

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

December 29, 2024

Organ Prelude: Noel Variations

Daquin

Words of Welcome

***Hymn: The First Nowell**

No. 136

1. The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds
in fields as they lay,
in fields where they
lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell!
Born is the King of Israel.

2. They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east
beyond them far,
and to the earth
it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. **(Refrain)**

3. And by the light of that same star
three wise men came
from country far;
to search for a king
was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. **(Refrain)**

4. This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem
it took its rest;
and there it did
both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay. **(Refrain)**

5. Then entered in those wise men three
full reverently
upon their knee,
and offered there
in his presence
their gold and myrrh and frankincense. **(Refrain)**

6. Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to
our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven
and earth of nought,
and with his blood mankind hath bought. **(Refrain)**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Blessed be God the creator of all, for God has opened the gates of paradise to all.

God has kept the promise to Israel, to raise up from the house of David the stunning salvation promised by prophets long ago.

Blessed be God the liberator of all, for God has opened a way to abundance and peace to all.

God has kept the promise to the peoples of the earth, to free from bondage to oppression inside and out, those who open themselves to the courage and perseverance God can provide.

Blessed be God the inspirer of all that lives, for God has opened a way to growth and transformation to all.

God has kept the promise to those who believe, to renew and re-invigorate us for life even as we live in the midst of uncertainty and death.

ALL: God, Creator of all life, Saving Word made flesh, Spirit of holiness and transfiguration, we worship you now and forever, Amen.

Special Music: Past Three O'Clock

Trad. English Carol

*Past three a clock,
And a cold frosty morning,
Past three a clock;
Good morrow, masters all!*

*Past three a clock,
And a cold frosty morning,
Past three a clock;
Good morrow, masters all!*

1. Born is a Baby,
Gentle as may be,
Son of the eternal
Father supernal.

3. Mid earth rejoices
Hearing such voices
e'ertofore so well
Carolling Nowell.

*Past three a clock,
And a cold frosty morning,
Past three a clock;
Good morrow, masters all!*

*Past three a clock,
And a cold frosty morning,
Past three a clock;
Good morrow, masters all!*

2. Seraph quire singeth,
Angel bell ringeth;
Hark how they rime it,
Time it and chime it.

4. Hinds o'er the pearly,
Dewy lawn early
Seek the high Stranger
Laid in the manger.

*Past three a clock,
And a cold frosty morning,
Past three a clock;
Good morrow, masters all!*

*5. Cheese from the dairy
Bring they for Mary
And, not for money,
Butter and honey.*

*Past three a clock,
And a cold frosty morning,
Past three a clock;
Good morrow, masters all!*

*8. Thus they: I pray you,
Up, sirs, nor stay you
Till ye confess him
Likewise and bless him*

*Past three a clock,
And a cold frosty morning,
Past three a clock;
Good morrow, masters all!*

Introduction

ALL: “On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, A partridge in a pear tree.”

Interpretation

Prayer of Approach, Confession & 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 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, the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

The Peace of Christ be with you all;

And also with you.

Baptism of Liam Hajitaheri

Questions to parents of baptizand:

1) With the enabling of God's grace, do you commit yourself to personal growth in renouncing what is wrong and embracing what is right in your life and in the world?

I do.

2) With the enabling of God's grace, do you commit yourself to becoming a closer follower of Jesus Christ in his ongoing ministry of compassion and healing in the world by the way you care for all life around you?

I do.

3) With the enabling of God's grace, do you commit yourself to the way of forgiveness with an open heart?

I do.

4) With the enabling of God's grace, do you commit yourself to pursuing justice and truth in a spirit of openness to reconciliation rather than retaliation?

I do.

5) With the enabling of God's grace, do you commit yourself to growing spiritually as a part of this congregation, its worship, fellowship and service, offering yourself and your substance, as you are able?

I do.

6) With the enabling of God's grace, do you commit yourselves to raising your child within the nurturing and guiding fellowship of the church in its worship, witness and service?

I do.

Question to Congregation:

Do you, on behalf of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture Liam and his parents, by word and deed, with love and in prayer, encouraging them to follow the way of Christ in the world?

We do.

***Hymn: In The Bleak Mid-Winter**

No. 145

1. In the bleak midwinter,
frosty wind made moan;
earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow,
snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

2. Our God, heaven cannot hold
him,
nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall welcome
him
when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter
a stable place sufficed
the Lord God incarnate, Jesus
Christ.

3. Angels and archangels
may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim
thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her
maiden bliss,
worshipped the
Beloved with a kiss.

4. What can I give him,
poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;
if I were a Wise Man, I would do
my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my
heart.

ALL: “On the second day of Christmas my true love gave to me, two turtle doves...”

