



EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

116 South Highland Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

412.441.3800

www.ELPC.church

As a diverse community of helievers, we strive to follow God – the Creator who calls us, Jesus who teaches us, and the Spirit who empowers us. We show God's unconditional love by providing a refuge for spiritual growth, ardently pursuing justice, and extending Christ's radical hospitality to all. (Strategic Vision mission statement, 2011)

Christmas Eve Service

DECEMBER 24, 2023 — 10:00 PM

TIME OF PREPARATION

O Holy God, we hear the story of shepherds and magi, of maiden and carpenter, of prophets and angels, and we too come to Bethlehem for a blessing. You are born in our hearts because you have chosen the weakness of our bodies for your birth. We are filled with love because you have taken upon yourself our humanity; we are filled with hope because you have offered us your Spirit, your life and your light; we are filled with faith because all that is meek and lowly and humble in us and in creation becomes holy this night. Our salvation has come into this holy time and we gather to say together, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and goodwill to all."

— Maren C. Tirabassi

PRELUDE

"Toccata on Antioch"
"In Dulci Jubilo"
"Coventry Carol"

Marcel Dupré arr. Douglas Smith

from Messiah:

G.F. Handel

Craig Phillips

"Behold, a Virgin Shall Conceive/O Thou, That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion"

Tessa Morris, soloist

"For Behold, Darkness Shall Cover the Earth/The People that Walked in Darkness"

Todd Farwell, soloist

"Angels from the Realms of Glory"

"Gesù Bambino"

"O Holy Night"

arr. John Ferguson Pietro Yon Cody Conley, *violin* Adolphe Adam Logan Williams, *soloist*

CALL TO WORSHIP & ADVENT CANDLE-LIGHTING

Matthew Stufft and Cody Shav

Leader:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and set lights in the sky — sun and moon and stars. By these stars, our ancestors charted their journeys. By these stars, they knew God was with them. In the beginning, too, was the Word. And the Word has come down from heaven to earth. By the Word made flesh, Christ our Savior, we know that God is with us.

Tonight, we light five candles to bring the fire of the stars down from heaven to earth, to nestle among the greens. We name this candle Hope. We name this candle Peace. We name this candle Joy. We name this candle Love. We name this candle Christ.

People:

Our lives are a journey, and we do not always know the way. But we chart our path by the star of Christ. Even when faith burns low and its promises seem too good to be true, we set our face steadily towards the light.

^{*} Indicates where you may please rise in body or spirit.

Dec 24 • Christmas Eve Service

Leader: Listen to ancient words come true anew this night: "The people who walked in darkness have

seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:2, 6)

People: Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of Christ's presence, help us become the signs of

Christ's presence that others are searching for. As these candles are but a glimpse of the light of the heavens, help us to be a glimpse of heaven on earth. Help us to shine like

stars in the world. Let us worship God! Amen.

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN #133 (music printed in bulletin)

ADESTE FIDELIS

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

ANTHEM "Alleluia! Christ Is Born!" David Lasky

* PRAYER OF ADORATION

The Rev. Ashley DeTar Birt

Great God, we were on the journey with Mary and Joseph, afraid and nervous about what the future would bring. We were in the fields with the shepherds, shocked and astonished at the proclamation of angels: Unto us a child is born, a Son is given, and authority rests on him. Through our fears we are learning to sing a new song, one that declares your glory, honor, and praise.

Help us, O God, to be active participants in your story, that we might enact justice in a society yearning for it and share the grace offered in the person and work of Christ. In the name of the One called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father. Amen.

* HYMN #145 (music printed in bulletin)

"What Child Is This"

GREENSLEEVES

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 96

The Rev. BJ Woodworth

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:1-20

The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

Solo

"Domine Deus" (from Gloria)

Antonio Vivaldi Denise Sheffey-Powell, *soloist* Cody Conley, *violin*

SERMON "An Extraordinarily Ordinary Night" The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

INTERCESSORY PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

The Rev. Woodworth

HYMN #110 (music printed in bulletin)

"Love Has Come"

Bring a Torch

OFFERING INVITATION

The Rev. Woodworth

We offer our gifts in response to God's love, and the grace of Jesus Christ, which we seek to make known through the ministries of this congregation.

