

WORSHIP NOTES

Contrary to the secular understanding of Christmas being celebrated on a single day, the church recognizes the liturgical season of Christmas as extending from Dec. 25 through Jan 6. Celebrating Christmas as a season helps us to enter more fully into the meaning of the incarnation. Christmas is the first in a series of celebrations (Christmas, Epiphany, the Baptism of our Lord, and the Transfiguration of Jesus) that affirm the identity of Jesus as fully human and fully divine.

Go, Tell It on the Mountain is an African American spiritual. The stanzas as we now have them were created in the first half of the 20th century to replace “the original ones which could not be found,” according to a note in their first publication. It is also likely that the current stanzas were written in order to provide a more coherent Christmas narrative than had come down with the refrain. What may well have been a general text about being transformed from a seeker to a proclaimer has been made into a retelling of Luke 2:8-20, one that thrusts the singers into the role of the shepherds who spread the news of this great event.

Mendelssohn is the tune of the recessional carol *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*. It is an adaptation from a composition by Felix Mendelssohn. The original composition was for male chorus and orchestra named *Festgesang an die Künstler, Opus 68* (1840). It was composed to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of the invention of printing. Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809-1847) was born in Hamburg, Germany. He was the grandson of the Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn; however, Felix was raised Lutheran. His musical ability was noted early. He became accomplished on the piano and organ and at age twelve he began to compose. At 17 he composed his overture to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. He revived an interest in the study and performance of Johann Sebastian Bach’s musical œuvre, conducting the *St. Matthew Passion* 150 after its first performance. Much of his life was spent in composing and performing his own compositions throughout Europe.

Hugh A. MacKinnon (born 1891; died Dec. 25, 1981), composer of *Sleeps Judea Fair* and also author of its text, was an American organist and church musician. He held positions in Vermont, New Hampshire, the Church of the Transfiguration (Little Church Around the Corner) in New York City, Laramie, (Wyoming) and Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

THE FLOWERS in the Narthex are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of our fathers, Nathaniel O. Abelson and James G. Talcott from their children Dr. and Mrs. James A. Talcott.

THE FLOWERS in the Sanctuary are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mrs. Corinne Ingraham Pigott by her children Cynthia Ingraham and Richard Pigott.



NEXT SUNDAY’S PREACHER will be Brian K. Ballard, *Student Minister*.

THE BRICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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MINISTERS

The Rev. Dr. Kimberly L. Clayton, *Transitional Senior Minister*

The Rev. Douglas T. King, *Senior Associate Minister*

The Revs. Rebekah McLeod Hutto & Adam D. Gorman, *Associate Ministers*

The Rev. Michael L. Lindvall, *Pastor Emeritus*

Hannah F. Allred, Brian K. Ballard, Joshua H. Narcisse, *Student Ministers*

MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Keith S. Tóth, *Minister of Music and Organist*

Amanda Page Smith, *Director of Children’s Music Ministries*

Meg Cutting, *Wilson Family Yale Sacred Music Intern*

ORDER OF ST. PAUL

Michael J. Appleby, Nathan P. Appleby, Leah C. Lee, Deborah M. Li, Caroline C. Pickering, Alexander N. Rahman, Christopher L. Allen, *Beadle*.

CHANCEL CHOIR

Soprano: Artemisz Polonyi, Melissa Raymond, Catherine Thorpe, Elizabeth Van Os. *Alto:* Agueda Fernández-Abad, Allison Gish, Jessica Kimple. *Tenor:* Richard Liebowitz, Johnny Maldonado. *Bass:* Scott Lindroth, Nathaniel Sullivan.

SESSION

Sallie J. Abelow, Patrick A. F. Blott, Susan P. Crary, Paul J. Elmlinger, R. Scott Froehlich, Scripture Z. Gonzalez, Mark A. Greenwood, Shannon D. Henderson, William S. Hilburn, Harold P. Hope III, Anne R. Huneke, R. Lynne Lee, Sue-Peng Li, Robert D. McCrie, Helen B. Pennoyer, Elizabeth M. Philipp, Clare C. Pickering, Brian J. Pitz, Susan A. Powell, Debra N. Seraphim, Richard H. Stowe, Katherine C. Vosters, Ryan E. Widener, Henry M. Wildermuth (*Youth Elder*), Suzanne W. Wilson, Frances G. Laserson, *Clerk of Session*.

DEACONS

Linda R. Arnold, Bret M. Barasch, Beth A. Bell, Arthur W. Bingham, Nancy T. Blair, Elizabeth A. Boehmler, Christopher A. Carroll, Blythe G. Chace (*Youth Deacon*), Carl C. Cordova III, E. Graham Clark, David M. Darst, Helen T. W. Elmiger, Marc T. Engberg, Joseph A. Galloway, William J. Gambrell, Jeffrey B. Gower, Christopher W. Hamilton, Kate S. Hrobsky, Cathy Leonhardt, Jane B. Lowry, Katrina K. Masterson, Amelia McDonald, M. Paige Rustum, Grace Sarno, Andrew R. Skobe, John D. Tuttle, Tanya S. Wells.

