



EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

116 South Highland Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206 412.441.3800 www.ELPC.church

As a diverse community of believers, 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, 2024 — 10:00 PM

TIME OF PREPARATION

A child is born with an odd heritage, in an odd place, under odd circumstances. But this is a "Prince of Peace," a "Wonderful Counselor," a "Mighty God." Angels sing, people come from miles around, and a star shines brightly on the place where he lay swaddled. Odd enough. But then this Presence of God, Emmanuel, goes on to live an odd life of presence with the poor, the unlikely, the untouchable, the lowly and in the end, gives himself for the sake of the least of these.

— Reading from *“Presence in the Midst of Loneliness”* by Marcia McFee Dylan Evers

PRELUDE

“Joy to the World – Carillon”	Mary Beth Bennett
from <i>Messiah</i> “Comfort Ye/Every Valley Shall Be Exalted”	G.F. Handel
	Logan Williams, <i>soloist</i>
“Sweet Little Jesus Boy”	Robert MacGimsey
	David Jennings-Smith, <i>soloist</i>
“A New Christmas Morning, Hallelujah”	Robert MacGimsey
	Denise Sheffey-Powell, <i>soloist</i>
“The Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth”	
	as recorded by Bing Crosby and David Bowie
	Todd Farwell and David Jennings-Smith, <i>soloists</i>
“Gesù Bambino”	Pietro Yon
	Adrianna Cleveland, <i>soloist</i>
	Cody Conley, <i>violin</i>
“In Dulci Jubilo”	Marcel Dupré
“Cantique de Noël/O Holy Night”	Adolphe Adam
	Tessa Morris, <i>soloist</i>

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Michael A. Diaz

CALL TO WORSHIP & CHRIST CANDLE-LIGHTING

Andrew and Molly Swagler

Leader: Tonight, we tell the story that we tell every year — the story of Christ’s birth, the story of love made flesh. For generations, people have gathered together on this holy night, because there is something about this story that speaks to the deepest parts of us. We believe in bundling up this hope, this good news, and passing it on — to our children, to our neighbors, to the world around us. Our story is in the story of Christmas. In the holy darkness of this night,

People: We light a candle of hope, for the Christ child has come.

Leader: Amid tremors of fear, violence, war, and confusion,

People: We light a candle of peace, for the Christ child has come.

Continues on next page...

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

Leader: Amid angels singing songs of gloria,
People: We light a candle of joy, for the Christ child has come.
Leader: Amid tears of relief and looks of amazement,
People: We light a candle of love, for the Christ child has come.
Leader: As we open our hearts and make a dwelling place for God,
People: We light the Christ candle, for Emmanuel—God with us!

* **PROCESSIONAL HYMN #133** (*music printed in bulletin*) ADESTE FIDELIS
“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

OPENING PRAYER Rev. Dr. Diaz

SOLO “In the Bleak Midwinter” Gustav Holst
Cody Conley, *violin*

READING A Reading *from* Lisle Gwynn Garrity Michele Bossers
As I return to Jesus’ birth story, my imagination leads me to wonder... Each year, we tell this story because it is raw with joy, pain, and the complexities of being human. No matter how your story is unfolding, may you find that this sacred story holds space for you. For this is how God shows up—in a child who cries, in hands that hold, in human flesh, in life and in death. *May God bless the hearing of these words. Amen.*

* **HYMN #136** (*music printed in bulletin*) “Go, Tell It on the Mountain” GO TELL IT

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 2:7-20 Rev. BJ Woodworth

ANTHEM “Where Shepherds Lately Knelt” Carl Schalk

SERMON “We Tell This Story” Rev. Dr. Diaz

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER Rev. Dr. Henk and Michele Bossers
This evening, we invite you to pray with us responsively. When you hear the words “O Christ, our light,” please respond with,
“Hear our prayer.”

We pray for the church. With Mary, help us to treasure and ponder the gift that has been given to us, a gift of good news and great joy for all. O Christ, our light, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the world. With the prophets, help us to proclaim the promise of your peace for all nations and your justice for all people. O Christ, our light, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this community. With shepherds, help us to keep watch over those entrusted to our care and all who need protection. O Christ, our light, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for loved ones. With the angels, help us to offer signs of hope, comfort, and joy for all who live in fear. O Christ, our light, **hear our prayer.**

Jesus Christ, hope of the world, help us to bear witness to your light so that all may trust in your goodness and have new life. O Christ, our light, **hear our prayer.**

As we tell your story of good news, let us once again speak the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray, saying:
Our Father/Creator/Mother...Amen.

