









11:00 a.m. Worship • December 22, 2024

Exploring Faith. Changing Lives.

Sardis Presbyterian Church is an inclusive congregation called to equip disciples of Jesus Christ to impact the world by:

-  **PRAISING** God our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer
-  **LEARNING** about God's will for our lives
-  **LOVING** one another unconditionally
-  **SERVING** neighbors near and far
-  **SHARING** the gifts with which we have been blessed
-  **WITNESSING** to the Good News of Jesus Christ to provide hope for the world.

We are honored that you chose to worship God with us this morning. If you are looking for a church home, we would love to help you explore the possibility that Sardis is the place God is calling you to worship and serve.

WORSHIP



December 22, 2024

THE CHAPEL (through the doors to left of the pulpit) is available, with audio of the worship service, for those who need it (e.g. families with young children, those with health challenges, etc.).

HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES with disposable ear coverings are available. Please speak with an usher and they will provide one for you. Additionally, Sardis now has a hearing loop in the Sanctuary. If your hearing aid has a t-coil, please sit in the main section of the sanctuary to take advantage of this technology.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY is provided in the main body of the Sanctuary, on the side aisles on the seventh pew, and in the transept area. A handicap unisex bathroom is located in the left rear hallway.

PASTORAL EMERGENCIES: After hours and on weekends or holidays, please call the church office and leave a message, including a call-back number. A Pastor will be in touch with you shortly.

Welcome! Our guest organist today is Lois Buesser.

WORSHIPING GOD TOGETHER

† Rise in body or in spirit.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE Christmas Processional and Medley *Jefferey Hall*
Coventry Ringers

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS Rev. Dr. Allysen Schaaf

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF LOVE AND CALL TO WORSHIP The Delaney Family

Leader: Today we light the candle of Love. This candle reminds us that God's story is all about love. Love created. Love was born in the flesh. Love is still on the way. The shepherds showed up to see this love. The magi travel from afar to honor this love. An angel of the Lord sent word to protect this love.

People: Love is for me. Love is for you. Love is for our neighbors. Love is God's gift to share with the world.

Leader: This Advent,

All: may we see how God's story of love is still ongoing.

Leader: This Advent,

All: may we add to God's story of love in the ways we share and invite others.

Leader: In the light of the candle of love, I invite you to turn and greet our online worshippers and then turn to welcome a neighbor and share with each other:
Who is someone who shares Christ's love with you?

† HYMN #105 People, Look East *Besançon*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION Nancy Finlayson

God, we confess that we have placed limits on the ways love can be experienced and shared. We confess that we have overlooked the very presence of your love in our midst. Forgive us for trying to place boundaries around love. Forgive us for the times we have not loved ourselves and our neighbors as you have loved us. Open our eyes to see your love being born among us. Expand our awareness to see the presence of a love that is deeper, fuller, and truer than we ever could have hoped for. May your love change us and lead us to be present with love in the world. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON Nancy Finlayson

Leader: Friends, believe the Good News.

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

† RESPONSE **Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!** *Gloria*

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES OF CHRIST Amanda Hooks

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION Dr. Schaaf

FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 2:8-20 Dr. Schaaf



The poinsettias in the sanctuary are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Azilee and Bill Tucker and Thelma Ellett by the Tucker family.



ANTHEM

Night of Silence

Daniel Kantor

Agape Singers, Wesley Ashely, guitar, Henry Uslan, flute

Cold are the people, Winter of life, We tremble in shadows this cold endless night, Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping, Flowers that will echo the sunrise, Fire of hope is our only warmth, Weary its flame will be dying soon. Voice in the distance, Call in the night, On wind you enfold us You speak of the light, Gentle on the ear you whisper softly, Rumors of a dawn so embracing, Breathless love awaits darkened souls, Soon will we know of the morning. Spirit among us, Shine like the star, Your light that guides shepherds and kings from afar, Shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely, Rising in the warmth of your Son's love, Star unknowing of night and day, Spirit we wait for your loving Son.

SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON

Matthew 2:1-12

Rev. Dr. Joe B. Martin

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Room in the Story for You and Your Neighbor

Dr. Martin

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

† HYMN #113

Angels We Have Heard on High

Gloria

† AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Nicene Creed (4th Century)

Nancy Finlayson

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Dr. Schaaf

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, forever. Amen.

THE PRESENTATION OF GOD'S TITHE AND OUR OFFERING

Dr. Schaaf

Please place your Prayer Request Cards in the offering basket.

OFFERTORY

The Shepherds' Carol— Traditional Austrian Carol
Sanctuary Choir

arr. Dan Forrest

As lately we watched o'er our fields through the night, a star there was seen of such glorious light. All through the night, angles did sing. Carols so sweet of the birth of a King. His throne is a manger, his court is a loft. But hosts of bright angels, in strains sweet and soft, Him they proclaim, our Christ by name, and earth, sky, and air straight are filled with His Fame.

The, shepherds, be joyful, salute your new King, let hills and vales ring to the song that ye sing. Blest be the hour, welcome the morn for Christ our dear Savior on earth now is born.

† DOXOLOGY #606

Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow

Old Hundredth

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God all creatures here below;

Praise God above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Ushers today are members of the Worship Ministry.

God's children of all ages are welcome in worship! Children's worship activity bags can be found at the front entrance and in the younger children's worship space. The open space in the front right is provided for children 5 and under to experience all aspects of worship in ways that meet their developmental needs. Audio of the service can be heard in the Chapel if you and your child need to step out for a bit and the nursery is also open during worship for children 5 years and younger in the Education Building. Ask an usher if you need directions and speak with one of the pastors or Amanda Hooks if you have questions about how best to include your child in the experience of worship.

We have several offering options for you!

Option 1: Make a credit card gift online using your mobile device: go to sardis.org and click on "Make a Gift Now"

Option 2: Text 'Sardis + amount' to 73256 (e.g. 'Sardis 100' = \$100)

Option 3: Click the QR code here to go directly to the secure online form.



Option 4: Place your offering in the offering plate.

Thank you for your gifts and support of Sardis Presbyterian Church.

SENT BY THE WORD

† HYMN #136

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Go Tell It

† BLESSING AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

Dr. Martin

Leader: The peace of Jesus Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.*Let's pass that peace with one another
before we follow Jesus by carrying it out into the world.*

POSTLUDE

The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns

David N. Johnson**THIS WEEK AT SARDIS****Tuesday, December 24**

4:00 p.m. Contemporary Christmas Eve Service Fellowship Hall

7:00 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Service Sanctuary

9:00 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Service with Communion Sanctuary

Wednesday, December 25**MERRY CHRISTMAS!!****Thursday, December 26**

Church Office Closed

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Room In The Inn Donations And Volunteers Are Needed. Please use the QR code at the bottom of the page to sign up!

Christmas Eve Worship Services. Invite your friends and neighbors to join you in celebrating the birth of Christ at Sardis. We have three Christmas Eve worship service offerings:

- **4:00 p.m.** Contemporary Family Christmas Eve service in the Fellowship Hall with special fellowship opportunities like a photo booth, crafts, Christmas book giveaway, and more! The nursery will be open for this service.
- **7:00 p.m.** Traditional candlelight worship in the Sanctuary.
- **9:00 p.m.** Traditional candlelight worship in the Sanctuary with Sacrament of Holy Communion.

If you would like to be a Scripture Reader on Christmas Eve, use the QR code below!

We Welcome New Ushers to participate each week at the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services. Instructions and coordinators will be provided by one of the church ministries. Use the QR code below to sign up!

Youth Parent Programming. Parents and grandparents of middle and high school youth please join us on January 5th at 6:00 p.m. for dinner and a conversation with Amanda McGough (Ph.D., Psychologist, and Sardis Youth Parent) about Suicide Prevention. Amanda will share about risk factors and warning signs of suicide, and what you can do to help yourself or a loved one. With rising mental health concerns in our country, Charlotte school systems, and our own church, we hope you will join us for this important conversation. Together we can create and open and supportive culture around suicide prevention. Register by Thursday, January 2nd using the QR code below.

