

A Christmas Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols  
18 December 2022 – 4:00 o'clock pm



First Congregational Church † United Church of Christ  
444 East Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215



# A CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Based on ancient sources, the first service of this kind in modern times was held in Victorian England. Father E.W. Benson (1829-1896), later Archbishop of Canterbury, began the practice of a Festival Service of Lessons and Carols in preparation for the Christmas Feast, first at Truro Cathedral (1880) and later at Canterbury Cathedral.

A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols was first held at King's College Chapel on Christmas Eve 1918. The service was planned by Eric Milner-White (1884-1963), newly appointed Dean of King's College Chapel, who had served as an army chaplain in World War I and witnessed the horrors of the war. He recognized the need for creative worship, beauty, and an embrace in the Word of God. First broadcast in 1928, except for 1930 the service has been broadcast every year, even during World War II. Many churches throughout the world adapt the service for their own purposes.

From 1919 the Order of Service has always begun with the hymn "Once in Royal David's City." The first three notes of the introduction to that hymn are played on the organ, then the director points to one of 16 trebles, the number determined by statutes of King Henry VI, who then sings the first stanza to an audience of millions listening by radio around the world.

The nine lessons begin with a reading from Genesis by a young chorister, continue with a choice of readings from Genesis, Isaiah, Baruch, Micah, Zephaniah, Luke, Hebrews, or Matthew, always ending with the lesson from John 1:1-18, usually read by a senior member of the clergy staff. Other lessons are read by members of the church and community.

Carols sung by the congregation and choir change from year to year, service to service, but the backbone and strength of the service comes from the lessons of Holy Scripture, how, in the words of the Bidding Prayer, "God would visit and redeem his waiting people" and "that the good purpose of God is being mightily fulfilled" and that "our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will bring all people and all things into the glory of God's eternal kingdom."

Welcome to this **Christmas Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols**. Whether you are here in person or listening online, may the music of the choirs, the songs of the congregation, the prayers, and lessons read aloud bring you great joy and peace, which passes all human understanding. Blessings to you and all your loved ones in this Christmas Season.

Please silence all electronic devices.

Assistive listening devices are available in the Church Office from the Deacons.

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# PRELUDE

*La Nativité (The Nativity)*

*La Crèche (The Cradle)*

*Les Anges (The Angels)*

*Les Bergers (The Shepherds)*

*La Sainte Famille (The Holy Family)*

Jean Langlais

(1907-1991)

G. DENE BARNARD, ORGANIST

*Gloria (Angels We Have Heard on High)*

arr. Frances L. Callahan

FIRST CHURCH RINGERS

(1920-2017)

JENNIFER FRY, DIRECTOR

*Fanfare on "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"*

Robert Hobby

(b. 1962)

*Swiss Noel*

Louis-Claude Daquin

(1694-1772)

# WELCOME

The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens

First Church Senior Minister

# THE PROCESSIONAL CAROL

Once in Royal David's City

The People stand to sing stanzas four through six with the choirs.



*Solo* - 1. Once in ro - yal Da - vid's ci - ty Stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,  
*Choir* - 2. He came down to earth from hea - ven Who is God and Lord of all,  
*Choir* - 3. And through all his won - drous child - hood He would ho - nor and o - bey,  
*All* - 4. For he is our child - hood's pat - tern, Day by day like us he grew,  
5. And our eyes at last shall see him, Through his own re - deem - ing love,  
6. Not in that poor low - ly sta - ble, With the ox - en stand - ing by,



Where a mo - ther laid her ba - by In a man - ger for his bed:  
And his shel - ter was a sta - ble, And his cra - dle was a stall;  
Love and watch the low - ly mai - den, In whose gen - tle arms he lay:  
He was lit - tle, weak, and help - less, Tears and smiles like us he knew:  
For that child so dear and gen - tle Is our Lord in heav'n a - bove;  
We shall see him; but in hea - ven, Set at God's right hand on high;



Ma - ry was that mo - ther mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.  
With the poor and mean and low - ly Lived on earth our Sa - vior ho - ly.  
Chris - tian child - ren all must be Mild, o - be - dient, good as he.  
And he feel - eth for our sad - ness, And he shar - eth in our glad - ness.  
And he leads his child - ren on To the place where he is gone.  
Where like stars his child - ren crowned All in white shall wait a - round.