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.

OFFERING INVITATION

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.



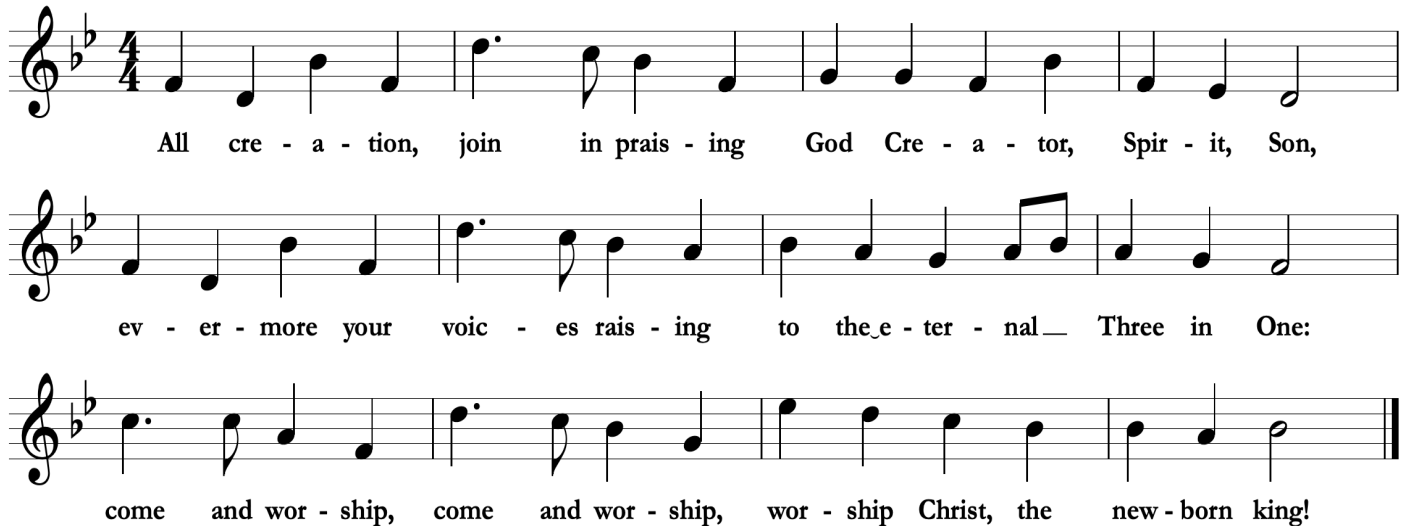
OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Before the Marvel of this Night”

Carl Schalk

*** DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION #143 (verse 4)**

REGENT SQUARE



All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Son,
ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One:
come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king!

