

# THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

The First Presbyterian Church  
of Howard County

*First Sunday of Christmas  
December 31, 2023*

*10:00 a.m. In-person & Livestream Service*

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## GATHER

*Let all enter the sanctuary in a spirit of prayer.  
Words in **bold** are read by the congregation.*

*\*Those who are able may stand*

*Please remember to turn your cell phones to silent.*

*This worship service is being livestreamed to the internet,  
and you may appear on our Facebook page and YouTube channel.*

*For our online congregation - Let us know you are here! Post a greeting!  
And remember that you can place a request in the Prayer Journal  
in the comments on both You Tube and Facebook Live.*

### Prelude

Prelude on In Dulci Jubilo

*Gordon Young*

### Greeting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

*Please fill out the red Friendship Pad in each pew.  
Newcomers please leave us your address and contact information!  
Then, pass the folder the length of the pew and back.*

### Call to Worship

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

**Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,  
so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

**Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us  
and prosper for us the work of our hands –  
O prosper the work of our hands!**

Let us worship God!

### \* Carols

**126**

Jesus, Jesus, O What a Wonderful Child

*Wonderful Child*

**116**

The Snow Lay on the Ground

*Venite Adoremus*

*(see page 2 & 3 for hymns)*

# Jesus, Jesus, O What a Wonderful Child 126

Je-sus, Je-sus, O what a won-der-ful child.

Je-sus, Je-sus, so ho-ly, meek and mild;

new life, new hope the child will bring.

Lis-ten to the an-gels sing; "Glo-ry,

glo-ry, glo-ry!" Let the heav-ens ring.

Specific sources for the words and the music of this piece from the African American heritage remain uncertain. The predictable rhymes suggest that, like "Jesus, the Light of the World" (see no. 127), it may have originated as a reflection on an existing Christmas carol.

TEXT: African American; all.  
 MUSIC: African American; harm. Jeffrey Radford; arr. Horace Clarence Boyer, 2000  
 Music Harm. © 1992 The Pilgrim Press  
 Music Arr. © 2000 Horace Clarence Boyer

# The Snow Lay on the Ground 116



1 The snow lay on the ground; the stars shone bright,  
 2 'Twas gen - tle Mar - y maid, so young and strong,  
 3 Saint Jo - seph too was by to tend the child,  
 4 And thus that man - ger poor be - came a throne;



when Christ our Lord was born on Christ - mas night.  
 who wel - comed here the Christ - child with a song,  
 to guard him, and pro - tect his moth - er mild.  
 for he whom Mar - y bore was God the Son.



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.  
 She laid him in a stall at Beth - le - hem;  
 The an - gels hov - ered round and sang this song;  
 O come, then, let us join the heaven - ly host



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.  
 the ass and ox - en shared the roof with them.  
 Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.  
 to praise the Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.



Ve - ni - te a - do - re - mus Do - mi - num.

*Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.*

This is one of the few instances where we can see how one Christmas carol has been built upon another. The refrain here quotes the original Latin refrain of "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (see no. 133), which means this text was created later than the first half of the 18th century.

\* **Lighting the Christ Candle**

Here is why we have light these candles:

**From generation to generation we tell the story.**

**Christ is born. God with us in human flesh.**

Whenever we light this candle, we proclaim:

**Christ is the light of the world and the center of our lives.**

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession**

Holy God, Maker of all:

**Have mercy on us.**

Jesus Christ, servant of the poor:

**Have mercy on us.**

Holy Spirit, Breath of life:

**Have mercy on us.**

**Gracious and loving God,  
as we stand on the threshold of a new year,  
we look back and recognize  
the many ways we have fallen short of your glory:  
missed opportunities to share your love;  
times when we were silent  
when we could have spoken up for what was right;  
indifference to your claim on our whole lives  
through Jesus Christ;  
and a lack of gratitude for your amazing grace  
by which you save us and call us to be your people.  
Lord, forgive us.**

**As we look ahead to a new year,  
free us from thinking we can save ourselves.**

**Help us to follow where you lead.**

**Show us how to be your children and your heirs,  
forgiven and freed to live for our God**

**and for one another in love;**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Amen.**

*(A time of silence is kept during which individual confessions may be offered.)*

**Assurance of Grace**

**\* Response of Praise 141, verse 1**  
(singing together)

*On This Day Earth Shall Ring*

1. On this day earth shall ring  
with the song chil - dren sing  
to the Lord, Christ our King,  
born on earth to save us;  
him the Fa - ther gave us.  
Id - e - o - o - o, id - e - o - o - o,  
id - e - o glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o!

