

**FIRST CHURCH IN BOSTON**  
**Order of Service**  
**Sunday, December 24, 2021**  
Rev. Edmund Robinson, Minister  
Gigi Mitchell-Velasco, Music Director

**PRELUDES**

Jacqueline Schwab - piano

“Rejoice Greatly” from *The Messiah*  
Erin Anderson, soprano

Gigi Mitchell-Velasco - organ

**WORSHIP**

**INTROIT** “Carol of the Bells” Mykola Leontovych  
*arr. Wilhousky*

Hark! How the bells, sweet silver bells, all seem to say,  
“throw cares away.” Christmas is here bringing good cheer,  
to young and old, meek and the bold. Ding, dong, ding, dong,  
that is their song, with joyful ring, all caroling. One seems to  
hear words of good cheer from everywhere, filling the air.  
Oh, how they pound, raising the sound, o’er hill and dale  
telling their tale. Gaily they ring, while people sing, songs of  
good cheer, Christmas is here! Merry, merry, merry, merry  
Christmas! On, on they send, on without end, their joyful tone  
to every home. Ding, dong, ding, dong.

**CHALICE LIGHTING**

**OPENING WORDS**

#616: **For So The Children Come** - Sophia Lyon Fahs

For so the children come and so they have been coming.

***Always in the same way they come born of the seed of  
man and woman.***

No angels herald their beginnings. No prophets predict  
their future courses.

***No wise men see a star to show where to find the babe  
that will save humankind.***

Yet each night a child is born is a holy night,

***Fathers and mothers – sitting beside their children’s  
cribs feel glory in the sight of a new life beginning.***

They ask, “Where and how will this new life end? Or will it  
ever end?”

***Each night a child is born is a holy night – A time for  
singing, A time for wondering,  
A time for worshipping.***

**OPENING HYMN #253 O Come All Ye Faithful**



(ring your bells with the words in **bold**)

*Adeste fideles, laeti triumphantes, venite, venite in Bethlehem. Natum videte Regem angelorum.*

Refrain: *Venite, adoremus, venite, adoremus, venite adoremus Dominum.*

1. 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.  
(Refrain)
2. Lo, humble shepherds, hasting to his cradle, leaving their flocks in the fields, draw near.  
We, too, with gladness, thither bend our footsteps.  
(Refrain)
3. **Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation; O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!**  
**Glory to God, all glory in the highest. (Refrain)**

**FIRST READING** The Birth - Luke 2:1-7

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.

**HYMN #246 O Little Town of Bethlehem**

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
2. For Christ is born of Mary and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love,  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth.  
Let praises ring; from God they bring goodwill to all on earth.
3. How silently, how silently the wonder is made known,  
when God imparts to human hearts the gift that is our own.  
No ear may hear that coming, but in this worldly din,  
when souls are truly humble, then the dear babe rests within.

**ANTHEM** "In the Bleak Midwinter"

Harold Darke

*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.  
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 Jesus Christ.  
Enough for Him, whom cherubim 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 give him, give him my heart, give him my heart.*

## **SECOND READING** Song of the Angels - Luke 2: 8-14

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 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!"

## **HYMN #231** Angels We Have Heard on High



(ring your bells with the words in **bold**)

1. Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains. **Gloria in excelsis Deo. Gloria in excelsis Deo.**
2. 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.**
3. 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.**

## **OFFERTORY** "Torches! Torches!"

Jean Joubert

*Torches, torches, run with torches All the way to Bethlehem! Christ is born and now lies sleeping; Come and sing your song to him! Ah! Roro, Roro, my baby, Ah Ro, my love, Roro; Sleep you well, my heart's own darling, While we sing you our Roro. Sing my friends and make you merry, Joy and mirth and joy again; Lo, he lives, the King of Heaven, Now and evermore. Amen.*

## **THIRD READING** The Adoration - Luke 2: 15-20

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 the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

## **HYMN #237** The First Nowell



(ring your bells with the words in **bold**)

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. **Nowell, Nowell. Nowell, Nowell, born in the king of Israel.**

2. The looked up and saw a star, shining in the east  
beyond them far, and to the earth it gave a great light,  
and so it continued both day and night. **Nowell, Nowell,  
Nowell, Nowell. Born is the king of Israel.**

**SOLO** "O Holy Night"

Adolphe Adam

Noel Velasco, tenor

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining, it is the night of  
the dear Saviour's birth;  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining, till he appeared,  
and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks  
a new and glorious morn!  
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices! O night  
divine! O night, when Christ was born! O night divine, O  
night, O night divine!

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming, with glowing  
hearts by His cradle we stand;  
So, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming, here came the  
wise men from the Orient land.  
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger, in all our trials  
born to be our friend;  
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices! O night  
divine! O night, when Christ was born! O night divine, O  
night, O night divine!