*** SHARING GOD'S PEACE**

Rev. Dr. Diaz

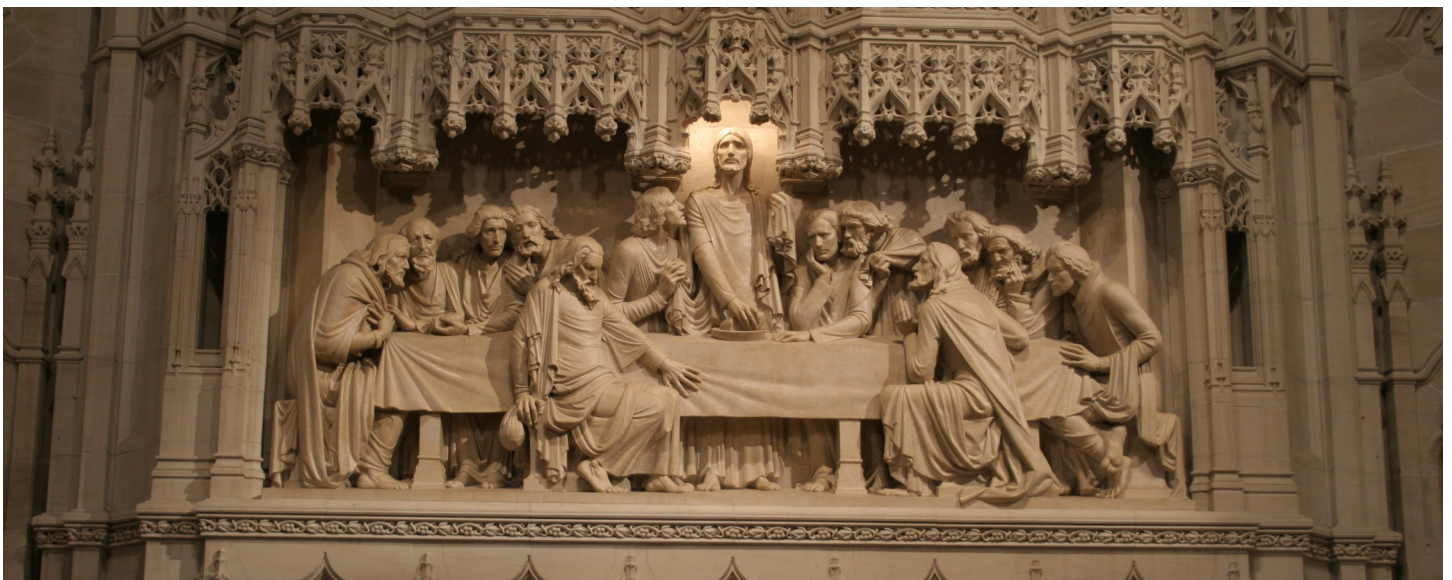
Rev. Woodworth

Leader: La paz de Cristo esté con ustedes.

The peace of Christ be with you.

People: **Y también contigo.**

And also with you.



— THE LORD’S SUPPER —

INVITATION TO THE LORD’S SUPPER

Rev. Dr. Diaz

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Rev. Woodworth

Leader: El Señor esté con ustedes.

The Lord be with you.

People: Y también contigo.

And also with you.

Leader: Levantemos nuestros corazones.

Lift up your hearts.

People: Lo tenemos levantado al Señor.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Demos gracias al Señor nuestro Dios.

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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Rev. Dr. Diaz

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. Congregants in the Transepts will be guided by volunteers to receive communion. Those not able to come forward will be served in their seats.

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION *(music printed in bulletin)*

HYMN #146

“Gentle Mary Laid Her Child”

TEMPUS ADEST FLORIDUM

HYMN #115

“Away in a Manger”

MUELLER

HYMN #113

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

GLORIA

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION *(unison)*

Rev. Woodworth

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 for all the world. Amen.

SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Rev. Dr. Diaz

* HYMN #122 *(music printed in bulletin)*

“Silent Night”

STILLE NACHT

* CHARGE & BENEDECTION

Rev. Dr. Diaz

* RECESSIONAL HYMN #134 *(music printed in bulletin)*

ANTIOCH

“Joy to the World”

POSTLUDE

“Toccata on Antioch”

Craig Phillips
Dr. Edward Alan Moore, *organ*



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: Rev. Dr. Michael A. Diaz
Liturgists: Rev. BJ Woodworth
Rev. Dr. Henk and Michele Bossers
Andrew and Molly Swagler
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore
Organist and Music Director
ELPC Chancel Choir
Cody Conley, *Violin*
Soloists: Adrianna Cleveland
Todd Farwell
David Jennings-Smith
Tessa Morris
Denise Sheffey-Powell
Logan Williams
Acolytes: Sydney and Calvin Swagler
Beadles: Liz Hopkins
Debbie O'Dell-Seneca
Crucifer: Mario Seneca
Sound: Tim Benedict and 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, sponsored by the congregation members.

◆ **SUNDAY WORSHIP**

There will be no Journey service on Sunday, Dec 29.
11 am..... **Sanctuary Worship.** Our largest service with a multi-cultural congregation and music from organ, piano and choir.
Dec 29 — Rev. Dr. Michael A. Diaz 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 (and no Cathedral Yoga) on Dec 25 and Jan 1.

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 on Mondays
Rev. BJ Woodworth will lead a time on Zoom of 30 minutes of communal silence and guided meditation on scripture.

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

Tuesday Morning Zoom Prayer Group
Join Steve Evrard on Zoom for a time of scripture readings, responsive prayer, and interactive dialogue.

