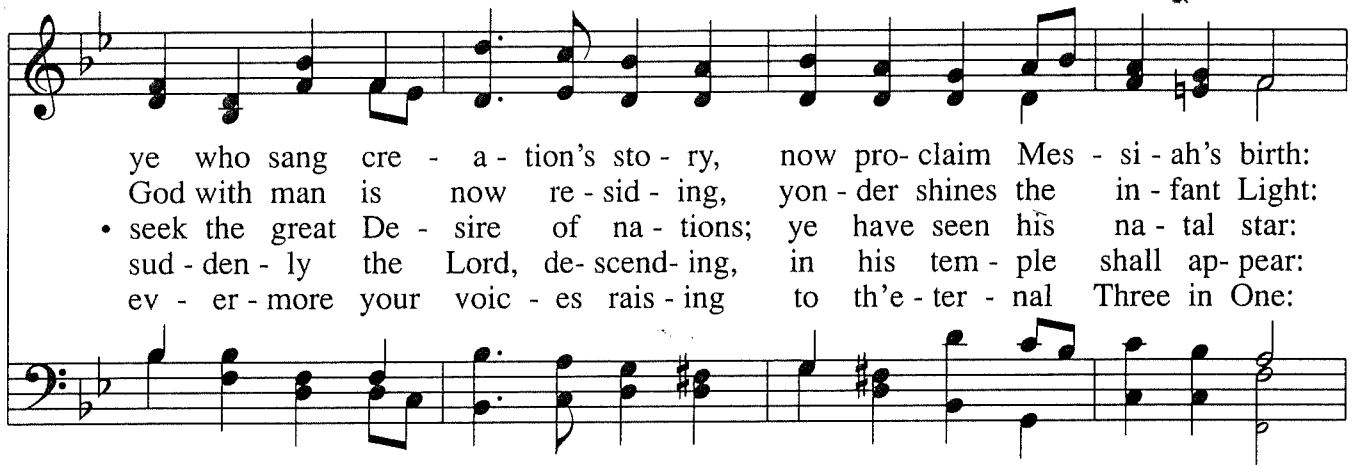
Number 218

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

They saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.
Matt. 2:11

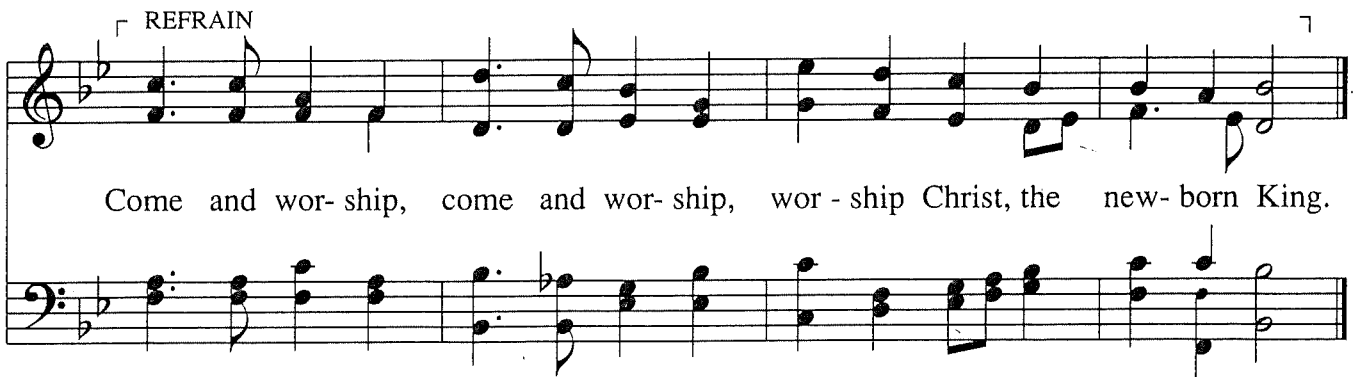


1. An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
2. Shep - herds in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flock's by night,
3. Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
4. Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, watch - ing long in hope and fear,
5. All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son;



ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with man is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant Light:
• seek the great De - sire of na - tions; ye have seen his na - tal star:
sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing, in his tem - ple shall ap - pear:
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to th'e - ter - nal Three in One:

REFRAIN



Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

Benediction

Numbers 6: 24 – 26

Pastor Doug Warren

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

The Congregation may be seated after the Benediction for silent prayer

Postlude

~~ Organist: Jonathan Denham ~~

~~ Pianist: Anne Hablitzel~~

~~ Violinist: Leah Eells ~~

~~ Please ensure cell phones are off ~~

Pastor Doug's Christmas Book is Available
on the back Table.

