



First Baptist Church

Worship Service for Sunday, December 31st, 2023

First Sunday of Christmas

Welcome! Young children are welcome in the service or in our staffed nursery.

The collection is taken at the doorways as you enter the sanctuary.

**Please stand as you are able whether you are participating at home or in the sanctuary.*

We Gather as God's People

Silent Prayer: God of light and peace, whose glory, shining in the child of Bethlehem, still draws the nations to yourself: dispel the darkness that shrouds our path, that we may come to kneel before Christ in true worship, offer him our hearts and souls and return from his presence to live as he has taught. Amen. (Revised Common Lectionary)

Music for Gathering

Xavier Russell-MacLean

Opportunities for Life and Service

Kayely Rich

Morning Chimes

Xavier Russell-MacLean

*The Introit

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

#145

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold him, born the King of angels.**

**O come, let us adore him, (x3)
Christ the Lord!**

Leader: Welcome in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Jesus Christ is born for us!

All: Alleluia! Christ is born!

Welcoming One Another

We Approach God

*Carol of Praise

“As with Gladness Men of Old”

#163

The children are invited to come forward during the singing of this song.

**As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright,
So, most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led to thee.**

**As with joyful steps they sped to that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before him whom heav’n and earth adore,
So, may we with willing feet ever seek the mercy seat.**

**As they offered gifts most rare at that manger rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin’s alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee our heav’nly King.**

**Holy Jesus, every day keep us in the narrow way;
And when earthly things are past, bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glory hide.**

Children’s Blessing

**The first Noël, 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.
Noël, Noël, Noël, Noël, born is the King of Israel.**

**Then entered in those Wise Men three,
full reverently upon the knee,
and offered there, in his presence,
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.
Noël, Noël, Noël, Noël, born is the King of Israel.**

**Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
That hath made heaven and earth of naught,
And with his blood mankind hath bought.
Noël, Noël, Noël, Noël, born is the King of Israel.**

Confession of Sin
Assurance of Pardon

Cheryl Johnston

We Listen to God

*Carol of Approach

“Of the Father's Love Begotten”

#118

**Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore!**

**O ye heights of heav'n adore him, angel hosts his praises sing,
Pow'rs, dominions bow before him, and extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent, ev'ry voice in concert ring
Evermore and evermore!**

**Christ, to thee, with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to thee
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving, and unending praises be,
Honour, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory,
Evermore and evermore!**

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 60, selected verses

O.T. page 690

Responsorial Lesson: Psalm 72

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

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

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

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

Leader: May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

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

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

All: Long may he live! May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all day long.

Leader: May his name endure for ever, May all nations be blessed in him; may they pronounce him happy.

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

Leader: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

All: Blessed be God's glorious name for ever; may God's glory fill the whole earth.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

*Gospel Lesson: Matthew 2:1-15

N.T. page 2

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

We Respond to God

*Carol of Response "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

#152

**I heard the bells on Christmas day their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat of peace on earth, good will to men.**

**I thought how, as the day had come, the belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th'unbroken song of peace on earth, good will to men.**

**And in despair I bowed my head: "There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song of peace on earth, good will to men."**

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:

"God is not dead, nor doth he sleep;

The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, good will to men."

**Till, ringing, singing on its way, the world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime, of peace on earth, good will to men.**

Prayers of the People

Cheryl Johnston

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,
and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Our Gifts and Offerings

Cheryl Johnston

We Depart to Serve God

*Hymn for Departing

"Joy to the World"

#125

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive its king;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room, and heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.**

Music for Departing

Grace Liu

Parents:

Please go to meet your children in Nursery as they can only be dismissed into your care.

The Journey of the Magi by T.S. Eliot

“A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.”
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

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