Tuesdays, 8 to 8:30 am
Meeting ID: 896 9680 6662
Passcode: 116

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 Christmas Eve night 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 see one of the pastors to attend, or contact Jen King for info on future classes (JenK@coh.net).

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

#133 — O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

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

ye; O come ye to Beth - le - hem! Come, and be - hold him,
 of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes; ver - y God, be -
 all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove! Glo - ry to God, all
 sus, to thee be all glo - ry given; Word of the Fa - ther,

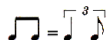
Refrain

born the King of an - gels!
 got - ten, not cre - at - ed! O come, let us a - dore him; O come, let
 glo - ry in the high - est!
 now in flesh ap - pear - ing!

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

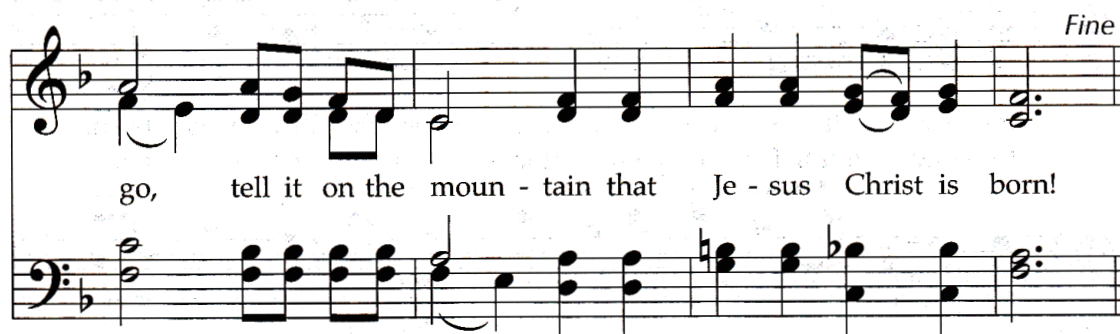
From its Roman Catholic origins, this 18th-century hymn has spread to worldwide use by many denominations in both Latin and vernacular versions. Once popular with a wide range of hymn texts, this tune is now firmly associated with this Christmas text from which it is named.

#136 — GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

Refrain 

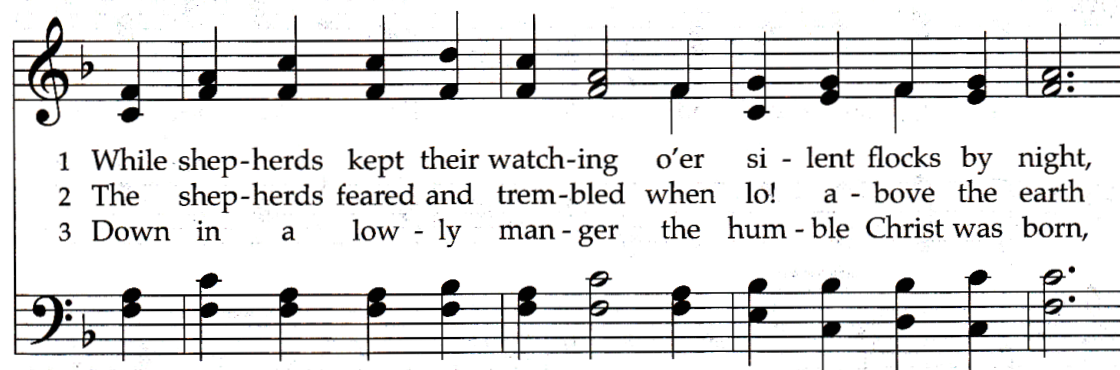


Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;