Interpretation

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9: 6, Micah 5: 2

Isaiah 9:6

A Child Has Been Born

⁶ A child has been born for us. We have been given a son who will be our ruler. His names will be Wonderful Advisor and Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace.

Micah 5:2

² Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest towns in the nation of Judah. But the Lord will choose one of your people to rule the nation – someone whose family goes back to ancient times.

ALL: “On the third day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, three French hens...”

Interpretation

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 13: 12-13

¹² Now all we can see of God is like a cloudy picture in a mirror. Later we will see God face to face. We don’t know everything, but then we will, just as God completely understands us. ¹³ For now there are faith, hope, and love. But of these three, the greatest is love.

ALL: “On the fourth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, four calling birds...”

Interpretation

Scripture Reading: Luke 2: 15-20, John 20: 31

Luke 2: 15-20

¹⁵ After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about.” ¹⁶ They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay. ¹⁷ When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. ¹⁸ Everyone listened and was surprised. ¹⁹ But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant. ²⁰ As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about the child. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

John 20: 31

Why John Wrote His Gospel

³¹ These accounts of what Jesus said and did, what happened to him and what he accomplished are written so that you will put your faith in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God. If you open your heart with faith in him, you will have true life.

ALL: “On the fifth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, five golden rings...”

Interpretation

***Hymn: Once in royal David's city**

No. 166

1. Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby

in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

2. Christ came down
to earth from heaven,
who is God and Lord of all,
sheltered by a humble stable,
cradled in a cattle stall:

with the poor, oppressed and
lowly,
lived on earth our Saviour holy,

3. and our eyes at last shall see
him,
through his own redeeming love,

for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heaven above,
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

4. Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him, but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
there God's children gather round,
bright like stars, with glory
crowned.

**ALL: “On the sixth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, six
geese a layin...”**

Interpretation

Scripture Reading: Genesis 1: 1-5, 31, 2: 1

The Story of Creation

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was barren, with no form of life, it was under a roaring ocean covered with darkness. But the Spirit of God was moving over the water.

The First Day

³ God said, “Let there be light!” And light started shining. ⁴ God looked at the light and saw that it was good. God separated light from darkness ⁵ and named the light “Day” and the darkness “Night.” Evening came and then morning --that was the first day.

³¹ God looked at what God had done and what came to be. All of it was very good! Evening came and then morning – that was the sixth day.

^{2:1} So the heavens and the earth and everything else were created. God spoke, creation responded, and what came to be was incredibly beautiful!

ALL: “On the seventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me, seven swans-a-swimming...”

Interpretation

***Hymn: Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming**

No. 151

1. Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming,
as prophets long have sung.
It came, a floweret bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.

2. Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Saviour,
when half-spent was the night.

3. This flower, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendour
our darkness everywhere.

True flesh, yet very God,
from sin and death he saves us
and shares our every load.

4. O Saviour, child of Mary,
who felt our human woe,
O Saviour, King of glory,
who dost our weakness know,
bring us at length, we pray,
to the bright courts of heaven
and to the endless day.

**ALL: “On the eighth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, eight
maids-a-milking...”**

Interpretation

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5: 2-10

Blessings

² Then Jesus began to speak, and taught them, saying: ³ God blesses those people who depend only on God. They belong to the kingdom of Heaven! ⁴ God blesses those people who grieve because they care. They will find comfort! ⁵ God blesses those people who are humble, knowing they need other life to live well. The earth will belong to them! ⁶ God blesses those people who want to fulfill God’s will more than to eat or drink. They will be given what they want! ⁷ God blesses those people who are merciful. They will be treated with mercy! ⁸ God blesses those people whose hearts are pure. They will see God! ⁹ God blesses those people who make peace. They will be called God’s children! ¹⁰ God blesses those people who are treated badly for doing right. They belong to the kingdom of heaven even when they suffer rejection in the world.

ALL: “On the ninth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, nine ladies dancing...”

Interpretation

Scripture Reading: Galatians 5: 16-26

God’s Spirit & Our Own Desires

¹⁶ If you are guided by the Spirit, you won’t obey your selfish desires. ¹⁷ The Spirit and your desires can be enemies of each other. They are often fighting each other and preventing you from doing what you know you should.

¹⁸ But if you obey the Spirit, you don’t need rules like the Law of Moses to keep you from harm. ¹⁹ People’s selfish desires make them give in to immoral ways, filthy thoughts, and shameful deeds. ²⁰ They worship idols rather than God, give in to soul-destroying addictions, hate others, and are more often instigating conflict rather than pursuing peace. People become jealous, angry, and self-serving. They not only argue and cause trouble, but they are ²¹ envious. They get drunk, carry on at wild parties, and do other harmful things as well. I told you before, and I am telling you again: No one who does these things will share in the blessings of God’s kingdom because that requires love above all else. ²² God’s Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, ²³ gentle, and self-controlled. There is no rule against behaving in any of these ways. ²⁴ And because we belong to Christ Jesus, our selfish feelings and desires while still active, are being starved. ²⁵ God’s Spirit has given us life, and so we should follow the Spirit.

