

# Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren

Christmas Eve Candlelight service

Long Green and Kanés Rds., near Glen Arm, MD

December 24, 2014

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## *The Light Shines in the Darkness*



Gathering Music



Welcome

*(Pete)*



Welcome! Whether you are acquainted with the persons sitting around you, or find yourself amid folks you don't yet know, may all of us together be

a community this evening, as we tell ó yet once more ó this ancient story of angels, and weary, expectant parents, and low-paid farm workers, and traveling astrologers all connecting in the most unlikely, yet truly fitting place where good news is born and God is present. Whether you believe or have doubts, or have faith even amid your questions, may we be a people who this evening are open to wonder, who listen and perhaps hear something that has not grabbed us before. Again, welcome.

Before we step into wonder, a few reminders:

First, please turn off your cell phones and other devices. Our task this hour is to be attentive to the presence of God.

Second, as part of our worship this evening we will be taking up an offering. What you give will go toward the ongoing mission of this congregation. Please be generous so that we might continue to be a vibrant community of faith.

Third, you are invited after this service to join us in the fellowship hall for refreshments. It's a good time to catch up with folks you may not have seen for a while, and to share your blessings and Christmas wishes.

Finally, while your bulletin alerts you to what will take place tonight in a general sense, all the words you will need to speak or sing will be projected upon the screen. Hymn numbers will be listed at the beginning of each song, in case you wish to use the hymnal in the pew rack in front of you. However, we plan to worship primarily by candle-light this evening.

Now, let us pray.

## Opening Prayer



Come, eternal Spirit, come.

Come, with words of comfort and speak tenderly to us.

Come with reassurance and rekindle the fires of our faith.

We are among those whose longing hearts have yearned for a time when war shall be no more, when the mighty will be brought low, and the lowly will be lifted up, when a new king and a new kingdom shall guide us into the ways of peace. Has not the mouth of the Lord so spoken? Will not the glory of the Lord be revealed so that all flesh, including our own eyes, shall see it together?

Eternal God, we do indeed look for that day, when the blind see, and the lame walk, and the stranger becomes a brother or sister, and everyone shall join in our cry, that God is with us.

O come, Lord Jesus, come. Thy kingdom come.  
O come, O come, Immanuel. Amen.

## Carol



(vs. 1) ðAngels we have heard on highö #197 *(piano & guitars)*  
*(first youth processes with lit candle as we sing and stands at Advent wreath)*



1. Angels we have heard on high, sing-ing sweet-ly thru the night,  
and the mountains in re-ply ech - o - ing their brave de-light.

*Refrain:* Glo - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.  
Glo - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

# Psal|m 33:20-22

(NIV)

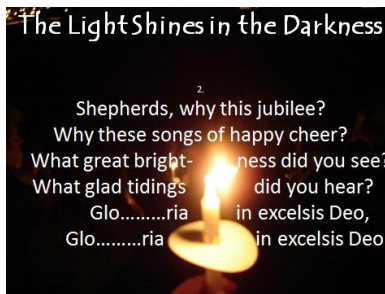


- <sup>20</sup> We wait in hope for the Lord;  
he is our help and our shield.
- <sup>21</sup> In him our hearts rejoice,  
for we trust in his holy name.
- <sup>22</sup> May your unfailing love be with us, Lord,  
even as we put our hope in you.



## Light the Candle of Hope

*(the first youth then speaks out loud the word "hope" for all to hear,  
lights the front candle in the Advent wreath,  
then blows out the candle s/he has carried, and quietly exits)*



## Carol

*(vs. 2) ðAngels we have heard on highö #197 (piano & guitars)  
(second youth processes with lit candle as we sing and stands at Advent wreath)*

2. Shepherds, why this jub-i-lee? Why these songs of hap-py cheer?  
What great brightness did you see? What glad tidings did you hear?

*Refrain:* Glo - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.  
Glo - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.



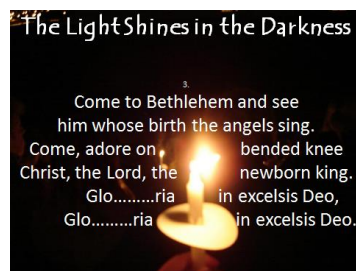
Isaiah 11:1-2, 6-9  
(NIV)

- <sup>1</sup> A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;  
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
- <sup>2</sup> The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him<sup>o</sup>  
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and of might,  
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord.
- <sup>6</sup> The wolf will live with the lamb,  
the leopard will lie down with the goat,  
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;  
and a little child will lead them.
- <sup>7</sup> The cow will feed with the bear,  
their young will lie down together,  
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
- <sup>8</sup> The infant will play near the cobra's den,  
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.
- <sup>9</sup> They will neither harm nor destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.