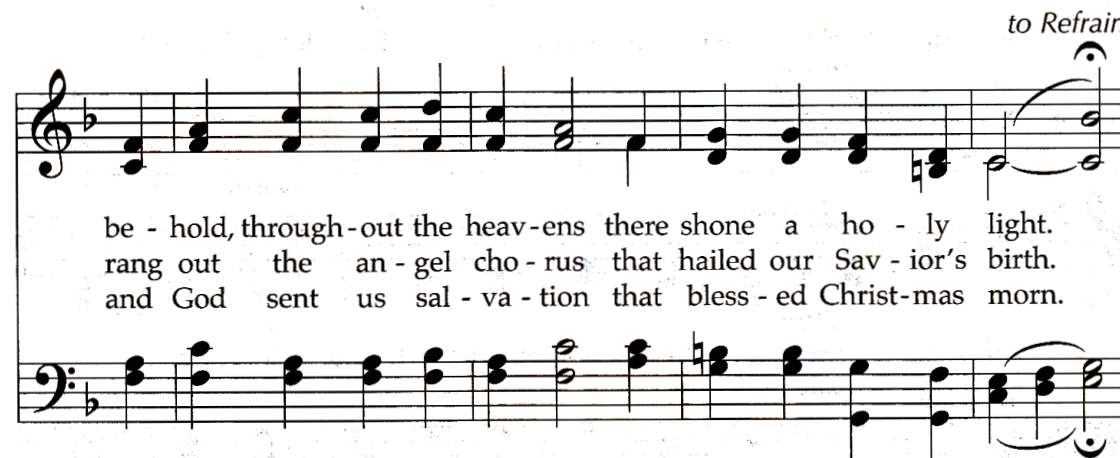


go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!

Fine



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

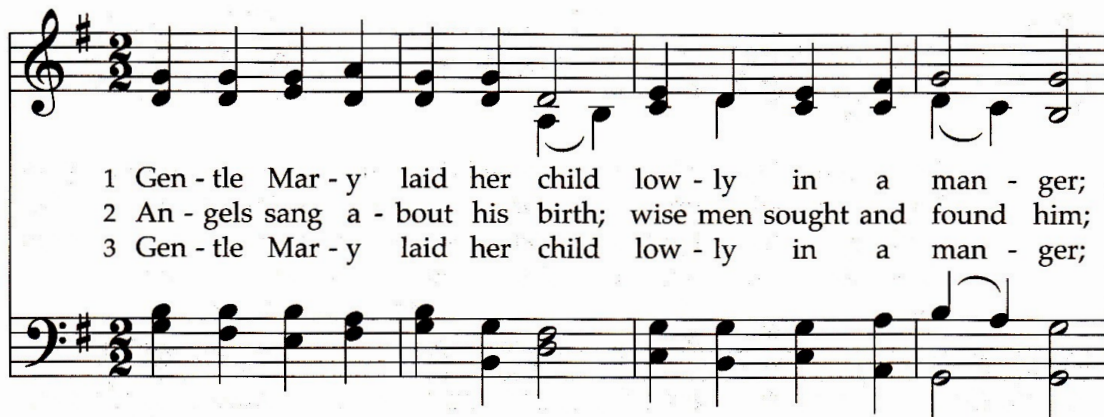


be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

to Refrain

Like other material from oral traditions, 19th-century African American spirituals flourished without being written down. Their refrains were their most stable parts, and narrative stanzas were often improvised to fit. These Nativity stanzas attempt to recall that tradition.

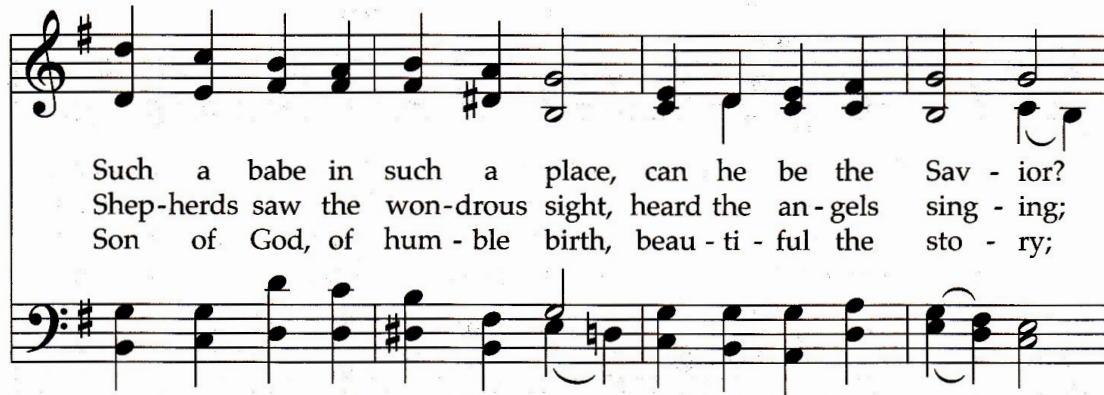
#146 — GENTLE MARY LAID HER CHILD



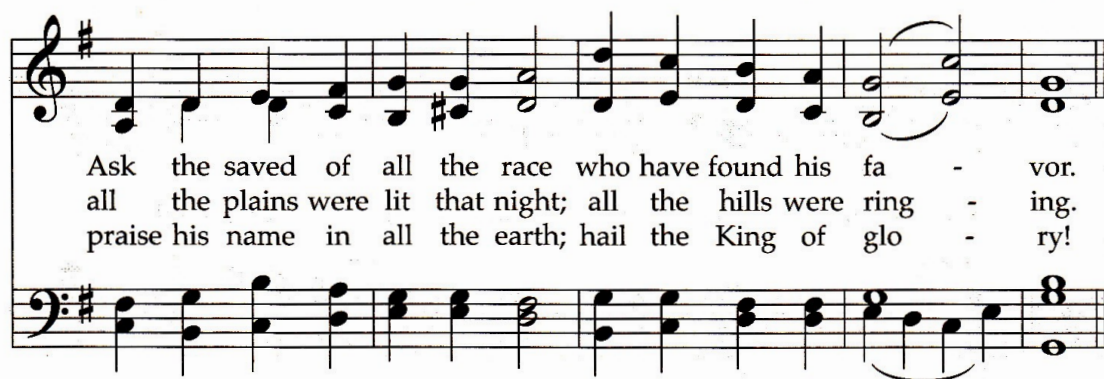
1 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child low - ly in a man - ger;
2 An - gels sang a - bout his birth; wise men sought and found him;
3 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child low - ly in a man - ger;



there he lay, the un - de - filed, to the world a strang - er.
heav - en's star shone bright - ly forth, glo - ry all a - round him.
he is still the un - de - filed, but no more a strang - er.



Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Sav - ior?
Shep - herds saw the won - drous sight, heard the an - gels sing - ing;
Son of God, of hum - ble birth, beau - ti - ful the sto - ry;



Ask the saved of all the race who have found his fa - vor.
all the plains were lit that night; all the hills were ring - ing.
praise his name in all the earth; hail the King of glo - ry!

This 20th-century Christmas text by an English-born Canadian clergyman was originally a poem called "The Manger Prince." It gains a certain antique flavor by being set to a late medieval song associated with springtime. (The tune name means "The flowering time is near.")

#115 — AWAY IN A MANGER

Capo 3: (D) F (G) B \flat (D) F

1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed,
 2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the poor ba - by wakes,
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask thee to stay

(A7) C7 (D) F

the lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head.
 but lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes.
 close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.

(G) B \flat (D) F

The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
 I love thee, Lord Je - sus; look down from the sky,
 Bless all the dear chil - dren in thy ten - der care,

(A7) C7 (D) F (Em) Gm (A7) C7 (D) F

the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
 and stay by my side un - til morn - ing is night.
 and fit us for heav - en to live with thee there.

Though erroneously attributed to Martin Luther, this anonymous carol has North American roots, probably originating among Pennsylvania Lutherans. Although more than forty melodies have been connected with these words, this tune was among the earliest written for them.

#113 — ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet-ly sing-ing o'er the plains,
 2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro-long?
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun-tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
 What the glad - some ti - dings be which in - spire your heaven - ly song?
 come, a - dore on bend - ed 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!

#122 — SILENT NIGHT

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight;
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light
 4 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Won - drous star, lend thy light;

'round yon vir - gin moth - er and child! Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and
 glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, heav - en - ly hosts sing "Al - le - lu -
 ra - dian beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing
 with the an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our

mild, sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 ia: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born."
 grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.
 King: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born.

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

1 *고요한 밤 거룩한 밤*
어둠에 묻힌 밤
주의 부모 앉아서
감사기도 드릴 때
아기 잘도 잔다
아기 잘도 잔다

SPANISH

1 *¡Noche de paz, noche de amor!*
Todo duerme en derredor,
entre los astros que esparcen su luz,
bella, anunciando al niño 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.

#134 — JOY TO THE WORLD

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their songs
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na -

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

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven 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 heaven and na - ture sing,

and

sing, and heaven, and heaven 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.

heaven and na - ture sing,

While Isaac Watts did not write this text strictly for Christmas use, he did purposely cast his paraphrase of Psalm 98:4-9 in Christian terms, titling it "The Messiah's coming and kingdom." So "the Lord" here is Jesus Christ, rather than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.