ALL: “On the tenth day of Christmas my true love gave to me, ten lords-a-leaping...”

Interpretation

Scripture Reading: Exodus 20: 1-17, Mark 12: 28-31

Exodus 20: 1-17

The Ten Commandments

¹ God said to the people of Israel: ² I am the Lord your God, the one who brought you out of Egypt where you were slaves. ³ Do not worship any god except me. ⁴ Do not fashion any idols that take my place in your hearts. ⁵ Don't bow down and worship them instead of me and my will for you. I am the Lord your God, and I demand all your love. If you reject me and my love, this will have consequences for your families for three or four generations through negative influence. ⁶ But if you love me and obey my laws rooted in love, my love will bless your families for thousands of generations. ⁷ Do not misuse my name. I am the Lord your God, and I will punish anyone who misuses my name to make promises rather than relying on their own trustworthiness.

⁸ Remember that the Sabbath Day belongs to me. ⁹ You have six days when you can do your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day of each week belongs to me, your God. No one is to work on that day – not you, your children, those who work for you, your animals, or the refugees who live in your towns. ¹¹ In six days I made the sky, the earth, the oceans, and everything in them, but on the seventh day I rested. That's why I made the Sabbath a special day that belongs to me. Every life needs time to rest before me.

¹² Respect your parents, even though they are not perfect, and you will find blessing in your own life long after they are gone. ¹³ Do not murder, and murder begins with hate and contempt. ¹⁴ Be faithful in marriage and respectful even when things don't work out. ¹⁵ Do not steal. ¹⁶ Do not tell lies about others. ¹⁷ Do not crave anything that belongs to

someone else, whether it's someone's house, partner, workers, animals or anything else. Work for it instead.

Mark 12: 28-31

The Most Important Commandment

²⁸ One of the teachers of the Law of Moses came up while Jesus and the religious authorities were arguing. When he heard Jesus give a good answer, he asked him, "What is the most important commandment?" ²⁹ Jesus answered, "The most important one says: 'People of Israel, you have only one Lord and God. ³⁰ You must love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.' ³¹ The second equally important commandment says: 'Love others as much as you love yourself.' No other commandment is more important than these." And if you fail in one, you are failing in the other.

ALL: "On the eleventh day of Christmas my true love gave to me, eleven pipers piping..."

Interpretation

Special Music: Ding! Dong! Merrily on High

English traditional

*1. Ding dong, merrily on high!
In heav'n the bells are ringing;
ding dong, verily the sky
is riv'n with angel singing.
Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!
Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!*

*Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!
Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!
3. Pray ye dutifully prime
your matin chime, ye ringers;
may ye beautifully rhyme
your evetime song, ye singers.
Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!
Gloria, hosannah in excelsis!*

*2. E'en so here below, below,
let steeple bells be swungen,
And io, io, io,
by priest and people sungen.*

Prayers of Thanksgiving & Pastoral Concern

**ALL: “On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love gave to me,
twelve drummers drumming...”**

*** The Apostle’s Creed**

A CHRISTIAN CREED BASED ON THE APOSTLES’ CREED FROM: IONA, SCOTLAND Modified for AHPC

We Believe in God above us,
Maker and sustainer of all that lives,
Of sun, moon and stars,
Of water, air, and earth,
Of male and female,
All genders, colours and cultures.

We believe in God beside us,
Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,
Born of a woman’s womb, servant of the poor.
He was tortured and nailed to a cross.
He bore the suffering of others, but died himself forsaken.
He descended into the earth to the place of death.
On the third day he rose from the tomb.
He ascended into heaven to be everywhere present,
And his reign will come on earth.
We believe in God within us,
The Holy Spirit of transforming flame,
Life-Giving breath of the church,
Energy of healing, justice and forgiveness,

Source of resurrection and life everlasting.

Amen.

Interpretation

Anthem: This day the Christ is born

Jim Nasmith

***Hymn: It came upon the midnight clear**

No. 148

1. It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
“To all the earth goodwill and peace,
from heaven's all gracious King!”;
the world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.

2. Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

3. But with the woes of sin and strife,
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong,
but we, through din of war, hear not

the love song which they bring.
Oh hush the noise, Oh still the strife
and hear the angels sing.

4. And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow,
look now! for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing.
Oh rest beside the weary road
and hear the angels sing.

5. For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
God's promised splendours fling,
and all the world take up the song,
which now the angels sing.

Benediction

Organ postlude: The Sussex Carol

arr. by Bruce Nasmith

**Remain seated if you are more comfortable*