TEXT: CECIL FRANCES ALEXANDER (1818-1895)

MUSIC: IRBY, HENRY JOHN GAUNTLETT (1805-1876)

DESCANT AND HARMONIZATION: DAVID WILLCOCKS (1919-2015)

SOLO CHORISTER: HENRY WADE

*The People remain standing.*

## THE BIDDING PRAYER

The Rev. Dr. Nancy Livingston  
First Church Member & Guest Minister

Beloved in Christ, as we await the great festival of Christmas, let us prepare ourselves so that we may be shown its true meaning. Let us hear, in readings from Holy Scripture, how the prophets of Israel foretold that God would visit and redeem his waiting people. Let us rejoice, in our carols and hymns, that the good purpose of God is being mightily fulfilled. Let us celebrate the promise that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will bring all people and all things into the glory of God's eternal kingdom.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for the mission and unity of the Church for which he died, and especially in this country and within this community.

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless; the hungry and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Let us also remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

These prayers and praises let us humbly offer to God, in the words which Christ himself taught us:

**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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

*The People sit.*

## THE BIDDING CAROL

Thou Shalt Know Him When He Comes

*Thou shalt know Him when he comes  
not by any din of drums,  
nor his manners nor his airs,  
nor by anything he wears.*

*Thou shalt know Him when he comes,  
not by his crown or by his gown,  
But his coming known shall be  
by the holy harmony which his coming makes in thee.  
Thou shalt know him when he comes. Amen.*

TEXT: ANONYMOUS  
MUSIC: MARK SIRETT (B. 1952)

*God announces in the Garden of Eden that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.*

**N**ow the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God say, “You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?”’ The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.”’ But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ He said, ‘I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.’ He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’ The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.’ Then the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent tricked me, and I ate.’ The LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures.’

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**People Thanks be to God.**

CAROL

Adam Lay Ybounden

Adam lay ybounden,  
Bounden in a bond;  
Four thousand winter  
Thought he not too long.

And all was for an apple,  
An apple that he took,  
As clerkes finden  
Written in their book.

Ne had the apple taken been,  
The apple taken been,  
Ne had never our lady,  
A been heavnè queen.

Blessed be the time  
That apple taken was.  
Therefore we moun singen  
Deo Gracias.

TEXT: ANONYMOUS, 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
MUSIC: BORIS ORD (1897-1961)

The tree of life my soul hath seen,  
 Laden with fruit, and always green:  
 The tree of nature fruitless be  
 Compared with Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,  
 And pleasure dearly I have bought:  
 I missed of all; but now I see  
 'Tis, found in Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,  
 It keeps my dying faith alive;  
 Which makes my soul in haste to be  
 With Jesus Christ the apple tree

His beauty doth all things excel:  
 By faith I know, but ne'er can tell,  
 The glory which I now can see  
 In Jesus Christ the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil,  
 Here I will sit and rest awhile:  
 Under the shadow I will be,  
 Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

TEXT: ANONYMOUS  
 MUSIC: ELIZABETH POSTON (1905-1987)

THE SECOND LESSON: Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Sue Cook  
 First Church Member & Board of Trustees Chairperson

*Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.*

**T**he 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. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**People Thanks be to God.**

What sweeter music can we bring  
 Than a carol, for to sing  
 The birth of this our heav'nly King?  
 Awake the voice! Awake the string!  
 Dark and dull night, fly hence away,  
 And give the honor to this day  
 That sees December turn'd to May.  
 Why does the chilling winter's morn  
 Smile like a field beset with corn?  
 Or smell like a meadow newly shorn  
 Thus on the sudden? Come and see  
 The cause, why things thus fragrant be:  
 'Tis he is born, whose quick'ning birth  
 Gives life and lustre, public mirth,  
 To heavn and the underearth.