## Light the Candle of Peace

*(the second youth then speaks out loud the word "peace" for all to hear,  
lights the left candle in the Advent wreath,  
then blows out the candle s/he has carried, and quietly exits)*



## Carol

*(vs. 3) ðAngels we have heard on highö #197 (piano & guitars)  
(third youth processes with lit candle as we sing and stands at Advent wreath)*

3. Come to Beth-le-hem and see him whose birth the angels sing.  
Come, a-dore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the new-born king.

*Refrain:* Glo - - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.  
Glo - - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.



## Psalm 16:7-11 (NRSV)

<sup>7</sup> I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;  
in the night also my heart instructs me.

- <sup>8</sup> I keep the Lord always before me;  
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.  
<sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;  
my body also rests secure.  
<sup>10</sup> For you do not give me up to Sheol,  
or let your faithful one see the Pit.  
<sup>11</sup> You show me the path of life.  
In your presence there is fullness of joy;  
in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.



## Light the Candle of Joy

*(the third youth then speaks out loud the word “joy” for all to hear,  
lights the right, pink candle in the Advent wreath,  
then blows out the candle s/he has carried, and quietly exits)*



## Carol

*(vs. 4) ÕAngels we have heard on highö #197 (piano & guitars)  
(fourth youth processes with lit candle as we sing and stands at Advent wreath)*

4. See him in a man-ger laid whom the an-gels praise a-bove.  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love.

*Refrain:* Glo - - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.  
Glo - - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.



## Psalm 136:1-3, 23-26

(NRSV)

- <sup>1</sup> O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.
- <sup>2</sup> O give thanks to the God of gods,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.
- <sup>3</sup> O give thanks to the Lord of lords,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- <sup>23</sup> It is he who remembered us in our low estate,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- <sup>24</sup> and rescued us from our foes,  
for his steadfast love endures forever;
- <sup>25</sup> who gives food to all flesh,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.
- <sup>26</sup> O give thanks to the God of heaven,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.



## Light the Candle of Love

*(the fourth youth then speaks out loud the word "love" for all to hear,  
lights the candle in the back of the Advent wreath,  
then blows out the candle s/he has carried, and quietly exits)*





## Carol

(vs. 1 & 3) *O come, all ye faithful* #212 (*piano*)  
*(fifth youth processes with lit candle as we sing and stands at Advent wreath)*

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.  
 O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
 O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.
  
3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
 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.



## Scripture

John 1:1-5

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has

come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.  
<sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

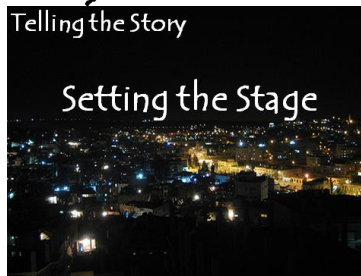


## Light the Christ Candle

*(the fifth youth then speaks out loud the word “Christ” for all to hear,  
lights the middle candle in the Advent wreath,  
then blows out the candle s/he has carried, and quietly exits)*

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## Telling the Story



## Setting the Stage

*(Pete)*

*(as Pete speaks, two youth – representing Mary and the angel Gabriel –  
quietly come to the right/organ side of the front steps.  
Mary kneels and the angel stands.)*

We have a story to tell one more time, about a young woman's encounter with an angel whose visit completely changed her life; about her groom-to-be who struggled with that change; about a forced trip at the wrong time in a pregnancy, and shoddy accommodations at the destination where a child was born; about a "Glory to God" moment involving scraggly young men few respectable folks would want arriving at their door with a bunch of sheep; about some strangers from a strange land with strange gifts at a

strange time. It is a fascinating story ó one we repeat again and again. It never ceases to fill us with a bit of wonder ó if we allow it to do so.

Now, the pieces of this story don't fit neatly together. They are told from different perspectives and leave many things unsaid. Sort of like our own lives, parts of which make little sense at times and are not woven together into a tidy story in which everyone lives happily ever after. However, God enters into all the cracks and crevices of our less-than-perfect lives, just like long ago, and is there like a midwife, bringing to birth what is often unexpected, yet good and real! So, my friends, I invite you to listen, again, to the story, as if for the first time. Be ready to add your voice to the carols we sing into the spaces between the scriptures. In song and story, may we behold glory.