You are invited to use the QR code to the right if you would like to make a donation in support of ELPC. A donation box is also available in the Sanctuary.



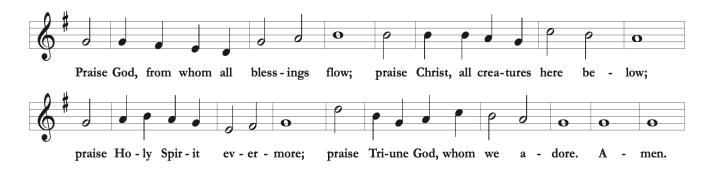
OFFERTORY ANTHEM

"Where Shepherds Lately Knelt"

Carl Schalk

* DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION

OLD HUNDREDTH



— THE LORD'S SUPPER —

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Rev. Woodworth

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

Leader: El Señor esté con ustedes. **People:** Y también contigo.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

Leader: Levantemos nuestros corazones. **People:** Lo tenemos levantado al Señor.

Leader: Demos gracias al Señor nuestro Dios.

We lift them up to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: Es justo dar gracias y alabanzas a Dios.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

The Lord's Prayer can be found on pg. 35 (English), on pg. 40 (Español) or on pg. 45 (한국어) in the Glory to God hymnal.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy
The Rev. Woodworth



SHARING THE BREAD & THE CUP

The communion elements are gluten-free bread and grape juice. The congregation is invited to come forward by using the center aisle to the communion servers where each may receive the bread and the cup, then returning to their seats via the side aisles to partake of the elements. Those seated in the transepts are asked to join the procession to the front to receive communion by entering one of the pews from the outside and proceed to the center aisle after those seated in the row. Those not able to come forward will be served in their seats.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

"The Holy Boy"

John Ireland

Robin Thompson, soloist

Sussex Carol

HYMN #112 (music printed in bulletin)

"On Christmas Night All Christians Sing"

"The Virgin's Slumber Song" (Mariä Wiegenlied)

Max Reger

Adrianna Cleveland, soloist

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (unison)

The Rev. DeTar Birt

Holy and astounding God, on this night, at this table, in this meal, we have been met by Christ the reflection of your glory, the imprint of your being. As we depart from this place, may our lives be a joyful song, proclaiming the good news of your righteousness and peace for all the world. Amen.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

John 1:1-5, 14

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

* HYMN #122 (music printed in bulletin)

"Silent Night"

STILLE NACHT

MENDELSSOHN

* CHARGE & BENEDICTION

The Rev. Fowler-Searcy

* RECESSIONAL HYMN #119 (music printed in bulletin)

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

POSTLUDE

"In Dulci Jubilo, BWV 729"

Johann Sebastian Bach Dr. Edward Alan Moore, organ

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As part of ELPC's mission to extend radical hospitality to all, our full worship service is now being livestreamed on Facebook and archived at www.ELPC.church. This notice is to inform you that by being in attendance, you give permission for incidences where you appear within the video. Should you have any questions, please see one of our pastors.

Please turn off all electronic devices before the service begins.

♦ PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Preaching: The Rev. Patrice L. Fowler-Searcy

Liturgists: The Rev. BJ Woodworth

The Rev. Ashley DeTar Birt

Cody Shay Matthew Stufft

Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore

Organist and Music Director

ELPC Chancel Choir Cody Conley, Violin

Soloists: Adrianna Cleveland

Todd Farwell Tessa Morris Robin Thompson Denise Sheffey-Powell

Logan Williams

Brass Roots: Carlos Richter, Trumpet

Dalton Stoops, Trumpet

Vicente Hernandez, Trombone

John Caughman, Tuba

Beadles: Polly McQueen

Erich Stein

Crucifer: Mario Seneca Sound: Tim Benedict

Wayne Gaines

♦ WORSHIP FLOWERS

The poinsettia plants in the Sanctuary are in loving memory of the Honorable Andrew W. Mellon and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Beatty Mellon.

♦ SUNDAY WORSHIP

There will be no Journey service on Sunday, Dec 31. The Journey service will resume on Sunday, Jan 7, 2024.

11 am **Sanctuary Worship.** Our largest service with a multi-cultural congregation and

music from organ, piano and choir.

Dec 31 — The Rev. Henk Bossers

preaching.