We see him come and know him ours,  
 Who with his sunshine and his show'rs,  
 Turns all the patient ground to flow'rs.  
 The darling of the world is come,  
 And fit it is, we find a room  
 To welcome him, to welcome him.  
 The nobler part of all the house here, is the heart,  
 Which we will give him; and bequeath  
 This holly, and this ivy wreath,  
 To do him honour; who's our King,  
 And Lord of all this reveling.  
 What sweeter music can we bring  
 Than a carol, for to sing  
 The birth of this our heav'nly King.

TEXT: ROBERT HERRICK (1591-1674)

MUSIC: JOHN RUTTER (b. 1945)

THE THIRD LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-4, 6-9

David Hogrefe

First Church Member & Pianist for 9 a.m. Service

*The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.*

**A** shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**People Thanks be to God.**

Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen  
Aus eisner Wurzel zart.  
Wie uns die Alten sungen,  
Von Jesse kam die Art.  
Und hat ein Blümlein bracht  
Mitten im kalten Winter,  
Wohl zu der halben Nacht.

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming,  
From tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming,  
As men of old have sung.  
It came, a flow'ret bright,  
Amid the cold of winter,  
When half spent was the night.

TEXT: GERMAN, 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
MUSIC: JOHN RUTTER (B. 1945)  
BRADLEY WALSH, OBOIST

*Unison*

1. O day of peace that dim-ly shines  
 2. Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb,

Through all our hopes and prayers and dreams, Guide us to jus - tice,  
 Nor shall the fierce de - vour the small; As beasts and cat - tle

truth, and love, De - liv - ered from our self - ish schemes. May swords of  
 calm - ly graze, A lit - tle child shall lead them all. Then en - e -

*Harmony*

hate fall from our hands, Our hearts from en - vy find  
 mies shall learn to love, All crea - tures find their true

re - lease, Till by God's grace our war - ring  
 ac - cord; The hope of peace shall be ful -

world Shall see Christ's prom-ised reign of peace.  
 filled, For all the earth shall know the Lord.

TEXT: CARL P. DAW, JR. (B. 1944)

MUSIC: JERUSALEM, CHARLES H.H. PARRY (1848-1918)

*God comforts the people and calls on them to prepare for redemption.*

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all the people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**People Thanks be to God.**

CAROL

A Carol For All Seasons  
arr. Terry Price (B. 1949)

FIRST CHURCH RINGERS  
JENNIFER FRY, DIRECTOR

*The People stand.*

CAROL

When Jesus Comes



1. When Je-sus comes, when Je-sus comes, the wait-ing world will be made new; for on that  
2. (When Je-sus) comes, when Je-sus comes, a star will shine like none be-fore; and in its  
3. (When Je-sus) comes, when Je-sus comes, the sick will rise and be made well; the lame will  
4. (When Je-sus) comes, when Je-sus comes, we'll know the power of love di-vine; for in a



night, that ho-ly night, the words of pro-phets will come true. 2. When Je-sus  
light, its ho-ly light, we'll find a sta-ble's o-pen door. 3. When Je-sus  
leap, the blind will see, the mute will sing "Em-man-u-el!" 4. When Je-sus  
hum-ble man-ger bed we'll see the sleep-ing sa-cred sign.

TEXT: MARY KAY BEALL CARTER (B. 1943)  
MUSIC: JOHN CARTER (B. 1930)

*The People sit.*

*The angel Gabriel salutes the virgin Mary.*

**I**n the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**People Thanks be to God.**

The People stand.

CAROL

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from hea - ven came,  
2 "For know a bless - ed Mo - ther thou shalt be,  
3 Then gen - tle Ma - ry meek - ly bowed her head,  
4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born

his wings as drift - ed snow, his eyes as flame;  
all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee,  
"To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said,  
in Beth - le - hem, all on a Christ - mas morn,

"All hail," said he, "thou low - ly maid - en Ma - ry,  
thy Son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,  
"my soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy his ho - ly Name."  
and Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say—

most high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - ri - a!  
most high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - ri - a!  
Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy, Glo - ri - a!  
"Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - ri - a!