CHRISTMAS IN THE TRENCHES John McCutcheon  
(1984)

My name is Francis Tolliver, I come from Liverpool.  
Two years ago the war was waiting for me after school.  
To Belgium and to Flanders, to Germany to here  
I fought for King and country I love dear.

'Twas Christmas in the trenches, where the frost so bitter  
hung,  
The frozen fields of France were still, no Christmas song  
was sung  
Our families back in England were toasting us that day  
Their brave and glorious lads so far away.

I was lying with my messmates on the cold and rocky  
ground  
When o'er the field of battle came a most peculiar sound  
Says I, "Now listen up, me boys!" each soldier strained to  
hear  
As one young German voice sang out so clear.

"He's singing bloody well, you know!" my partner says to  
me  
then one by one, each German voice joined in harmony  
The cannons rested silent, the gas clouds rolled no more  
As Christmas brought us respite from the war  
As soon as they were finished and a reverent pause was  
spent  
"God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" struck up some lads  
from Kent  
The next they sang was "Stille Nacht." "Tis 'Silent Night',"  
says I  
And in two tongues one song filled up that sky  
"There's someone coming toward us!" the front line sentry  
cried  
All sights were fixed on one long figure trudging from their  
side  
His truce flag, like a Christmas star, shown on that plain so  
bright  
As he, bravely, strode unarmed into the night.  
than one by one on either side walked into "No Man's  
Land"  
With neither gun nor bayonet we met there hand to hand

We shared some secret brandy and we wished each other well  
And in a flare-lit soccer game we gave them Hell  
We traded chocolates, cigarettes, and photographs from home  
These sons and fathers far away from families of their own  
Young Sanders played the squeezebox and they had a violin  
This curious and unlikely band of men.

Than daylight stole upon us and France was France once more  
With sad farewells we each prepared to settle back to war  
But the question haunted every heart that lived that wonderous night  
"Whose family have I fixed within my sights?"  
'Twas Christmas in the trenches where the frost, so bitter hung  
The frozen fields of France were warmed when songs of peace were sung  
For the walls they'd built between us to exact their work of war  
Were crumbled and were gone forevermore.

My name is Francis Tolliver, in Liverpool I dwell  
Each Christmas come since World War I, I've learned its lessons well  
That the ones who call the shots won't be among the dead and lame  
And on each end of the rifle we're the same.

### LIGHTING THE CANDLES

**HYMN #251** Silent Night led by Larry Bell and William Thorpe, guitars

1. Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright round you virgin mother and child. Holy infant so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.
2. Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight, glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia," sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.
3. Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

### BENEDICTION

We Wish You a Merry Christmas     Edmund and the Choir  
We wish you a merry Christmas (3 times), and a happy new year.  
Good tidings we bring to you and your kin.  
We wish you a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

### CLOSING HYMN

#245 Joy to the World  (ring your bells with the words in **bold**)

1. **Joy to the world!** The Word is come: let earth **with praises ring**. Let every heart prepare a room, and **heaven and nature sing**, and **heaven and nature sing**, and heaven and **heaven and nature sing**.
2. **Joy to the earth!** Now gladness reigns: let hearts their songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat **the sounding joy**, repeat **the sounding joy**, repeat, repeat **the sounding joy**.
3. No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground. Let righteousness its **glories show** as far as **love is found**, as far as **love is found**, as far, as far as **love is found**.

**POSTLUDE** Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella - *French traditional* Keith Chapman

Please return the Bells on your way out. Thank you.

*You are invited to enjoy conversation and community in the Narthex (Lobby) and auditorium.*

Large print orders of service are available from an usher.

Restrooms are off of the main church lobby, beyond the coat racks.

### **Announcements**

Please visit our website: [firstchurchboston.org](http://firstchurchboston.org)  
We are on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.  
Broadcast on WERS, 88.9, Sunday mornings at 11am.

### **Join us on Sunday! Service is at 11am.**

December 26 is called Boxing Day in England because in the great manor houses, the staff has the day off and the owners "box up" the leftovers from the Christmas feast and distribute them to the staff and visitors to have their own Christmas. In a similar way, First Church is giving its hard-working music director and choir the day off Sunday December 26 and it is up to the members and visitors to fill the hour with songs, stories and readings appropriate to the season. Please bring anything verbal, vocal or instrumental that you want to share, keeping in mind that the proceedings are broadcast on WERS-FM.

### **First Church Boston Staff**

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### **First Church Boston Lay leadership**

Standing Committee

Fern Beck, chair

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Michael Sullivan, treasurer

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Trustees

Janine Mudge, chair

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**First Church Boston choir**

Erin Anderson  
Alecia Batson  
Becca Bly

Mary Collins\*  
Jacqueline Schwab\*  
Karlie Traversa

Noel Velasco

Larry Bell\*  
Keith Brinkley  
Bob Hinckley  
William Thorpe

\*Volunteers

**First Church Boston  
Lessons and Carols  
December 24, 2021**