MLK Day of Service for Children and Families: Join us Monday, January 20 from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall for a meaningful day of service that honors Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy of community support and compassion! Children ages 5-elementary school are invited to participate in service projects that will help our community, including our partners with Roof Above/Room in the Inn, Nourish Up, Crisis Assistance, and Charlotte Family Housing. Visit sardis.org/events to register.

Sardis Sign-Up Genius! Use this QR code to access any and all Sardis Sign-Ups.



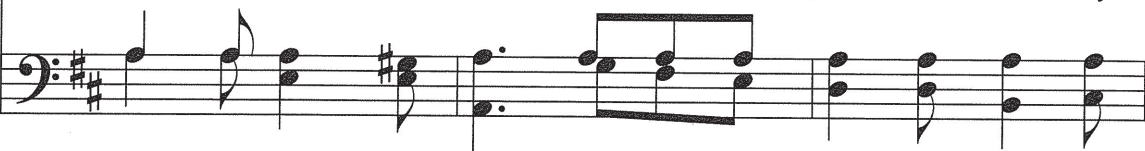
People, Look East



1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the
 2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more
 3 Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the
 4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more
 5 An - gels, an - nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who



crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are
 seed is plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to
 nest that must be filled. E - ven the hour when wings are
 light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y
 brings new life to earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley



Peo - ple, look



a - ble; trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.
 nour - ish, that in course the flower may flour - ish.
 fro - zen God for fledg - ing time has cho - sen.
 weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.
 hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.



This text was written to provide a new Advent text for an existing carol tune, here named for the city in eastern France where it originated. The author has imaginatively expressed the cosmic implications of Christ's coming by addressing each stanza to a part of creation.

east and sing to - day:

Peo - ple, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.
 Love, the Rose, is on the way.
 Love, the Bird, is on the way.
 Love, the Star, is on the way.
 Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Peo - ple, look east: (Love is on the way.)

Prepare the Way, O Zion 106

G C D7 G C D Gsus G

- 1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!
- 2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.
- 3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sav - ior's rule em - brace,

G C D7 G C D Gsus G

Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.
 His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.
 and ti - dings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.

Em D G A7 D A D Em A7 D

Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
 Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.
 All lands will bow re - joic - ing, their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.

Refrain

G Em Dsus D Em Am D7 G

O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

This engaging Advent text based on Isaiah 40:3–5 and Psalm 24:7–10 has been in use in the Church of Sweden for almost two hundred years. It is set to a version of an even older Swedish tune, which in turn seems to be derived from a German folktune that spread to Scandinavia.

113 Angels We Have Heard on High

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;

and the moun-tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
 What the glad - some ti - dings be which in - spire your heav-en-ly song?
 come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.

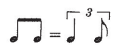
Refrain

Glo - - - ri - a

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

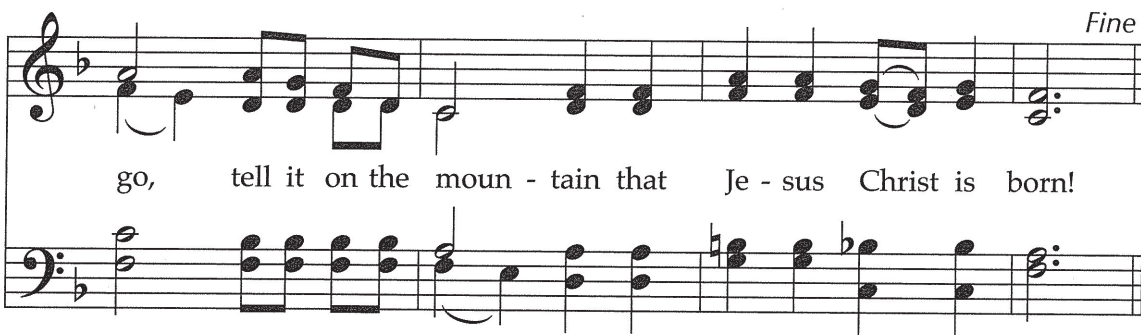
This French carol probably dates from the 1700s, though it was not printed until the following century. Because it uses a vernacular language for the narrative stanzas and Latin for the refrain, it belongs to a special category called "macaronic" or mixed-language texts.