TEXT: BASQUE CAROL

MUSIC: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE, BASQUE CAROL HARM. EDGAR PETTMAN (1866-1943)

The People sit.

My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour,  
 For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.  
 For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed,  
 For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is His name.  
 And His mercy is on them that fear Him throughout all generations,  
 He hath showed strength with His arm,  
 He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.  
 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and hath exalted the humble and meek.  
 He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away.  
 He rememb'ring his mercy hath holpen His servant Israel:  
 as He promised to our forefathers, Abraham, and his seed forever.  
 Glory be the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,  
 As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be,  
 World without end. Amen.

TEXT: LUKE 1:46-55

MUSIC: WILLIAM CROFT (1678-1727)

THE SIXTH LESSON: Matthew 1:18-23

Shannon Hardin  
Columbus City Council President

*An angel appears to Joseph in a dream.*

**N**ow the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**People Thanks be to God.**

In the bleak mid-winter, 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 mid-winter long ago.

Our God, Heav'n cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain.  
 Heav'n and earth shall flee away, when He comes to reign,  
 In the bleak midwinter, a stable-place sufficed,  
 The Lord God Almighty - Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him whom cherubin worship night and day,  
 A breast full of milk and a manger full of hay.  
 Enough for Him, whom angels fall down before.  
 The ox and ass and camel which adore.

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.

TEXT: CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830-1894)

MUSIC: ARR. HAROLD DARKE (1888-1976)

SOLOISTS: CYNTHIA ADCOCK, SOPRANO AND RYAN JENKINS, TENOR

THE SEVENTH LESSON: Luke 2:1-7

Sarah Giffen

First Church Member and Volunteer

*Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.*

**I**n those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**People Thanks be to God.**

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky, and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care, and fit us for Heaven to live with Thee there.

TEXT: TRADITIONAL CAROL

MUSIC: WILLIAM JAMES KIRKPATRICK (1838-1921); ARR. MACK WILBERG (B. 1955)

BRIANNA BURKETT, FLUTE; BRADLEY WALSH, OBOE

*The People stand.*

CAROL

O Little Town of Bethlehem



Men - O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!  
Women, children - O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er Pro - claim the ho - ly birth,  
Choir - How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, The won - drous gift is giv'n!  
All - O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, Des - cend to us, we pray:



A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep The si - lent stars go by.  
And prais - es sing to God the King, And peace to all on earth;  
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts The bless - ings of his heav'n.  
Cast out our sin, and en - ter in, Be born in us to - day.



Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing light;  
For Christ is born of Ma - ry; And, gath - ered all a - bove,  
No ear may hear his com - ing; But in this world of sin,  
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels The great glad ti - dings tell:



The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to - night.  
While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep Their watch of wond'ring love.  
Where meek souls will re - ceive him, still The dear Christ en - ters in.  
O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Em - man - u - el.

TEXT: PHILLIPS BROOKS (1835-1893)

MUSIC: FOREST GREEN, ENGLISH

MELODY; ARR. RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

*The People sit.*

*Jesus is born at Bethlehem and is worshiped by angels and shepherds.*

**I**n that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in a manger.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**People Thanks be to God.**

*The People stand.*

CAROL

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high, singing sweetly through the night,  
And the mountains in reply echoing their brave delight.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why these songs of happy cheer?  
What great brightness did you see? What glad tidings did you hear?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing:  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

See him in a manger laid whom the angels praise above;  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

TEXT: FRENCH CAROL

MUSIC: *GLORLA*, FRENCH CAROL, ARR. EDWARD SHIPPEN BARNES (1887-1958)

*The People sit.*

Mary had a Baby, My Lord: Where was He born? Born in a manger.  
 What did they call Him? “King Jesus”. Oh, Mary had a Baby, He is called “King Jesus”.  
 Mary had a Baby, oh, yes! He is called “King Jesus”, Mighty Counsellor”, “King Emanuel”,  
 “Mighty God”, Everlasting Father”, “Prince of Peace”,  
 Mary had a Baby. My Lord! My Lord!

