



# Friends Church

An Open & Affirming Congregation



*"Nativity with Women Attending"*  
Frank Wesley

December 24, 2023  
6:30pm  
Christmas Eve



## PSALM FOR MEDITATION: Psalm 97, NRSV

The Lord is king! Let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne. Fire goes before him, and consumes his adversaries on every side. His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the Lord, before the Lord of all the earth. The heavens proclaim his righteousness; and all the peoples behold his glory. All worshipers of images are put to shame, those who make their boast in worthless idols; all gods bow down before him. Zion hears and is glad, and the towns of Judah rejoice, because of your judgments, O God. For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. The Lord loves those who hate evil; he guards the lives of his faithful; he rescues them from the hand of the wicked. Light dawns for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!

## PRE-SERVICE HANDBELL CHOIR CONCERT: Chimes of Christmas

O Little Town of Bethlehem - Michael Helman

Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying - Ron Mallory

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel - Albert Zabel (*Ruthie De Leon, organ*)

Angels We Have Heard on High - Martha Lynn Thompson

Joy to the World - Cynthia Dobrinski

*Friends Church Handbell Choir, Conducted by Chris Hoffman*

*Dinah Anderson, Sean Dudo, Tami Dudo, Cady Engler, Cathy Hansen, Alicia Ramirez, Diane Simpson, Kenya Terrell, Tom Vogel, Laura Wimberley, Kim Witt*

## CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

WORDS OF WELCOME

Trent Williams

## PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF THE ALTAR CANDLES

CALL TO WORSHIP

Matt Hoffman

**\*HYMN FOR LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE #116** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel  
Tune: Veni Emmanuel (verses 1-2, 6-7)

**\*INVOCATION**

Becky Burks

*Children in the sanctuary are invited to come to the front. All are invited to sing the first verse of "Away in a Manger" (NCH #124) to begin the children's message.*

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

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Brooke Dooley

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

Many: **And also with you!**

## FIRST GOSPEL READING:

Luke 2:1-7, NRSV

Trent Williams

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.

## CHORAL ANTHEM: What sweeter music - John Rutter

What sweeter music can we bring than a carol, for to sing the birth of this our heavenly King? Awake the voice! Awake the string! Dark and dull night, fly hence away, and give the honour to this day that sees December turned to May, that sees December turned 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 quickening birth gives life and lustre, public mirth, to heaven and the underearth.

We see him come, and know him ours, who, with his sunshine and his showers, turns the patient ground to flowers, turns all the patient ground to flowers. 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 revelling.

What sweeter music can we bring than a carol, for to sing the birth of this our heavenly King, the birth of this our heavenly King.

## SECOND GOSPEL READING:

Luke 2:8-20 NRSV

Dan De Leon

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!” 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.

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: **God is still speaking. Thanks be to God!**

## THE MESSAGE

“What Love Looks Like”

Dan De Leon

## MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

## INVITATION TO SHARE

Becky Burks

## OFFERTORY

Secure online giving via Realm Giving at [bit.ly/givetofriendsucc](https://bit.ly/givetofriendsucc)  
Venmo to 979-307-8860 or @friendsucc

## \*DOXOLOGY

Praise to God, the One who made us. Praise to Christ, God's on - ly - Son.  
the new\* - born

Praise the Spir - it, ev - er - with us. Praise the God - head, Three in - One.

Clear a path! Pre - pare the way! Ad - vent leads to Christ - mas Day!

\* - for use of Christmas Eve or Christmas Day

## \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

Trent Williams

Holy One, you have given us your greatest gift—  
your very Word come to earth, to live with us and through us;  
your holy child sent to free us from our bonds.  
Receive our thanks and praise.  
As you have given to us,  
so now we share your gifts and your grace with a world in need.  
Amen.

## THE OBSERVANCE OF HOLY COMMUNION

Brooke Dooley, Trent Williams

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Trent Williams

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 sins,  
as we forgive those who sin 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. Amen.

\*CAROLS BY CANDELIGHT

Angels We Have Heard on High, vv. 1 & 3 only

An - gels we have heard on high, sweet-ly sing-ing o'er the plains,  
Come to Beth-le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;

and the moun-tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.

*Refrain*

Glo - - - ri - a

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

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

8

# It Came Upon the Midnight Clear, vv. 1 & 5 only



It came up-on the mid-night clear, that glo-rious song of old,  
For lo, the days are has-tening on, by proph-ets seen of old,  
from an-gels bend-ing near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:  
when with the ev-er-cir-cling years shall come the time fore-told,  
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all-gra-cious King":  
when peace shall o-ver all the earth its an-cient splen-dors fling,  
the world in sol-emn still-ness lay, to hear the an-gels sing.  
and the whole world give back the song which now the an-gels sing.



O Little Town of Bethlehem, vv. 1 & 4 only

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'. It consists of six systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are printed below the vocal lines.

O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
O ho - ly child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;  
A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by.  
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;  
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.  
O come to us; a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!

# Away in a Manger, vv. 1 & 3 only

Capo 3: (D) F (C) B $\flat$  (D) F



A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed,  
Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask thee to stay

(A7) C7 (D) F



the lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head.  
close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.

(C) B $\flat$  (D) F



The stars in the sk - y looked down where he lay,  
Bless all the dear chil - dren in thy ten - der care,

(A7) C7 (D) F (Em) Gm (A7) C7 (D) F



the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.  
and fit us for heav - en to live with thee there.

# Silent Night, Holy Night!

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright  
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight;  
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light

'round yon vir - gin moth - er and child! Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and  
glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, heav - en - ly hosts sing "Al - le - lu -  
ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing

mild, sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
ia: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born!"  
grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

## \*BENEDICTION

Dan De Leon

## POSTLUDE

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### Instrumental Music:

- Prelude: What Child Is This? - Traditional English Melody, arranged by Melody Bober  
Offertory: The Holly and the Ivy - English Carol, arranged by Jeanine Yeager  
Communion: O Holy Night - Adolphe Adam (Chris Hoffman, tenor)  
Postlude: Silent Night - arranged by David Lanz

Scriptures for Dec 31: Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED:** The church office will be closed on Monday, Dec 25th & Tuesday, Dec 26th for Christmas holiday. Normal hours resume on Wednesday, Dec 27th.

**9AM SERVICES AND SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH ON BREAK:** The 9am worship service and 10am Sunday School classes for children and youth, K-12, will not be offered next Sunday, December 31. All are welcome to join us for the 11am service on Dec 31st. The 9am services and Sunday School classes resume on January 7, 2024.

**JACK'S JAZZ FEST:** Jack's Jazz Fest will be held December 31 from 1-4 pm at Friends Congregational Church. This event is dedicated to one of Jack's loves, Jazz. Music was his passion and he loved learning about its history and learning to play with soulful expression. Come celebrate his life, beautiful music, participate in an art contest, a gumbo cook off, and learn from a living museum. There will be crafts, games, music, and more. There will be a silent auction, with 100% of the proceeds benefitting the youth group's summer mission trip. 28% of the t-shirt profits will benefit Wellborn Middle School Jazz Band Club. 100% of the fun will help keep his memory alive and spread awareness about the importance of mental and physical health. Visit our social media or text 979-204-5517 for more information or to sign up for the gumbo cook off or art contest. You may also purchase a t-shirt in advance for \$15 via text or at the event.

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### Friends Church Staff

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#### Director of Music Ministries

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#### Executive Pastor

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#### Administrative Assistant

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