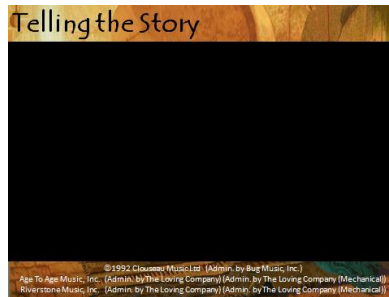
## Luke 1:26-38

(NRSV)

*(Spotlight turns on and focuses upon Mary and the angel Gabriel, who remain in place throughout the reading.)*

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore

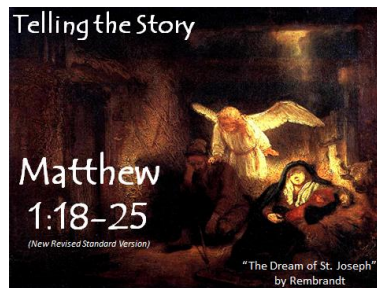
the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God.ö <sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, öHere am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.ö Then the angel departed from her.



## Duet

öBreath of heavenö

*(Spotlight turns off. During this song, Mary leaves and another youth, representing Joseph, takes her place kneeling beside the angel Gabriel.)*



## Matthew 1:18-25

*(NRSV)*

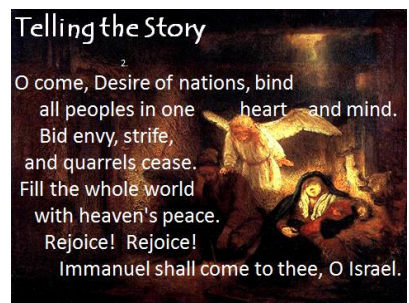
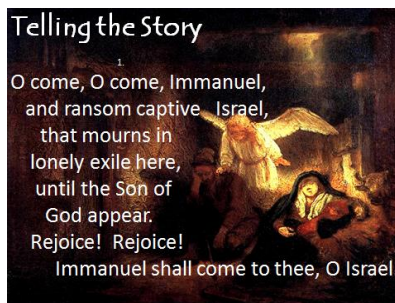
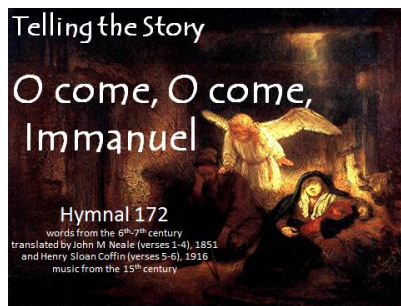
*(Spotlight turns on and focuses upon Joseph and the angel Gabriel, who remain in place throughout the reading.)*

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, öJoseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the

Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.ö <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> ðLook, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,ö  
which means, ðGod is with us.ö <sup>24</sup> When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

*(Spotlight turns off. During the next song,  
Gabriel leaves and Mary returns.  
They stand together.)*



## Carol

(vs. 1 & 6) ðO come, O come, Immanuelö #172 (guitars)

1.

O Come, O Come, Im-man - u - el and ransom captive Is - ra - el  
That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here until the Son of God ap-pear.

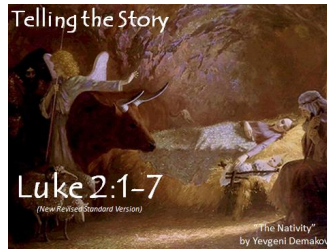
*Refrain:* Re-joyce! Re - joice! Im-man - u - el  
shall come to thee O Is - ra - el.

6.

O come, Desire of na - tions, bind all peoples in one heart and mind.  
Bid envy, strife & quar - rels cease. Fill the whole world with heav- en's peace.

*Refrain:* Re-joyce! Re - joice! Im-man - u - el  
shall come to thee O Is - ra - el.





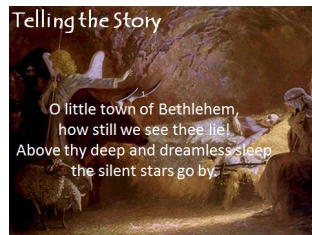
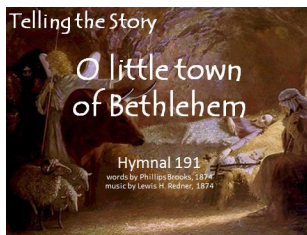
## Luke 2:1-7

(NRSV)

*(Spotlight turns on and focuses upon Mary and Joseph, who remain in place throughout the reading.)*

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>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.