TEXT: SPIRITUAL

MUSIC: ARR. WILLIAM DAWSON (1899-1990)

SOLOIST: CYNHTIA ADCOCK, SPORANO

THE NINTH LESSON: John 1:1–14

Rev. Ahrens  
 First Church Senior Minister

*John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.*

**I**n the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

**People Thanks be to God.**

*The People stand.*

CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him  
Born the King of Angels:  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of Heaven above!  
Glory to God, glory in the highest:  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory given!  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

TEXT: JOHN FRANCIS WADE (1711-1786)

MUSIC: *ADESTE FIDELES*, JOHN MASON NEALE (1818-1866)

DESCANT & ORGAN HARMONIZATION: DAVID WILLCOCKS (1919-2015)

*The People sit.*

THE OFFERING



*To give online, please scan this QR code link:*

MISSION INVITATION

Mark S. Williams

Designated gifts go to the **Concerts at First Church** and the **YWCA Family Center**. The funds for the Concerts support our tradition of Concerts at First Church with some of the best organists in addition to the choral concerts with instrumental ensembles and organs. The funds for the YWCA helps provide transportation assistance, furnished apartments, food and case management for those in need. Thank you for your generous spirit!

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
 From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
 "Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all-gracious King"  
 The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

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.

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 its ancient splendors fling,  
 And the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

TEXT: EDMUND HAMILTON SEARS (1810-1876)  
 MUSIC: CAROL, RICHARD STORRS WILLIS (1819-1900)

## A CHRISTMAS PRAYER – "JUST THE RIGHT WORD"

Rev. Ahrens

Gracious God, Creator of the Universe and each one of us,  
 Come dwell among us full of Your grace and truth.

Abide with us now on our journey to Bethlehem.  
 Rise within us just as Your Word rises - our Star of Wondrous Light.  
 Brightens our lives with Your birth, Your love and Your delight.

Speak to us in the stillness of this winter night.  
 Let us hear Your voice in the cardinals' chirping,  
 In the baby chattering and the child singing herself to sleep.  
 Let us hear Your voice in our parents' kind words  
 You who bind together earth to heaven,  
 Speak, for we are listening.

In silence, in sound  
 Your kingdom comes  
 Your will is done as  
 Your Word becomes flesh and lives with us.

As we stand in the darkness on the edge of our longest night,  
 we see your light rising in the moon and the stars.  
 Through candle light  
 we follow and seek comfort and confidence,  
 Even as the winds of winter blow,  
 We know your Word will not be overcome by darkness.

You gave annunciating angels clarity of voice and just the right words.  
 You blessed choirs with Messiah music of the spheres,  
 You taught stars to dance joy and heavens to sing glory.

And Your joy and glory go out through Your universe  
And Your song is sung forever of holiness  
that stretches beyond our bright blue planet  
and into the galaxies where your tender mercy  
and grace touch every trembling heart.

O Ancient of Days,  
O Song in Silence,  
O Light of Nations,  
The psalmist and saints,  
The prophets and apostles,  
The shepherds and sages bend low this night  
to worship Your Word lowly laid in the barn of our Savior's birth.

As gave your Word, give us just the right word tonight.  
For we know that...  
...All Timeless and timely tunes,  
All Melodies of musicians and harmonies of hearts,  
All Cries of the poor and prayers of refugees and immigrants,  
All the hurts,  
All the hungers,  
All the hopes of all the ages  
Kneel in prayer before You this night.

We need –  
just the right word to muster hope and create community,  
just the right word to bind our broken hearts,  
just the right word to move us to prayer, to song, to kindness, to joy.

Your Word is just the right Word.  
We need Your Word to be made flesh and dwell with us now.  
God, bring us Your Word – our Light, our Savior, our Song. Amen.

A POEM/PRAYER BY THE REV. DR. TIMOTHY C. AHRENS, SENIOR MINISTER, FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST,  
COLUMBUS, OHIO, DECEMBER 18, 2022, FOR A CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

O nata lux de lumine,  
 Jesu redemptor saeculi,  
 dignare clemens supplicum  
 laudes preces que sumere.  
 Qui carne quondam contegi  
 dignatus es pro perditis.  
 Nos membra confer effici,  
 tui beati corporis.

