

GREETING

Gathered in Christ. **We serve with grace.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. *Silence is kept for reflection.*
God-with-us, we confess that we have turned away those seeking shelter, claiming there is no room when we have plenty. We have made power and wealth our idols, while you show us true glory: a baby in a manger. We have overlooked the shepherds, expecting good news in prettier packaging. Too often, we have valued violence instead of your peace. Turn us from our ways to your ways. Grant us the grace to begin again. Free us from all that keeps us bound, and forgive our sin, through Jesus Christ, who gives himself for us. Amen.

Hear the good news and rejoice! You are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, † forgiven in Christ, and freed to respond in joy. **Amen.**

GATHERING SONG "Angels from the Realms of Glory" #275

Angels, from the Realms of Glory



- 1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
- 2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
- 3 Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, bright - er vi - sions beam a - far;
- 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God, the Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son,



once you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
 God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light.
 seek the great de - sire of na - tions, you have seen his na - tal star.
 ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing to the e - ter - nal Three in One.

Refrain



Come and wor - ship, come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king.

Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4
 Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 60:1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord. Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 72:1-7,10-14

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son.

May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice.

May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness.

**May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.**

May he live while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.

May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth.

In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

**May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute,
may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.**

May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service.

For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper.

He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy.

From oppression and violence he redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight.

SECOND READING: EPHESIANS 3:1-12

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our

Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him. Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. **We have observed his star at its rising, and have come to worship him. Alleluia.**

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 2:1-12

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 2nd chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord. In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 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.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘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.’” Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 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.” 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. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 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. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road. The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON “*An Amazing Star!! And It Made All the Difference*”Deacon Ro

HYMN OF THE DAY “*The First Noel*”#300

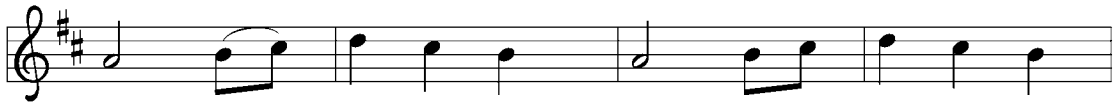
The First Noel



1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to
 2 They look - ed up and saw . . . a star shin - ing
 3 And by the light of that . . . same star three . .
 4 This star drew near to the . . . north-west, o'er . .
 5 Then en - tered in those wise . . . men three, full . .



cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where
 in . . . the east . . . be - yond . . . them far; and to the
 wise . . . men came . . . from coun - try far; to seek for a
 Beth - le - hem . . . it took . . . its rest; and there it
 rev - 'rent - ly . . . up - on . . . their knee, and of - fered



they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's
 earth it gave . . . great light, and . . . so it con -
 king was their . . . in - tent, and to fol - low the
 did both stop . . . and stay right . . . o - ver the
 there in his . . . pres - ence their . . . gold, . . . and

Refrain



night that was so deep.
 tin-ued both day and night.
 star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -
 place where Je - sus lay.
 myrrh, and frank - in - cense.



el, No - el! Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

Text: English traditional
 Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional

APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people. *A brief silence.* O God, you reveal yourself in this assembly. In water, wine, and bread, show us again and again your grace upon grace, that your church boldly testifies to your love. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself in creation. In seedlings and planets, microorganisms and galaxies, awaken us to the cry of the earth. As you nourish your people like a watered garden, empower us to nourish our creaturely companions. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself in every land and in the farthest parts of the earth. Deliver peoples who suffer under oppressive regimes. Thwart the foolish plans of unjust leaders. Give wisdom to our elected officials. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself in every human being. Help us recognize your image in our siblings in Christ who are in the strong grip of addiction, depression, anxiety, hopelessness, or other illness. Grant us compassion in our care for your people. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself anew every day. In this new year, renew this congregation and its ministries in our witness to the good news of the incarnation. Transform the way we have always done things into your new future for us. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

You reveal yourself in the lives of your holy ones. We give you thanks for those who set their hope on you, trusting the inheritance we receive in you. God of grace, **receive our prayer.**

We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

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

OFFERING

OFFERTORY SONG "*Give Thanks*"

Give thanks with a grateful heart. Give thanks to the holy one. Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son. And now let the weak say I am strong. Let the poor say I am rich; because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks. Give thanks.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of heaven and earth, from the beginning, you have called forth life, in which you take delight. The trees, the fields, and the seas sing for joy. Bless now these gifts, received from your bounty, that we may join the chorus of creation to tell of your salvation from day to day. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Once again we find ourselves at Christ's Table. No matter how the road twists and turns. It somehow always leads us here to God's abundant grace. But it's no surprise that we've ended up face to face with God, because God is around every corner. Like the Magi, we travel not knowing where our journey will end, but we can trust God to provide respite along the way in a piece of bread shared, in the cup poured out, in our community's warm embrace. We worship a hospitable God whose arms are always open. There's space for you here, and God is saving you a seat. So bring your weary feet and grateful hearts. Bring your hunger, your curiosity, your joy and your sorrow. Bring your whole self to this Table. Come, let us meet God here. Ever-present God, our traveling companion, we follow every path in search of you. Sometimes we run as fast as we can, taking every shortcut like a child eager to arrive at the promised destination. Sometimes we find ourselves wandering, unsure of whether we're following the trail or forging our own way. Sometimes we just need to lie down and stare up at the stars, resting before we set out once again. Wherever we are, we know you are right beside us. Holy God, we follow every path in search of you. And yet, you are already here. In the night in which you were betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me." Let the taste of this bread and cup open our eyes to the places we have met you. Let the star gifts we receive remind us to seek you out in even the most unexpected places. Guide us, invite us, challenge us, in the year ahead, and remind us that we are yours, your beloved, whom you have claimed, redeemed, and called good. We ask all these things in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

C: 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Family of faith, the bread has been broken and the cup has been poured, which means the feast is ready. Today you are invited to come to the Table to receive the body and blood of Christ, plus a star gift to guide you in seeking God this year. Come, these gifts are for you, all are welcome to receive.

COMMUNION HYMN "*Lamb of God*"Setting 4 #154

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God who lights our way, we thank you for this moment along the journey, a moment filled with good things as we are reminded of our belovedness, and sent out to be your hands and feet in the world. Though we'd prefer at times a straightforward, step-by-step plan for our lives, you instead give us an invitation to wander, to seek, to take a different road, to be guided by a star. May these star gifts be a map to you, O Lord, guiding us to look under every rock and around every corner, seeking you out everywhere, because everywhere is exactly where you are, every step of the way. In hope, in peace, in joy, and in love we pray. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

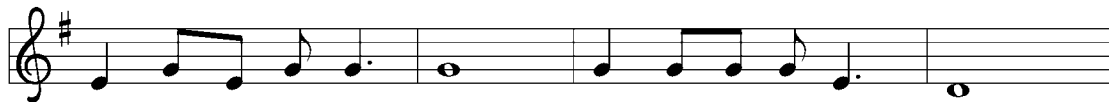
The God of love, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, lavish you with grace, illumine your path, and increase your joy, today and always. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG "*This Little Light Of Mine*" #677

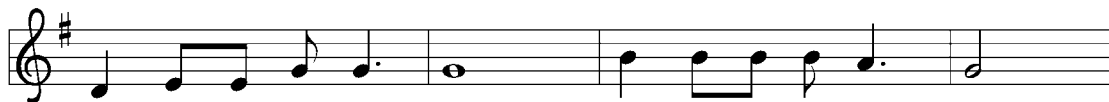
This Little Light of Mine



1 This lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
2 Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
3 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine,
ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine,
Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine,



let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

RINGING OF THE BELLS

SONG OF PEACE

My peace I give unto you. It's a peace that the world cannot give. It's a peace that the world cannot understand; peace to know; peace to live. My peace I give unto you.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. The Word of God dwells in you richly. **Thanks be to God.**