*(Spotlight turns off. During the next song, Mary and Joseph leave. Gabriel returns along with youth representing the shepherds. Gabriel stands, the shepherds kneel.)*



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## Carol

(vs. 1-3) ðO little town of Bethlehemö #191 (piano)

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



## Luke 2:8-20

(NRSV)

*(Spotlight turns on and focuses upon the shepherds and Gabriel,  
who remain in place throughout the reading.)*

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>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: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

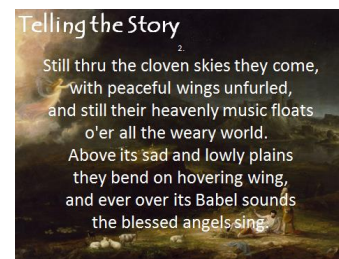
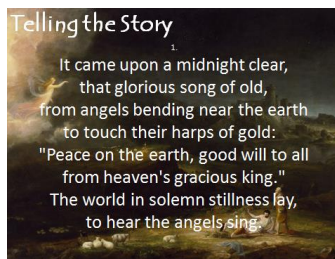
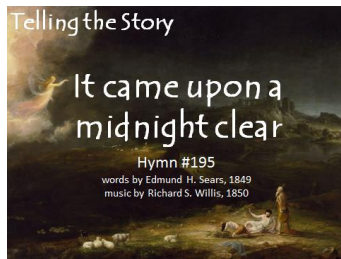
<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup>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." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this

child; <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

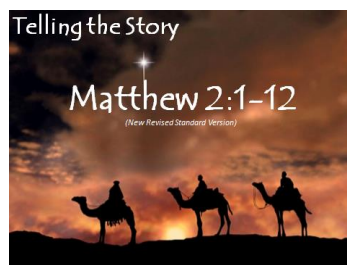
*(Spotlight turns off. During the next song, the shepherds and Gabriel leave.  
Three youth representing the wise men come and stand.)*



## Carol

(vs. 1-2) ðIt came upon a midnight clearö #195 (piano)

1. It came upon a midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, good will to all from heaven's gracious king."  
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.
2. Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world.  
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever over its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.



## Matthew 2:1-12

(NRSV)

*(Spotlight turns on and focuses upon the wise men,  
who remain in place throughout the reading.)*



<sup>1</sup> In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." <sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel."ö

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." <sup>9</sup> When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

*(Spotlight turns off. During the next song, the wise men leave.)*



## Carols

*(guitars – verses interspersed)*

öWe three kingsö (vs. 1 & 3) and öWhat child is thisö (vs. 1 & 3) #215

We three Kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain following yon - der star.

O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy perfect light.

*(transition to "What child is this", verse 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 keep-ing?  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud, the Babe, the son of Ma - ry!

*(transition to "We three kings", verse 3)*

Glorious new behold him arise, King and God and sa - cri - fice;  
Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia! Sounds through the earth and skies.  
O star of wonder, star of night, Star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy perfect light.

*(transition to "What child is this", verse 3)*

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come peasant, king, to own him.  
The King of Kings salvation brings, let loving hearts en-throne him.  
Raise, raise the song on high; the virgin sings her lullaby.  
Joy, joy for Christ is born, the Babe, the son of Ma - ry!

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## Responding to the Story



### Invitation to give

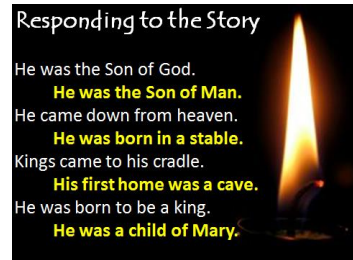
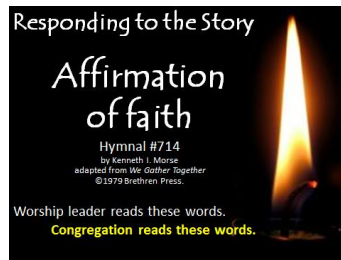
We may not have come to this time and place with any gold, frankincense, or myrrh, but we each have something to share. The ancient story we have just re-told calls for our response. One way of responding is by returning a monetary offering. Just now, we open the opportunity for you to give a special Christmas gift toward the ministry of this congregation. As the ushers pass the plates, ponder how else you might respond to the gospel story

ó this good news that extends beyond a baby in a manger and journeys toward a cross and an empty tomb, and the gift of abundant lifeí Ushers, please lead us in giving as we listen.