O born light of light,  
 Jesus, redeemer of the world,  
 mercifully deem worthy and accept  
 the praises and prayers of your supplicants.  
 Thou who once deigned to be clothed in flesh  
 for the sake of the lost ones.  
 Grant us to be made members  
 of your holy body.

TEXT: ANONYMOUS

MUSIC: MORTEN LAURIDSEN (B. 1943)

## CHRISTMAS SEASON BLESSING

Rev. Ahrens

May God, whose Son took our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of holiness.

**Amen.**

May God, who sent angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you hearlds of the Gospel.

**Amen.**

May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you peace and favor.

**Amen.**

May Christ, who by his Incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace.

**Amen.**

Go forth rejoicing in the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

*The People stand.*

CLOSING CAROL

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1. Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing      Glo - ry to the new - born King;  
2. Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored,      Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
3. Hail the heav'n - born Prince of Peace!      Hail the Sun of Right - eous - ness!

Peace on earth and mer - cy mild,      God and sin - ners re - con - ciled:  
Late in time be - hold him come,      Off - spring of a vir - gin's womb:  
Light and life to all he brings,      Ris'n with heal - ing in his wings;

Joy - ful all ye na - tions rise,      Join the tri - umph of the skies,  
Veiled in flesh the God - head see,      Hail th'in - car - nate de - i - ty!  
Mild he lays his glo - ry by,      Born that we no more may die,

With th'an - gel - ic host pro - claim,      Christ is born in Beth - le - hem.  
Pleased in flesh with us to dwell,      Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.  
Born to raise the sons of earth,      Born to give them se - cond birth.

*Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing      Glo - ry to the new - born King.*

TEXT: CHARLES WESLEY (1707–1788)  
MUSIC: MENDELSSOHN, FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)  
DESCANT AND ORGAN HARMONIZATION: DAVID WILLCOCKS

*The People sit.*

CLOSING VOLUNTARY

*In dulci jubilo*, BWV 729

J.S. Bach  
(1685–1750)

*Please remain seated quietly until the voluntary is finished.*

## PARTICIPANTS IN THE SERVICE

*(in order of appearance)*

G. Dene Barnard, *Organist/Choirmaster Emeritus*  
Jennifer Fry, *Director/First Church Ringers*  
Jeremy Bankson, *Guest Organist*  
The Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens, *Senior Minister*  
Henry Wade, *Solo Chorister*  
Matty Provenzano, *Crucifer*  
Mark Williams, *Vergers/First Church Director of Christian Education*  
The Rev. Dr. Nancy Livingston, *Minister*  
James Gallagher, *Interim Choral Director*  
Aarav Peter, *First Reader*  
Sue Cook, *Second Reader*  
David Hogrefe, *Third Reader*  
Nannette Maciejunes, *Fourth Reader*  
Christine Farquhar, *Fifth Reader*  
Shannon Hardin, *Sixth Reader*  
Cynthia Adcock, *Soprano*  
Ryan Jenkins, *Tenor*  
Sarah Giffen, *Seventh Reader*  
Brianna Buckett, *Flute*  
Bradley Walsh, *Oboe*  
The Rev. Joanna Samuelson, *Eighth Reader*  
Peter Murray, *Livestream Ministry Director*

### FIRST CHURCH CHOIR

*Soprano:* Cynthia Adcock, Marti Baumer, Margaret Cipriani, Abby Jenkins, Rose Kandel, Nancy Livingston, Ramona Moenter, Megan Smith, Lissa Wade

*Alto:* Janet Axt, Cindy Deliman, Allison Ellenberger, Jennifer Fry, Cheryl Hoskinson, Wendy Kennedy, Nancy Loy, SallyJane Mathias, Sandra Mathias, Melissa Obergefell, Teddi Obergefell, Judy Smith, Jan Wade, Kat Yamaguchi