♦ WEEKDAY WORSHIP

Taizé: Prayerful Song and Quiet Meditation

Chants and periods of meditative silence modeled after the Taizé community in France. Rev. BJ Woodworth leads this service in the Chapel.

Wednesdays, 7 pm No service on Dec 27.

Prayer Room (in Highland Ave hallway)

Come to sit and pray in silence. Come to experience the quiet in the midst of the wonderful busyness.

Available everyday

♦ WEEKLY SPIRITUAL LIFE OFFERINGS

Contemplative Prayer

Rev. BJ Woodworth will lead a time on Zoom of 30 minutes of communal silence and guided meditation on scripture. We will meditate on the Psalms, using the translation *Psalms for Praying* by Nan C. Merrill.

Mondays, 7:30 to 8 am Meeting ID: 959 8065 3992 Passcode: bestill

Meditation Hour

Join John Benedict, retired psychologist and practitioner of insight meditation, in the Chapel for an hour devoted to meditation, which includes an opening reading, silent sitting, and walking. All are welcome!

Tuesdays, 6-7 pm

WELCOME VISITORS!

We are grateful to have you join us for worship this morning and ask you to register your name in our red Friendship Books.

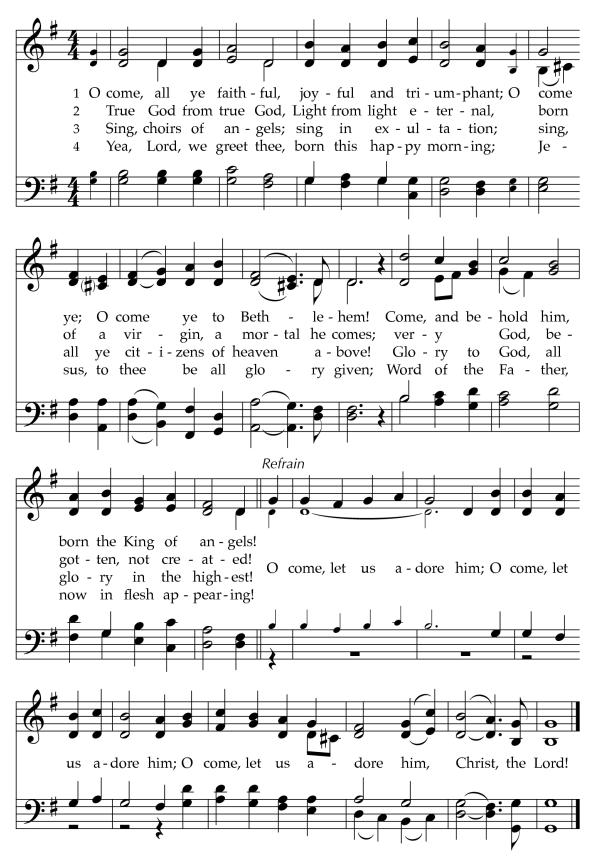
To learn more about our programs, church activities and volunteer services, we invite you to also:

Pick up a copy of our newsletter, the *Reaching Out*, either in the Narthex or at the Hospitality Desk near the Highland Avenue doors.

Attend an *Inquirers' Class* to learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Please contact Megan Leisher for more info (MeganL@coh.net).

Call the Church Office (412.441.3800), or visit the ELPC website at www.ELPC.church.