## Offertory Duet

õDo you hear what I hear?ö



## Affirmation of faith

Hymnal #714

Letø also respond with an affirmation of faith. I will read the words on the screen that are in white print. Your portion is in yellow or, if you are using the hymnal, your words are in bold print. If you are not able to affirm some of these words, it is okay to respectfully listen. Seekers are always welcome. This is not a litmus test to separate the faithful from the unbeliever. It is, rather, an opportunity to bear witness to what we have heard scripture speak to us. Would you add your voice?

He was the Son of God.

**He was the Son of Man.**

He came down from heaven.

**He was born in a stable.**

Kings came to his cradle.

**His first home was a cave.**

He was born to be a king.

**He was a child of Mary.**

He was the greatest among rulers.

**He was the least among servants.**

He was loved and honored.

**He was despised and rejected.**

He was gentle and loving.

**He made many enemies.**

He counseled perfection.

**He was a friend of sinners.**

He was a joyful companion.

**He was a man of sorrows.**

He said, "Rejoice."

**He said, "Repent."**

"Love God with all your heart."

**"Love your neighbor as yourself."**

"Don't be anxious."

**"Count the cost."**

"Deny yourself."

**"Ask and receive."**

In him was life.

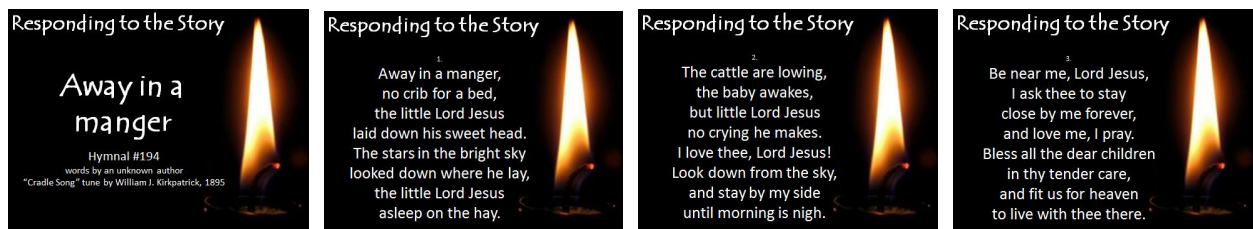
**He died on a cross.**

He was a historic person.

**He lives today.**

He was Jesus of Nazareth.

**He is Christ the Lord.**



## Carol

(all) ðAway in a Mangerö #194 (piano & guitars)

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

2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no cry - ing he makes.  
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,  
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.
3. Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay;  
close by me forever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,  
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.



## Christmas Prayer

“Be near” us, we have just prayed in song “be close by us, love us, care for us tenderly, be a blessing presence in our here-and-now. Amen! Of course, we have also just asked you to “fit us for heaven”! How quickly we forget what fitness requires. Oh, you have promised your encourager to constantly abide and guide. We confess, however, that we’d rather experience your Holy Spirit like a quilt that keeps us warm during the cold night (which you are), than like a trainer who prods us up and out of our spiritual beds (that you are, also).

As we have once again listened to the old, old nativity story, it strikes me “O Lord” that this is less a bedtime tale and more the coaching cry of a heavenly host. “Don’t be afraid,” angels say, repeatedly, and difficult steps are made. “Glory!” heavenly beings sing, and those you’d least expect to do so head out to witness. A star, of which there are millions in the heavens “a **star** in the sky ignites the imagination of seekers to leave behind the comfort of home and journey to “to only you know where.

We thank you, God, for your “*don’t be afraid*” in the middle of our own doubts and fears, and how you help us to keep on keeping on. May your word of “*peace, be still and know that I am God*” bring comfort and courage to those near and far who today face difficult circumstances and choices. We pray for our brothers and sisters in Nigeria made refugees in their own land.

We thank you, Lord, for your glimpses of glory, often witnessed where weød least expect. Who would guess youød show up out in our field, where we work? Open our eyes a bit wider to see you in the manger of our mealtimes, the cradle of our commute, the bundling cloths of our business, the stable of our interactions. May your word of *õpeace and good will to allö* lead to real listening in our cities and towns, divided as we are into so many camps. We pray for those with whom we disagree.