**\* Sharing the Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you.  
**And also with you.**

*(We share peace with a nod or a bow, perhaps with hand on heart  
or folded hands, or with the ASL sign for peace.  
If worshipping from home, greet each other by sending a text,  
a wave or comment on Facebook or YouTube.)*

1. Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing.  
Je - sus, the light of the world.  
Glo - ry to the new - born King,  
Je - sus, the light of the world.  
We'll walk in the light, beau-ti-ful light.  
Come where the dew - drops  
of mer - cy shine bright.  
O, shine all a-round us by day and by night.  
Je - sus, the light of the world.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing'. It consists of nine staves of music in a 3/4 time signature with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first line is marked with a '1.' indicating the start of the verse. The music features various note values including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and a triplet. The piece concludes with a final cadence on the last line.

**Words of Welcome**

## ENCOUNTER

### Prayer for Illumination

#### First Lesson: Isaiah 61:10-62:3

- <sup>61:10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
- <sup>11</sup> For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.
- <sup>62:1</sup> For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,  
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,  
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,  
and her salvation like a burning torch.
- <sup>2</sup> The nations shall see your vindication,  
and all the kings your glory;  
and you shall be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the Lord will give.
- <sup>3</sup> You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,  
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The Word of God for the People of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

### Children's Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

*Afterwards, children ages 4-7 may go with Ms. Kathy Moore to Godly Play.*

*Parents can pick up their children following worship in Rooms 110 & 113.*

*Older children, grades 2-5, who normally attend The Worship Bridge will return to their seats to experience a full worship service with their family.*

*(It is the church's policy to not put images of children on the livestream.)*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory forever.  
Amen.**

**Second Lesson: John 1:1-14**

<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.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

For the Word of God in Scripture,  
For the Word of God among us,  
For the Word of God within us:

**Thanks be to God!**

**Sermon**

You Are What You Say!

*Kenneth Page*

*(after the sermon, we observe a time of silence and prayer)*

**RESPOND AND SERVE**

\* **Hymn 140**

Once in Royal David's City

*Irby*

*(see next page for hymn)*



## Once in Royal David's City 140

1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly  
 2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and  
 3 Je - sus is our child - hood's pat - tern; day by day like  
 4 And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own re -

cat - tle shed, where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a  
 Lord of all, and his shel - ter was a sta - ble, and his  
 us he grew; he was lit - tle, weak and help - less; tears and  
 deem - ing love; for that child so dear and gen - tle is our

man - ger for his bed: Mar - y was that moth - er  
 cra - dle was a stall; with the poor and meek and  
 smiles like us he knew; and he feels for all our  
 Lord in heaven a - bove; and he leads his chil - dren

mild; Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child.  
 low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.  
 sad - ness, and he shares in all our glad - ness.  
 on to the place where he is gone.

Like "All Things Bright and Beautiful" (see no. 20), this popular Christmas hymn was written by an Irish poet to illustrate for children the various articles of the Apostles' Creed. It is not known which of several English villages the composer had in mind when naming this tune.

**\* Affirmation of Faith**

*from A Declaration of Faith*

Jesus, the long-expected Savior,  
came into the world as a child,  
descended from David,  
conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of Mary, a virgin.  
He lived as a Jew among Jews.  
He announced to his people  
the coming of God's kingdom  
of justice and peace on earth.  
We affirm that Jesus was born of woman as is every child,  
yet born of God's power as was no other child.  
In the person and work of Jesus,  
God himself and a human life are united but not confused,  
distinguished but not separated.  
The coming of Jesus was itself  
the coming of God's promised rule.  
Through his birth, life, death, and resurrection,  
he brings about the relationship between God and humanity  
that God always intended.  
Jesus is Lord!  
He has been Lord from the beginning.  
He will be Lord at the end.  
Even now he is Lord.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

**Concerns and Remembrances**

**Prayers of Gratitude and Concern**

**Concluding Prayer** *(together)*

**Holy One**

**into these dark places**

**into those unnamed dark places**

**into the darkness of fear and loneliness**

**pour out your radiance**

**shower down your light**

**break through pure brilliance**

**until the darkness is dispelled**

**and our hearts find peace**

**and the light of hope**

**can shine forth again**

**fresh and new with this new day**

**hear our prayers we pray,**

**Amen.**

**Offering**

**Offertory**

How Far is It to Bethlehem?

*Traditional English Melody*

\* **Doxology 137, verse 1** (*singing together*)

*He Came Down*

1. He came down that we may have love;  
he came down that we may have love;  
he came down that we may have love;  
hal - le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.

TEXT: Cameroon song  
MUSIC (HE CAME DOWN, LM): Cameroon melody; transcr. and arr. John L. Bell, 1986; arr. © 1986 WGRG, Iowa Community (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

\* **Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication**

**Let the Light of the World  
spill through our windows  
to neighbors dwelling in darkness.  
May our gifts and offerings  
reflect the light of Christ and,  
as beacons in the night,  
draw people far and near closer to you.  
In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

*(We stand quietly as the liturgist offers a prayer.)*

## **SEND AND BLESS**

**This Week at First Presbyterian Church**

\* **Hymn 340**

This Is My Song

*Finlandia*

*(see next page for hymn)*

# 340 This Is My Song

1 This is my song, O God of all the na - tions,  
 2 My coun - try's skies are blu - er than the o - cean,  
 3 This is my prayer, O Lord of all earth's king - doms:

a song of peace for lands a - far and mine,  
 and sun - light beams on clo - ver - leaf and pine,  
 thy king - dom come; on earth thy will be done.