#133 — O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL



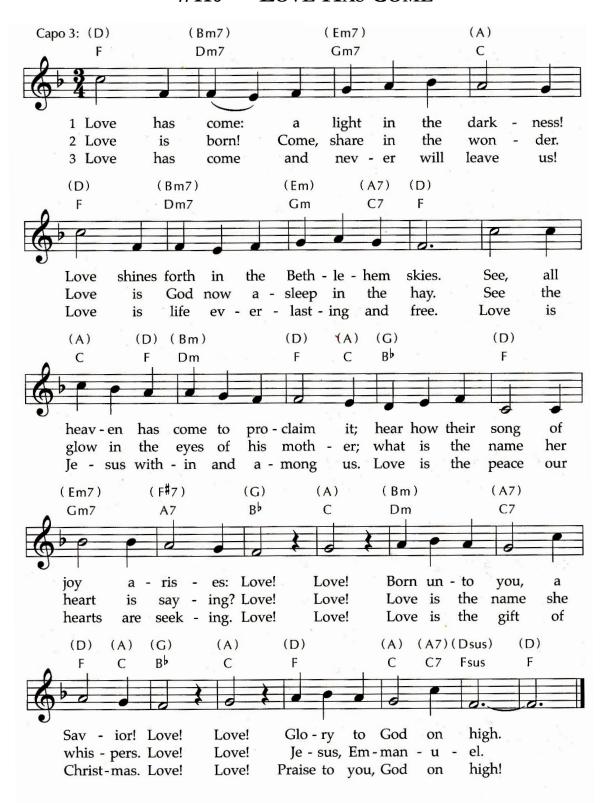
From its Roman Catholic origins, this 18th-century hymn has spread to worldwide use by many denominations in both Latin and vernacular versions. Once popular with a wide range of hymn texts, this tune is now firmly associated with this Christmas text from which it is named.

#145 — WHAT CHILD IS THIS



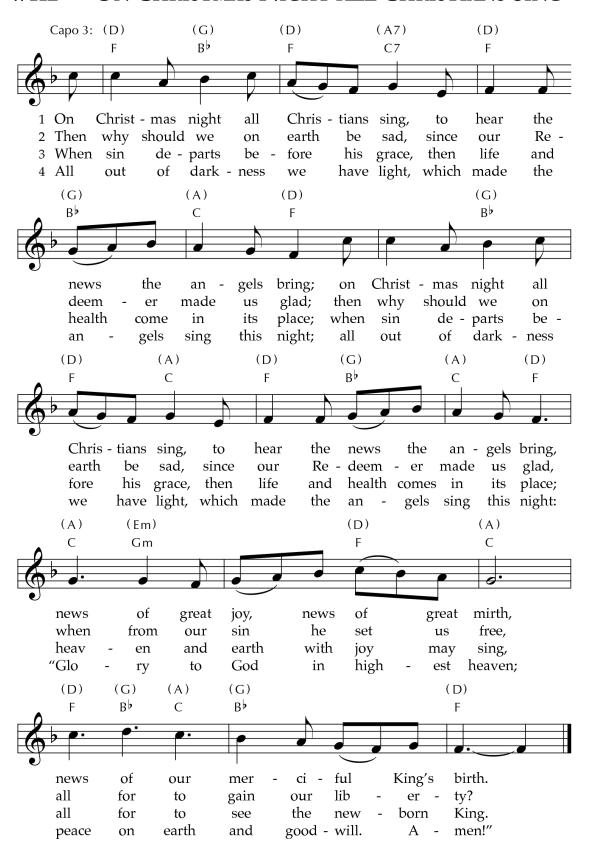
This Victorian text gains scope and power by having the original second halves of stanzas two and three restored. They give a stark forward glimpse of what lies ahead for this "babe, the son of Mary!" The tune is much older, dating from Tudor England.

#110 — LOVE HAS COME



Here is a chance to sing a familiar French carol tune with new words, the most important clearly being "Love." The senses "seen and heard" (as in Acts 4:20 and elsewhere) organize the first two stanzas, while the third holds the summary statement: "Love is the gift of Christmas."

#112 — ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT ALL CHRISTIANS SING



The words of this carol first appeared in 1684 in a collection by an Irish bishop, Luke Wadding. Whether they were his own work or something gleaned from popular use is not clear. The tune name recalls that the tune was collected in 1904 from Mrs. Verrall of Monk's Gate, Sussex.

#122 — SILENT NIGHT



GERMAN

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!

KOREAN

고요한밤 거룩한밤 어둠에 묻히밤 주의부모 앉아서 감사기도 드릴때 아기잘도 잔다 아기잘도 잔다

SPANISH

1 ¡Noche de paz, noche de amor! Todo duerme en derredor, entre los astros que esparcen su luz, bella, anunciando al niñito Jesús, brilla la estrella de paz, brilla la estrella de paz.

The tradition that this carol's tune was created for guitar accompaniment at its first singing on Christmas Eve 1818 seems reliable, though a recent find shows that the text was about two years old. But there is no question that this is now a favorite Christmas carol worldwide.

#119 — HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

