

No matter your age, race, economic status, religious background, gender or sexual orientation, you are welcome here.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Welcome & Announcements

Dr. Don Ashburn

Prelude

Improvisation

*Church Bell

(*The congregation is invited to stand)

*Call to Worship

Leader: Awake from sleep.

People: **Raise weary bodies.**

Leader: Light a candle in the cold and dark.

People: **One candle to chase away the night and herald the coming light.**

Leader: This is the time of readying the heart.

People: **This is the season for steps toward the stable.**

Leader: Let us worship the Lord, who came to live among us first as a babe in a manger.

*Hymn (see BACK page)

What child is this

Greensleeves

Lighting of the Third Advent Candle

The DaCosta-Hicks Family

Elizabeth DaCosta, David, Carson and Evie Hicks

*Prayer of Confession

Whitney Skeels

God of all time and seasons, how quickly the year spins by, and we are caught unprepared for your Advent. We are still recovering from the latest crisis or the long list of things to do. The demands on our time seem unending, the tasks seem overwhelming, and our energy is draining. Holy God, sing to us in the stillness of this moment; speak to us in the depths of our hearts. Let there be a space for you in the midst of all the hurry and rush -- a holy, inner place that cherishes silence and song, that keeps a candle lit and a manger ready. God of all time and seasons, create in us a place for your birth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Choral Response and Words of Assurance

This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.

Haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the son of Mary.

Words of Christian Greeting

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Dr. Ashburn

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. Amen.

Anthem

Fum, fum fum

Kate Benson, clarinet
Annalise King, euphonium
Darren Fletcher, harp
Stephen Main, bass
The Handbell Ensemble

arr. Gregory Pysh
adapted and arr. S. T. Main

-Traditional Catalonian carol

Scripture Reading

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Colossians 1:15-17

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Sermon

THE GOD OF CHRISTMAS...COMES NEAR

Rev. Dr. Steve Schibsted

Offertory

Sussex Carol
Kate Benson, clarinet
Annalise King, euphonium
Jo Giessler, organ
The Handbell Ensemble
Chancel Choir

arr. David Willcocks
(1919-2015)

On Christmas night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring: news of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should men on earth be so sad, since our Redeemer made us glad? When from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty?

When sin departs before his grace, then life and health come in its place; angels and men with joy may sing, all for to see the new the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night: "Glory to God and peace to men, now and for evermore, Amen."

-Traditional English carol

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Doxology

(Hymnal, p. 572)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Whitney Skeels

Accept these gifts we offer, gracious God. We dedicate this offering to you, for you are the giver of all good gifts. We pray that what we give will plant seeds of love and grace in good and fertile soil. Use both the work of our hands and the giving of our resources, so that the gospel may bloom and its roots grow deep, in this Advent season of preparation and beyond. In Jesus' name. Amen.

***Hymn (See NEXT Page)** Angels we have heard on high *Gloria*

***Commission and Benediction** Dr. Schibsted

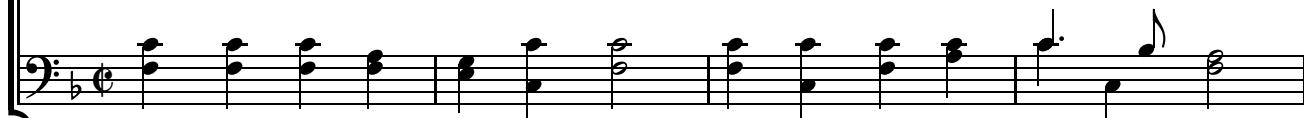
Voluntary *Improvisation*

Angels We Have Heard on High

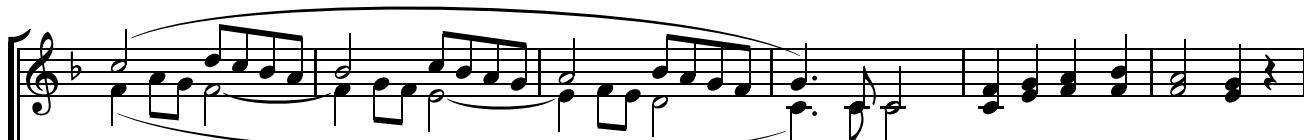
Gloria



1. An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi-lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
3. Come to Beth - le - hem, and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;
4. See with - in a man - ger laid Je - sus, Lord of heav'n and earth!



and the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o back their joy - ous strains.
Say what may the tid - ings be, which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.
Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid, with us sing our Sa - vior's birth.



Glo - - - - - ri - a in ex-cel - sis De - o,



Glo - - - - - ri - a in ex-cel - sis De - - o!



What child is this, who, laid to rest

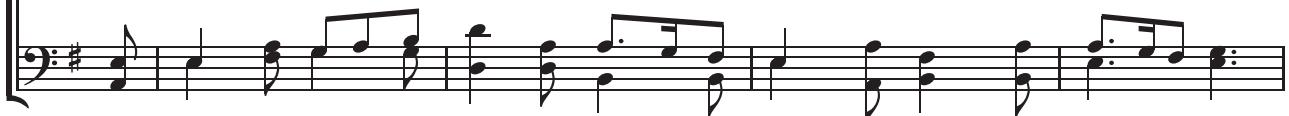
Greensleeves



1. What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Ma - ry's lap is sleep - ing?
2. Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
3. Now bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh, come, peas - ant, king, to own__ him;



Whom an - gels greet with an - themes sweet, while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
the King of kings sal - va - tion brings, let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the son of Ma - ry.



Words: *William C. Dix, 1865*

Music: *16th century English melody, harm. S. T. Main*

'THE MESSENGER'

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