136 Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain 

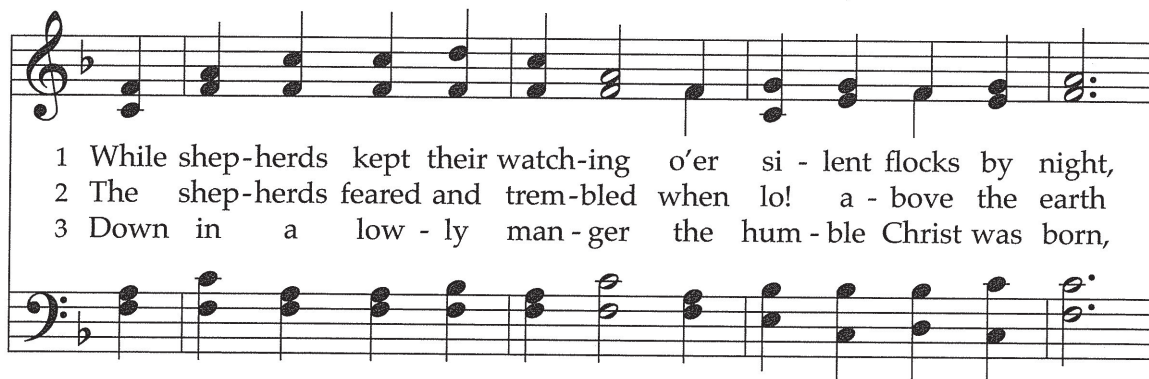


Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;

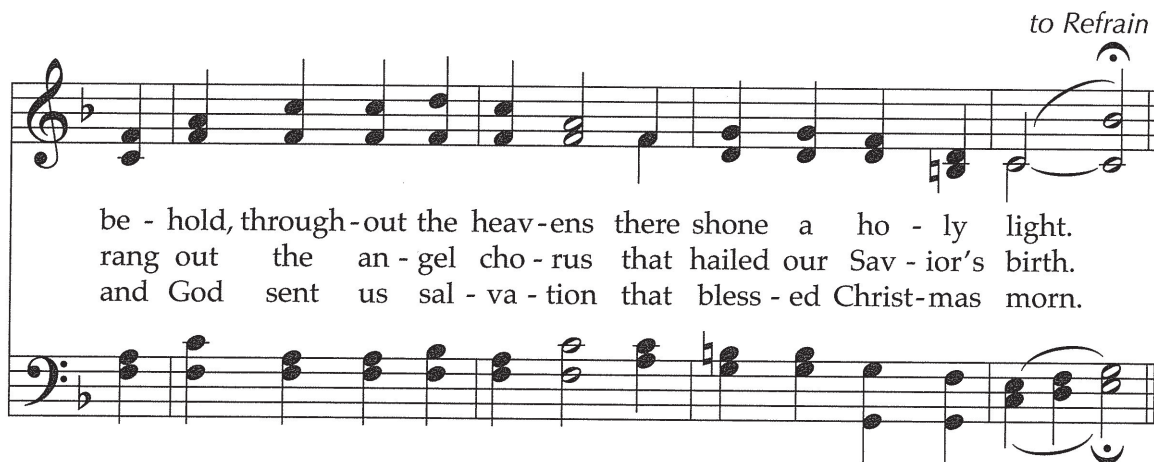


go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!

Fine



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth
 3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,



to Refrain

be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
 rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
 and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

Like other material from oral traditions, 19th-century African American spirituals flourished without being written down. Their refrains were their most stable parts, and narrative stanzas were often improvised to fit. These Nativity stanzas attempt to recall that tradition.