Christmas Eve Offering Recipient
Bethany Birches Camp, Plymouth, VT

Seek First His Kingdom and All These Things Will Be Given To You As Well.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I write to you with a full heart. My heart is filled with thankfulness, grace, and abundance. 2020 has been a challenging year for most. For some, it has been beyond challenging. For us here at Bethany Birches it has been stressful. When we realized summer camp would be possible and safe, and that young people needed a Christ-centered camp experience now more than ever, we were determined to find a way to abide by the guidelines, keep everyone safe, and run camp! We are so glad we did. Thought it was tiring, stressful, character-building, it was worth all of it. I suppose that's the way it is in the Kingdom of God. Jesus himself said in Luke 17 that whoever tries to keep their life will lose it and whoever loses their life will preserve it. This summer, and year in general has brought various kinds of loses. As promised, the camp, and those of us serving it have been preserved. Resources continue to be provided, lives impacted, and learning and growth abound.

On the topic of lives impacted, I couldn't be more pleased with one of our counselors this summer. While I was pleased with many of them, and think the summer team did a great job, the story of this one young woman helps me to envision the heart of our work. She had come to camp many years as a child and then even into her teen years. She was at camp every chance she got. She brought her friends. As she grew, and became involved in more activities, we saw less of her in her later teen years. She came back to us to be on staff in 2019. She wasn't sure she could be a counselor so took a support role. In 2020 she realized she wanted to be a counselor. She wasn't sure her faith was strong enough, or that her Bible knowledge was great enough. We hired her with enthusiasm because we know and love her and felt she was enough, and trusted her to guide campers toward their own relationships with God as her counselors did with her for so many years. As the summer wore on, she asked hard questions of us. She shared honestly and passionately. She gave deeply of herself to her campers and fellow staff. She started to read her Bible more often. After summer, she asked multiple times for us to begin a Bible study for staff and campers (which is now underway with many teens who are not currently in the faith). She is working hard to apply

all she is learning to her daily life. It is young people like this that are so needed right now. This young woman helps me remember that people are connecting deeply with God and those around them through the work we do at camp.

Now you can understand a little more why my heart is full. I have much to be thankful for, including that God would call me to this work, and let me witness so much change and joy and love, even while I am a sinner. I have you to be thankful for as well. Thank you for committing your Christmas Sacrificial Offering to the mission of Bethany Birches Camp. Join me in praying that God guides each of us as we are invited to make our own sacrifices and that as we respond to God's call in our lives, fruit is borne and, in the context, here at camp, many come to know Jesus and have intimate experience with God.

May the Lord bless you and keep you,

Brandon Bergey, Executive Director
Bethany Birches Camp

Memorial Poinsettias were Given by the Following

David Williams by Edie Williams

Richard and Evelyn Englishmen by Elaine Brown

Fred Forthman and Lenore Forthman by Dorothy Forthman

Allan Atwood by Dick and Bonnie Atwood

Dr. C. Everett Koop by Cora Koop

Robert Powell and Marion and Louis Van Dyk by Carol Powell

Cliff Notes on Christmas

Why did Jesus come as a baby born in Bethlehem?

Jesus was born in fulfillment of many promises made by God¹ to His people to deliver us and save us from our sin. We have these promises in the Bible where God explains that in humanity's rebellion against Him, we have received the penalty of our sin, which is spiritual death.²

Unable to resuscitate ourselves, we are lost and without hope unless God Himself comes to save us.³ But that is exactly what He did! Jesus, God the Son, as only He could, came to win us back to right relationship with God the Father. This role of mediator between God and human beings was long foretold as the unique work of the true King of Israel who would be born in Bethlehem, the city of David, Israel's greatest king.

What are we supposed to do?

Jesus calls us to repent from our disobedience, to believe and put our trust in Him for the salvation we so desperately need, and to identify with His people as the recipients of His grace. Let's look at each one of these things.

Repent. This means to turn from all the ways we disobey God and to start obeying Him instead. God has made Himself evident to all people⁴ even though we suppress that knowledge, but if we want to know Him as He truly is, the Bible shows us how to live in obedience to His holy calling.

Believe. Jesus calls us to stop believing that we can save ourselves or that any other thing can save us. He tells us to trust that He is the only way to God the Father. To believe *in* Christ is more than just believing that He was born; it's trusting Him to the exclusion of all else. What this baby King was born to do was to live the perfect life of obedience we fail to live and then die as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. His death on the cross paid the penalty for our rebellion and His resurrection from the dead on Easter morning declared that sacrifice was accepted by God the Father. To believe in Jesus is to trust His life, death, and resurrection to the exclusion of all else.

Identify. Jesus doesn't just save us as individuals; He saves us into His family. He adopts His followers as brothers and sisters. The practice of baptism is the historic way of identifying with this family of God. If you have never been baptized then you should confirm your belief in Christ by being baptized into membership of a Bible-believing church. If you have already been baptized, then you should profess your faith in Christ and be joined officially as a member.

¹ The Bible presents itself as God's self-revelation to His people starting as they came up out of Egypt into the Promised Land. These footnotes include references to books in the Bible by listing the name of the book followed by the chapter and verse in which to find the idea summarized above.

² Romans 6:23.

³ Ephesians 2:11-22.

⁴ Romans 1:18-23.