

**Infant Holy, Infant Lowly,**  
For His bed a cattle stall;  
Oxen lowing, Little knowing,  
Christ the babe is Lord of all.  
Swift are winging Angels singing,  
Noels ringing, Tidings bringing:  
Christ the babe is Lord of all.

Flocks were sleeping; Shepherds keeping  
Vigil till the morning new.  
Saw the glory, Heard the story,  
Tidings of a gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing, Free from sorrow,  
Praises voicing Greet the morrow:  
Christ the babe was born for you.

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**It Came Upon a 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.

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  
O rest beside the weary road  
And hear the angels sing.

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**Lo, how a rose e'er blooming**  
From tender stem hath sprung  
Of Jesse's lineage coming,  
By faithful prophets sung.  
It came a flower bright,  
Amid the cold of winter  
When half spent was the night

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
The rose I have in mind  
With Mary we behold it,m  
The virgin mother kind  
To show God's love aright  
She bore for us a Savior,  
When half spent was the night.

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**Hark! The herald angels sing,**  
"Glory to the new-born King.  
Peace on Earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled."  
Joyful, all ye nations rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies:  
With the angelic host proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
Glory To the new-born king.

Christ by highest heaven adored,  
Christ the everlasting Lord!  
Late in time behold him come,  
Offspring of the virgins womb.  
Velied in flesh the Godhead see;  
Hail the incarnate Deity.  
Pleased in flesh with us to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
Glory To the new-born king.

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the sun of righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings,  
Risen with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by,  
Born that we no more may die,  
Born to raise us from the earth.  
Born to give us second birth.  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
Glory To the new-born king.



*Joint Worship Service  
December 31, 2023*

*The First Sunday of  
Christmas*



Welcome – the hymn texts for today are on the back of the bulletin.  
If you are joining remotely, please check in texting your name(s) to 413-644-6435.

## PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

Peter Frost

PRELUDE

## GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We waited.

**All: And imagined a savior.**

One: We imagined power.

**All: One like the world but stronger and on our side.**

One: We imagined a king on a white horse wielding a sword.

**All: We got a baby born in a stable among the livestock.**

One: We imagined the work done for us through the destruction of our enemies.

**All: We receive a baby who will teach us our calling to seek reconciliation and to love expansively.**

One: Praise be to God for the unexpected babe of Bethlehem.

**All: Praise to the wisdom of love. Amen!**

~ written by Tim Graves, and posted on his blog LiturgyBits: "Little bits for worship."

\*HYMN *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly* #37

\*PASSING OF THE PEACE

POETRY READING #1

### THE GIFT OF THE WORD

TIME WITH CHILDREN *Blessing of the Presents*

#### *The Lord's Prayer*

Our God, 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

\*HYMN *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* verse 1 #38

SCRIPTURE READING / LECTIO DIVINA Luke 2:1-14

In 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.

In 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 Saviour, 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 favours!

\*HYMN *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* verse 3 #38

POETRY READING #2

### OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Today we will try a practice of the West Stockbridge Village Congregational Church. Gifts not marked for a pledge will be sent to a local charitable organization. You may write a charity on the enclosed slip. We will draw one slip randomly after worship to determine where the funds will be sent.

You may also submit a prayer to be read during Joys and Concerns. It will be read as submitted. Prayers may also be raised verbally during that time.

OFFERTORY

\*DOXOLOGY *Lasst Uns Erfreuen*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low; Alleluia, Alleluia.  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore; One God, Triune, whom we adore.  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

\*BLESSING OF THE GIFTS

POETRY READING #3

BRINGING OUR PRAYERS

\*HYMN *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* #48

POETRY READING #4

### GOING FORTH INTO THE WORLD

SENDING UNISON PRAYER

**Joy to the World! Our Lord Jesus has come! We welcome you, little king, as you reign in this world. Meet us with surprise, transform our expectations, give us courage to follow wherever you lead. Amen**

\*HYMN *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* #31

\*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE