



Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin, mother and child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night, Child of God, love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
Bring the dawn of redeeming grace;
Jesus Christ at Thy birth, Jesus Christ at Thy birth.

Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing, alleluias to our King;
Christ, the Savior, is born, Christ, the Savior, is born.

—Joseph Mohr, 1818



Carols and Communion
Old South Church *in* Boston

Carols and Communion

December 24th, 2023 ★ 11:00 p.m.

PRELUDE

Greensleeves

Richard Purvis

CHORAL INTROIT

O magnum mysterium

Morten Lauridsen

O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament, that animals
should see the newborn Lord, lying in a manger!

O blessed virgin, whose womb was worthy to bear the Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia!

—*from the Matins for Christmas Day*

*CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES

**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:

**O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

**God from God, Light from Light eternal,
Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Only-begotten Son of the Father! (*refrain*)**

**Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! (*refrain*)**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! (*refrain*)**

* *Indicates all who are able may stand*

*CHRISTMAS PRAYER BY FREDERICK BUECHNER

One: Holy Jesus, O Son of the Most High, Prince of Peace,
be born again into our world.

Many: Wherever there is war in this world, wherever there is pain,

One: Wherever there is loneliness, wherever there is no hope, come.

Many: Come, O long-expected one, with healing in your wings.

One: Holy Child, whom the shepherds and the kings
and the dumb beasts adored, be born again.

Many: Wherever there is boredom, wherever there is fear of failure,

One: Wherever there is temptation too strong to resist,
wherever there is bitterness of heart,

Many: Come, O Blessed One, with healing in your wings.

One: Savior, be born in each of us as we raise our faces to your face,
not knowing fully who we are or who you are,

**Many: Knowing only that your love is beyond our knowing
and that no other has the power to make us whole.**

**Come, Lord Jesus, to each who longs for you
even though we have forgotten your name. Come quickly. Amen.**

WELCOME

Ashley J. Popperson

ANTHEM

Long, Long Ago

Herbert Howells

Long, long ago, Oh! so long ago
Christ was born in Bethlehem to heal the world's woe.

His mother in the stable watched him where he lay
and knew for all his frailty he was the world's stay.

While he lay there sleeping in the quiet night
she listened to his breathing and oh! her heart was light.

She tended him and nursed him, giving him her breast,
and knew that it was God's son in her crook'd arm at rest.

Shepherds at the sheepfolds knew him for their King;
and gold and myrrh and frankincense three wise men did bring.

For he should be the Saviour, making wars to cease,
who gives joy to all people, and brings to them peace.

Long, long ago, Oh! so long ago
Christ was born in Bethlehem to heal the world's woe.

—*John Buxton*

The First Lesson

Isaiah 9:2-7

Nancy Lane

*CAROL

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

ES IST EIN' ROS

**Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming as saints of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright, amid the cold of winter
when half spent was the night.**

**Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind:
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior
when half spent was the night.**

THE SECOND LESSON

Luke 1:26-35

David Story

*CAROL

O Little Town of Bethlehem

SAINT LOUIS

**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.**

**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!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.**

**O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!**

THE THIRD LESSON

Luke 2:1-20

Ashley J. Popperson

THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

John M. Edgerton

*CAROL

Angels We Have Heard on High

GLORIA

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.**

refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song? (*refrain*)**

**Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
come adore on bended knee, Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. (*refrain*)**

THE FOURTH LESSON

Matthew 2:1-12

Donald A. Wells

*CAROL

The First Noël

THE FIRST NOËL

**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:**

refrain:

Noël, Noël, Noël, Noël, born is the King of Israel.

**Then they looked up and saw a star,
shining in the east, beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night: (*refrain*)**

**This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay: (*refrain*)**

**Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of naught,
and with his love our life hath sought: (*refrain*)**

THE CHRISTMAS PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER *Unison*

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.

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Rachel J. Barton



To give via ApplePay, GooglePay, or with a Credit Card,
scan the QR code with your smartphone camera.
You can also Text 44-321 and enter OSC to make a gift.

OFFERTORY

Joy to the World

John Rutter

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let Earth receive its King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns;
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love, and wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.

—Isaac Watts

THE FIFTH LESSON

John 1:1-14

Rachel J. Barton

*CAROL

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN

**Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

**Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate deity,
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Ashley J. Popperson

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION

Berceuse

Louis Vierne

*RECESSIONAL

The Holy Boy

John Ireland

*CAROL

Silent Night

STILLE NACHT

(text may be found on front cover)

*BENEDICTION

John M. Edgerton

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

OLD SOUTH CLOSED DECEMBER 25th THROUGH 30th

The staff of Old South has been running at top speed this fall creating and carrying out our signature services. To allow them time to rest and prepare for the start of the new year, the church will be closed the week between Christmas and New Year's Eve. May you and yours have a blessed Christmas and a most joyous New Year!



NEW YEAR'S EVE AT OLD SOUTH

NEW YEAR'S EVE MORNING WORSHIP

Saturday, December 31st, 10 a.m.

Join us for a simple service to celebrate the coming of the New Year!

BOSTON FIRST NIGHT: PIPES AND POPS

Sunday, December 31st, 7 p.m.

Free and open to the public

The best of Boston's brass and percussion artists join organist Mitchell Crawford in a supersonic program of popular classics and holiday favorites. Featuring fun and engaging programming for the whole family, this concert includes a seasonal sing of "Auld Lang Syne" and "Winter Wonderland". Experience Old South's incredible E. M. Skinner organ, with over 7,000 room-shaking pipes!

WEEKLY WORSHIP

Join us in person, on Vimeo, Facebook, and YouTube

FIRST Worship Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

FESTIVAL Worship Sundays at 11:00 a.m.

HEALING Worship, the second Sunday at 12:30 p.m. via Zoom

Old South Church in Boston thanks you for blessing us with your presence this Christmas Eve two-thousand & twenty-three and a special thanks for the leadership of John Edgerton, Ashley Popperson, Rachel Barton, Don Wells, David Story, Nancy Lane, George Sargeant, & members of the Old South Choir.

A NOTE ON THE INCLUSIVE DIMENSIONS OF GOD'S GRACE

Old South Church in Boston, in the name of its host, Jesus Christ, and in the spirit of Christ's invitation carved into the stone of this church's portico, "Behold I Set Before You an Open Door," welcomes all who seek to know God. Following the One who we believe is Sovereign and Savior, we affirm that each individual is a child of God, and recognize that we are called to be like one body with many members, seeking with others of every race, ethnicity, creed, class, age, gender, marital status, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression to journey together toward the promised realm of God. We invite everyone to join in the common life and mission of our reconciling community through participation and leadership in this congregation, and by fully sharing in the worship, rites and sacraments of this church. As we all move forward with the work of this church, we commit ourselves to making justice and inclusivity a reality in this congregation and in the world. On the threshold of Christ's open door, we rely upon the healing, unconditional nature of God's love and grace to be our help and guide.