TRUSTEES

Charles S. Anderson, Kenneth W. Austin, Patrick D. Barrett, Erik M. W. Caspersen, Kevin R. Greene, Linda B. Gridley, Timothy D. Haskin, Helen M. Lynch, Valerie S. Mason, *Secretary*, Richard A. Miller, *President*, Drucilla A. Richards, Willis G. Ryckman IV, Louisa J. Palmer, *Treasurer*.

— THE ORDER OF SERVICE FOR —

Nativity of Jesus Christ Christmas Day

— ELEVEN O’CLOCK —

WELCOME The moments before worship are a transition from “getting here” to “being here.” Since it usually takes a few minutes to quiet one’s mind, and to become open to the Spirit, it is most appropriate to give one’s friends a silent wave of the hand, a nod of the head, or a friendly smile in lieu of initiating a conversation.

AFTER THE PROCESSIONAL HYMN, in order not to disrupt the worship service, latecomers will be seated by the ushers only at times when the congregation is standing, either during the Congregational Response following the assurance of forgiveness or during the second hymn.

VISITORS, please know how welcome you are. Please sign the Friendship Book when it passes you during the service of worship and identify yourself with a name tag to be found in the book. You are also cordially invited to attend Coffee Hour following worship.

IN THE ORDER OF WORSHIP that follows, an asterisk invites all to stand; items in bold type face indicate that the congregation participates in word or song.

LECTIONARY SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE DAY

Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalm 98, 1-9

Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12)

John 1:1-14

THE GATHERING

PRELUDE

“In dulci jubilo”
Meg Cutting, *organist*

James Vivian (b. 1974)

WELCOME AND INVITATION TO THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

CHORAL INTROIT

Schumann’s Geistliche Lieder (1539)
“From Heaven Above to Earth I Come”

From heaven above to earth I come to bring good news to everyone! Glad tidings of great joy I bring to all the world, and gladly sing.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

People: Those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

Leader: The light shines in the darkness,

People: And the darkness did not overcome it.

Leader: Christ is born in Bethlehem.

People: Come, let us adore him.

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN 31

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Mendelssohn

*PRAYER OF ADORATION

All glory to you, great God, for the gift of Your Son, whom You sent to save us. With singing angels, let us praise Your name, and tell the earth His story. With the saints of all the ages, may we believe, rejoice, and bow down at the wonder of Your love. We pray this happy morning in Your Holy name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

* PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: The Peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

* CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE *(Hymn 22, verse 4)*

Regent Square

**All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One:
Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King!**

SCRIPTURE LESSON

John 1:1-14 *(Pew Bible, page 91N.T.)*

Margaret D. Stocker

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

*HYMN 51

“See, Amid the Winter’s Snow”

John Goss (1800-1880)

SERMON

Rev. Kimberly L. Claytong

“Nativity Sets and Pageants Unsettled”

THE RESPONSE

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Basque Noël, arr. David Willcocks
“The Infant King”

Sing lullaby! Lullaby baby, now reclining. Hush, do not wake the Infant King. Angels are watching, stars are shining over the place where he is lying. Lullaby baby, now asleeping. Hush, do not wake the Infant King. Soon will come sorrow with the morning, soon will come bitter grief and weeping. Lullaby baby, now adozing. Hush, do not wake the Infant King. Soon comes the cross, the nails, the piercing, then in the grave at last reposing. Lullaby! Is the babe awaking? Hush, do not stir the Infant King. Dreaming of Easter, gladsome morning, conquering Death, its bondage breaking: Sing lullaby!

—*Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924)*

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

GRADUAL HYMN

13th c. Benedictine plainsong
“Thee We Adore”

Thee we adore, O hidden Savior, Thee, Who at this blessed feast art pleased to be; Both flesh and spirit in Thy presence fail, Yet here Thy presence we devoutly hail.

—*Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274)*

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

SANCTUS 580

John Merbecke (c. 1510 – c. 1585)

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory:
Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High. Amen.**

THE LORD’S PRAYER

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.

INSTITUTION AND HOLY COMMUNION

Communion will be served by intinction. You are invited to come forward by the center aisle beginning with the front rows, receive bread, dip it in the chalice, partake, and return to your seat by the side aisles. Gluten-free bread is available at the serving station farthest to the right as you come forward. All who would humbly put their trust in Christ, whatever their church or denominational affiliation, are invited to participate.

COMMUNION MUSIC

Hugh A. MacKinnon (1891-1981)
“Sleeps Judaea Fair”

Sleeps Judaea fair, bides the Christ Child there: Shepherds, haste ye! flocks forsaking, swift your way to Him be taking, Babe, of Israel’s prayer. Christ from God is come, choosing earthly home: royal pomp and splendor never, but with love which naught can sever, He will heal the dumb; Christ from God is come. Lowly bend the knee, Thou from sin set free: Let the Christ Child, meekly smiling, infantwise all woe beguiling, grant His grace to thee! —*Hugh A. MacKinnon*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

* RECESSIONAL HYMN 29

“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

Go Tell It

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“God Rest Ye Merry”
Keith S. Tóth, *organist*

Wilbur Held