*Tenor:* Chris Bowling, Leigh Briggs, Kevin Carrico, Matt Darouse, Daniel Ehrman, Jim Griffin, Ryan Jenkins, Timothy Sarsany, Aidan Young

*Bass:* Al Adcock, John Deliman, Greg Duncan, Ronald Jenkins, Michael Kennedy, Sebastian Kulwicki, Barry Moenter, Robert Moreen, David Stang  
James Gallagher, Interim Choral Director

### FIRST CHURCH RINGERS

Janet Axt, Christopher Bowling, Cindy Deliman, John Deliman, Ann Eliot, Josh Lebold, Nancy Livingston, Nancy Loy, SallyJane Mathias, Sandra Mathias, Janine White  
Jennifer Fry, Director

## READERS

**Nancy Livingston:** Minister in The United Church of Christ, retired; at First Church, taught Adult Ed classes, served on Usher Team, Hymnal Supplement committee, Assisting Pastor; served as Officiant at Evensong, pianist for 9 a.m. service for 5 years; wrote blog for choir tours in England; playing handbells in First Church Bell Choir, singing in First Church Choir.

**Aarav Peter:** 7th grade student at Bexley Middle School, plays cello in the orchestra and piano in jazz band; was a chorister in the youth choir at First Church; sings with the New World Singers.

**Sue Cook:** Chairperson Board of Trustees of First Church; served as Administration Commissioner, Deacon, on Personnel Committee and Nomination Committee.

**David Hogrefe:** Pianist for 9 am worship service. He is a master gardener volunteer, serves on Bexley Community Gardens' Leadership Team and on the Bexley Community Foundation Grants committee, sings in the Columbus Symphony Orchestra Chorus and leads the Lakeside Trio, a local jazz combo.

**Nannette Maciejunes:** Executive Director of the Columbus Museum of Art since 2003, planning to retire at the end of 2022; formerly served CMA as curatorial research assistant, acting director for one year, chief curator for 10 years. During her tenure CMA raised nearly \$95 million to renovate existing facilities and expand the Museum. She has received numerous awards for her work, including the Institute of Museum and Library Services' National Medal, the nation's highest honor for museums. She has made the work of local and underrepresented artists a focus for the museum, and a new fellowship program for African-American visual artists is being created. She has authored many books of art history, with special emphasis on the works of Charles E. Burchfield, 20th c. American watercolor painter known for nature scenes and townscapes and John Marin, early American modernist, known for abstract landscapes and watercolors. Under her leadership the Museum implemented the mission to create great experiences with great art for everyone. Her work at CMA has been invaluable and she will be greatly missed.

**Christine Farquhar:** Moderator, First Church Council; served on Board of Deacons and as Senior Deacon, Board of Trustees and as Chair; volunteer for Good Samaritan, The Largest Table, Faith Mission meals, BOBS, First Serves; member First Church Book Club.

**Shannon Hardin:** President, Columbus City Council since 2018; he serves as head of the legislative branch of the City of Columbus, serves as the Chair of Rules Committee. A native of Columbus, Hardin attended Columbus Africentric K-8 and Columbus Alternative High School, and graduated from Morehouse College. After college he served as the External Affairs Manager, LGBTQ liaison and was on the Religious Advisory Commission for the Office of then-Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman. Hardin was appointed to Columbus City Council in 2014 to fill a vacancy; he won subsequent elections in 2015, 2017, and 2021. As Council President he is committed to fostering an inclusive economy by partnering to build mass transit and affordable housing, empowering small and minority businesses, and providing youth with pathways to the middle class. Regardless of the issue, Shannon Hardin views public policy through the saying, "If it's not for all, then it's not for us."

**Sarah Giffen:** Served on Parish Life Committee, was a Deacon; serves on Sacred Earth Committee and the First Church Care Committee, creator of prayer shawls.

**Rev. Joanna Samuelson:** Interim Associate Minister at First Church; her leadership involves worship planning, pastoral care, organizing Adult Faith Formation classes and the Connection Circles, and participation in the Church Vitality Commission and the BREAD Organization.

**Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Ahrens:** Senior Minister since January 2000; author of the soon to be released book, *The Genius of Justice*. His leadership involves support of staff, the Deacons, the Trustees, Stewardship, Personnel, BREAD, all search committees, Executive Committee, Church Council, The Washington Gladden Social Justice Park committees and more. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for Jewish Family Services in Columbus, the Center for Community Solutions based in Cleveland, and is a regular contributor to The Columbus Dispatch "Faith and Values" columns and The Columbus/Dayton African American News Journal, where he is a regular Contributing Editor. He is honored to serve First Church and the larger community.

**WE INVITE YOU TO CELEBRATE THE REMAINDER OF  
THE CHRISTMAS SEASON WITH FIRST CHURCH**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE

3 PM – FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE

7:30 PM – WORSHIP SERVICE AND PAGEANT

JAMIE BOBB, GUEST ORGANIST

11 PM – WORSHIP AND CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE

JAMIE BOBB, GUEST ORGANIST

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25 – CHRISTMAS

10 AM – WORSHIP SERVICE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1 – THE FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

11 AM – WORSHIP AND HOLY COMMUNION SERVICE

FIND OUR WORSHIP SERVICES AT [WWW.FIRST-CHURCH.ORG/WORSHIP/](http://WWW.FIRST-CHURCH.ORG/WORSHIP/)

### **UPCOMING CONCERTS**

- SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 4 PM – ORGANIST JANET YIEH
- SUNDAY, MARCH 26, 4 PM – ORGANIST ERIC PLUTZ
- SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 4 PM – NEW WORLD SINGERS OF THE COLUMBUS CHILDREN’S CHOIR

### **UPCOMING MUSIC MEDITATIONS**

- WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 12:15 PM – ORGANIST MICHAEL SCHREFFLER
- WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 12:15 PM – HARPSICORDIST MICHAEL UNGER
- WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 12:15 PM – ORGANIST AMANDA MOLE

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT [CONCERTSATFIRSTCHURCH.ORG/HOME/](http://CONCERTSATFIRSTCHURCH.ORG/HOME/)

*We THANK OUR DONORS for supporting Concerts at First Church.  
Through their generosity we can offer programs that feature our outstanding organs and choirs,  
and that offer the congregation at First Congregational Church, UCC,  
and the greater Columbus community both musical variety and excellence.*

GABRIEL (\$1,000+)

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Helen Wilson  
Hugh Schultz  
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Kent Shimeall & Lisa Morris  
Judy Smith  
Doreen Uhas-Sauer and John Sauer,  
in memory of Dr. Amos White  
and Dorothy Cromartie  
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Marilyn Potts  
Elizabeth Ramsey

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*These donors have contributed to the 2022-  
2023 concerts. We are grateful to all who  
support these fine programs with their financial  
gifts and their attendance.*

## Welcome Statement

You are welcomed, affirmed, and loved here; our faith informs us that you are a child of a loving God. Your characteristics and gifts will enrich our congregation. In this community, you will be celebrated, embraced, and honored, no matter how you identify or how your identity may evolve. Wherever you are on your faith journey, we invite you to join us in our diverse yet united experience.

## Open and Affirming Statement

We, the members of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio, welcome and affirm all. We believe we are all created in God's image and called to love our neighbors as Jesus loves us. We believe we are many members, but one body in Christ, called to unite all people in God's love. We are a community seeking God's presence and love in our lives. We seek to unite persons of all ages, races, nationalities, ethnicities, sexual orientations, sexes, gender identities and expressions, family structures, mental, intellectual and physical conditions, economic circumstances, political, theological and faith backgrounds. Together in our diversity, and being empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit, we will "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God." (Micah 6:8)

—Adopted September 8, 2002 by the congregation  
Revisions adopted January 27, 2019 by the congregation

## First Church is a faith community:

- † Called together by God, the Creator and Sustainer of life, to worship, pray and serve;
- † Led by Jesus Christ, our Teacher and Savior, to learn the faith and welcome all God's children;
- † Empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness to God's love and justice between ourselves, and throughout the world.



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