This is my home, the coun - try where my heart is;  
 But oth - er lands have sun - light too, and clo - ver,  
 Let Christ be lift - ed up till all shall serve him,

here are my hopes, my dreams, my ho - ly shrine;  
 and skies are ev - ery - where as blue as mine,  
 and hearts u - nit - ed learn to live as one.

*(continued on next page)*

THE LIFE OF THE NATIONS

but oth - er hearts in oth - er lands are beat - ing  
 So hear my song, O God of all the na - tions,  
 So hear my prayer, O God of all the na - tions:

with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.  
 a song of peace for their land and for mine.  
 my - self I give thee; let thy will be done.

The first two stanzas of this hymn were written between the 20th century's two world wars and focus on the theme of international peace. The third stanza, by another author and added later, uses the language of the Lord's Prayer to voice a distinctly Christian perspective.

TEXT: Stanzas 1-2, Lloyd Stone; stanza 3, Georgia Harkness, alt. FINLANDIA  
 MUSIC: Jean Sibelius, 1899; arr. *The Hymnal*, 1933, alt. 11, 10, 11, 10, 11, 10  
 Text St. 1-2 © 1934, rev. 1962 The Lorenz Corp.; St. 3 © 1964 The Lorenz Corp.  
 Music Arr. © 1933, rev. 1961 The Presbyterian Board of Christian Education (admin, Westminster John Knox Press)

\* Benediction

\* Response 135, verse 1 (singing together)

*There's a Star in the East*

1. There's a star in the east  
on Christ - mas morn.  
Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low.  
It will lead to the place  
where the Christ was born.  
Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low.  
Fol - low, fol - low;  
rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low.  
Fol - low the star of Beth - le - hem.  
Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low.

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of ten staves of music. The lyrics are: "1. There's a star in the east on Christ - mas morn. Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low. It will lead to the place where the Christ was born. Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low. Fol - low, fol - low; rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low. Fol - low the star of Beth - le - hem. Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low." The melody is simple and repetitive, with a clear emphasis on the words "Rise up, shep - herd, and fol - low."

Postlude

While By My Sheep

*Trad. German Carol, arr. Mark Hayes*



## **WELCOME TO WORSHIP AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

*We are grateful for your presence and invite you to participate in the worship, education, mission and common life of First Church.*

### **First Church Cares**

**To notify staff** of personal concerns, illness, hospitalization; to pass along a prayer request; or to arrange homebound Communion, contact [churchoffice@firstpreshc.org](mailto:churchoffice@firstpreshc.org) or call 410-730-3545.

### **Interested in the mission and activities of First Presbyterian Church?**

Visit the church's website, [www.firstpreshc.org](http://www.firstpreshc.org) for more info.

### **Program Staff**

If you need to talk with one of the staff, please contact them directly via email.

Rev. Ken Page, Interim Pastor, [churchoffice@firstpreshc.org](mailto:churchoffice@firstpreshc.org)

Virginia Callegary, Director of Christian Education, [churchoffice@firstpreshc.org](mailto:churchoffice@firstpreshc.org)

Margaret McGillivray, Director of Music Ministries, [churchoffice@firstpreshc.org](mailto:churchoffice@firstpreshc.org)

**For building emergencies contact**, Church Sexton, Woody Collins, [churchoffice@firstpreshc.org](mailto:churchoffice@firstpreshc.org)

### WORSHIP NOTES:

2023 Advent Candle Liturgy is "Adapted from a prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed \ A Sanctified Art LLC \ sanctified art.org."

The Affirmation of Faith is written by Ann Siddall, and posted on the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre and Faith Community website. <http://stillpointsa.org.au/prayer/prayers-and-liturgies/>

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**The First Presbyterian Church  
of Howard County**

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410.730.3545 | [www.firstpreshc.org](http://www.firstpreshc.org)

*Ministers: All members of the congregation*

Rev. Kenneth Page, Interim Pastor  
Virginia Callegary, Director of Christian Education  
Dr. Margaret McGillivray, Director of Music Ministries  
Caroline Smith, Church Administrator  
Pat Travers, Bookkeeper  
Woodrow Collins, Church Sexton  
Kathy Moore, Godly Play Coordinator  
Marla Youkers, Nursery Coordinator  
Sarah Reinhardt, Nursery Assistant

The First Presbyterian Church of Howard County is a congregation of  
the Presbytery of Baltimore in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

- ✦ We are an Earth Care Congregation ✦
- ✦ We are a Matthew 25 Congregation ✦

*Inspirit Counseling Services* at First Presbyterian Church  
Meredith Barger 410-433-8861 x104 | John Michalczyk 410-433-8861 x115