We thank you, God, for guiding us. You brought us here this evening. Oh, it might have been the prodding of a parent, or the touch of tradition, or our sense of responsibility, or a score of other motivations that nudged us to this here and now. You work through many hands and hearts, and you light the way toward more than õchurch.ö May we see your star as it rises above our homes and neighborhoods, and even above where weød least expect to find you. We pray for all, like those wise men long ago or like us and other around us today, who need to be õoverwhelmed with joyö and enter into your good news.

Yes, Be near us, Lord Jesus, we ask thee to stay;  
close by us forever, and love us, we pray.  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,  
and fit us ó yes, fit us ó for heaven to live with thee there.

Amen.

## A Carol new to us


(back of bulletin) (guitars)


Responding to  the Story

**This is Christmas morn**

on the back of your bulletin  
©1970, 2014  
Theresa Cocklin Eshbach  
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Responding to  the Story



Shep - herds a - lone in the fie - ld,  
on - ly their lambs were near. A star and a...

Shepherds alone in the field,  
only their lambs were near.  
A star and a...





# This is Christmas morn

Allegro (M.M. ♩ = c.155)

Harp-like accompaniment (autoharp, guitar, harp)



1. Shep - herds a - lone in the fie - ld,
2. The shep - herds just stood in a - maze - ment, dumb -
3. Three men of great fame and for - tune
4. To - day we re - mem - ber His com - ing.



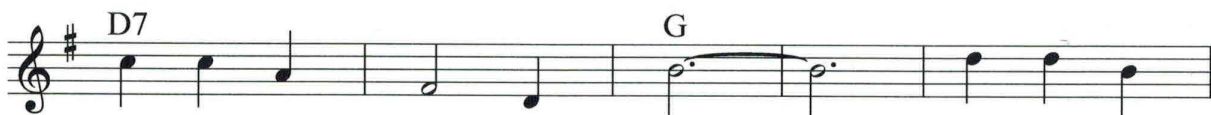
on - ly their lambs were near. A star and a  
found - ed they gazed at the sky; when just at that  
saw the new star bold - ly shine. They knew it was  
What is your off - 'ring to Him? A heart that will



voice broke the qui - et night; they shook in their shoes with  
mo - ment a great an - gel choir sang prais - es to God on  
His so they hurr - ied - ly came, with gifts so ex - qui - site - ly  
shine just as bright as that star, or one that's grown dark with -



fear. Don't be a - fraid, my friends,  
high. Peace on the earth, my friends,  
fine. Joy comes to you, my friends,  
in? Love comes to you, my friends,



for this is Christ - mas morn; This ver - y



night in Da - vid's town, your Sa - vior, Christ, is born.

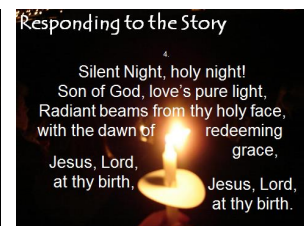


## Invitation to Candlelight

*“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”  
(John 1:5)*

As we sing, “Silent night,” you are invited into this light which shines in the darkness. When the light comes to you, let your unlit candle be the one that bends toward the light. This better prevents wax from dripping. It also reminds of humility and that, as we sang earlier, “where meek souls will receive him still the dear Christ enters in.” Please be careful with your candle. May we be set on fire spiritually, not physically. Let your light shine.

*(While the above is spoken, four youth come forward  
and begin lighting their own candles off the Advent wreath,  
then go and stand in the center aisle,  
two at the first pew – other either side,  
and two at the eight pew back – on either side.  
When the music starts, quietly begin to pass to the light  
to the first person in the center of each pew.  
As it says above, it is the person whose candle is unlit  
who bends their candle to lit it off yours..)*



## Carol

“Silent night” #193 (guitars)

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.

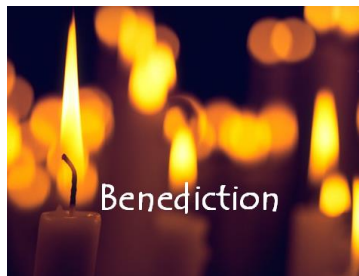


2. Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight,  
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;  
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!
3. Silent Night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light,  
Radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.
4. Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light  
With the angels let us sing Alleluia to our King  
Christ the Savior is born, Jesus the Savior is born!



## Silence

then we quench our candles (but not the Spirit)



## Benediction

(Meghan)



## Parting Music