



A Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols for Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025 ☆ 8:00 p.m.

OLD SOUTH CHURCH *in* BOSTON

It is Christmas time, a halting-of-hate time.
On this platform of peace, we can create a language
to translate ourselves to ourselves and to each other.
At this holy instant, we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.
—from Maya Angelou's *Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem*

PRELUDE

The First Noël
What Child Is This?
It Came upon the Midnight Clear

Smith and Hustad, *arrs.*

*CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES

O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
God of God, Light of Light e - ter - nal,
Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion!
Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing;

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem!
Lo! he dis - dains not the vir - gin's womb;
Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a - bove:
Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry giv'n;

Come and be - hold him, born the King of An - gels!
tru - ly our God, be - got - ten, not cre - at - ed:
"Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est!"
Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing.

Refrain
O come, let us a - dore him; O come, let us a - dore him;

O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord!

Text: John Francis Wade, c. 1743; trans. Frederick Oakeley, 1841, alt.
Tune: ADESTE FIDELES, John Francis Wade, c. 1743

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION *adapted from Frederick Buechner*

Ashley J. Popperson

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

**Wherever there is war in this world,
wherever there is pain;**

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

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

Holy Child, whom the shepherds and the kings
and the wild beasts adored, be born again.

* Indicates all who are able may stand

Wherever there is boredom,
wherever there is fear of failure;
 Wherever there is temptation too strong to resist,
 wherever there is bitterness of heart;
Come, O Blessed One,
with healing in your wings.
 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;
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

*CAROL

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS



O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
 For Christ is born of Mar - y and, gath - ered all a - bove,
 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!
 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.
 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heaven.
 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;
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
 No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;



the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
 and prais - es sing to God the king, and peace to those on earth.
 where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us; a - bide with us, our Lord Em - ma - nu - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1868, alt.

Tune: ST. LOUIS, Lewis Henry Redner, 1868

THE FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 40:1-11

Jack Millard

The prophet speaks of a world reconfigured by the coming of God's anointed one.

ANTHEM

I Wonder as I Wander

Kyle Pederson, *arr.*

I wonder as I wander out under the sky
how Jesus the Savior had come for to die;
for poor ornery people like you and like I—
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

The gift in the manger is given for all,
the strong and heroic, the lost and the small.
Christ bids to our stone hearts, "Come soften and give,"
and offers his own heart so others may live.

How I, a mere mortal, may look up in awe
as Bethlehem's star beckons me through the dawn;
it shines on the manger, the Prince of all peace,
and bids me to wonder, "Is this gift for me?"

I wonder as I wander out under the sky
how the light of the heavens is born in this child.
The universe dances with glory and grace,
and I gaze in the manger and see love's face.

Emmanuel.

Emmanuel.

I wonder as I wander out under the sky;
I wonder under the sky.

THE SECOND LESSON

Luke 1:26-35; 38

June R. Cooper

The angel Gabriel announces to Mary the fullness of time.

ANTHEM

The Holly and the Ivy

Rutland Boughton, *arr.*

The holly and the ivy, when they are both full grown,
of all the trees that are in the wood, the holly bears the crown.

*The rising of the sun and the running of the deer,
the playing of the merry organ, sweet singing in the choir.*

The holly bears a blossom as white as the lily flower,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ to be our sweet savior.

The holly bears a berry as red as any blood,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ for to do us sinners good.

The holly bears a prickle as sharp as any thorn,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ on Christmas day in the morn.

The holly bears a bark as bitter as any gall,
and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ for to redeem us all.

THE THIRD LESSON

Luke 2:1-16

Manuel Navia

When the time is come, the holy birth is revealed first to shepherds.

*CAROL

Angels We Have Heard on High

GLORIA



An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
 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 tid - ings be which in - spire your heav - enly 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 - - - - -



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

Text: French carol; trans. James Chadwick, 1860; adapt. H. F. Hémy, 1864

Tune: GLORIA, French carol, adapted

THE FOURTH LESSON

Matthew 2:1-12

Tim Lynch

Sages led by a star encounter the power of evil and the Epiphany of Love.

ANTHEM

Go Where I Send Thee!

Paul Caldwell and Sean Ivory, *arrs.*

*Children, go where I send thee!
 Children, how shall I send thee?*

I'm gonna send thee one by one:
 one for the little bitty baby,
 the baby boy born in Bethlehem.

I'm gonna send thee two by two:
 two for Paul and Silas;
 one for the little bitty baby...

I'm gonna send thee six by six:
 six for the days
 when the world was fixed;
 five for the bread they did divide;
 four for the Gospel writers;
 three for the Hebrew children;
 two for Paul and Silas...

...twelve by twelve:
 twelve for the twelve disciples;
 eleven of 'em singin' in heaven;
 ten for the ten commandments;
 nine for the angel choirs divine;
 eight for the eight the flood couldn't take;
 seven for the day God laid down his head;
 six for the days
 when the world was fixed...

*CAROL

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king;
 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
 Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of right - eous - ness!



Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"
 late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.
 Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.



Joy - ful all ye na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;
 Veiled in flesh the God - head see; hail the in - car - nate de - i - ty,
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



with the an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
 pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - ma - nu - el.
 born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.



Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new - born king!"

Text: Charles Wesley, 1739, alt.

Tune: MENDELSSOHN, Felix Mendelssohn, 1840;
adapt. W. H. Cummings, 1855

THE FIFTH LESSON

John 1:1-16 (*selections*)

Pamela Roberts

John ponders the mystical convergence of God's holy time and human time.

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.

Enough for him whom cherubim worship night and day,
 a breastful of milk and a mangerful of hay;
 enough for him whom angels fall down before,
 the ox and ass and camel which adore.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
 heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
 in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
 the Lord God Almighty — Jesus Christ.

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 I give him: give my heart.

CALL TO THE OFFERING

Rachel J. Barton



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

If you're new to Old South,
 scan the QR code with your
 smartphone camera
 to tell us more about yourself.



OFFERTORY

Shepherd's Pipe Carol

John Rutter

Going through the hills on a night all starry on the way to Bethlehem,
 far away I heard a shepherd boy piping on the way to Bethlehem.

*Angels in the sky brought this message nigh: "Dance and sing for joy that Christ the newborn King
 is come to bring us peace on earth, and he's lying cradled there at Bethlehem."*

"Tell me, shepherd boy piping tunes so merrily on the way to Bethlehem,
 who will hear your tunes on these hills so lonely on the way to Bethlehem?"

"None may hear my pipes on these hills so lonely on the way to Bethlehem;
 but a King will hear me play sweet lullabies when I get to Bethlehem."

*Angels in the sky came down from on high, hovered o'er the manger where the babe was lying
 cradled in the arms of his mother Mary, sleeping now at Bethlehem.*

"Where is this new King, shepherd boy piping merrily, is he there at Bethlehem?"
 "I will find him soon by the star shining brightly in the sky o'er Bethlehem."

"May I come with you, shepherd boy piping merrily, come with you to Bethlehem?
 Pay my homage too at the new King's cradle; is it far to Bethlehem?"

*Angels in the sky brought this message nigh: "Dance and sing for joy that Christ the infant King
 is born this night in lowly stable yonder — born for you at Bethlehem."*

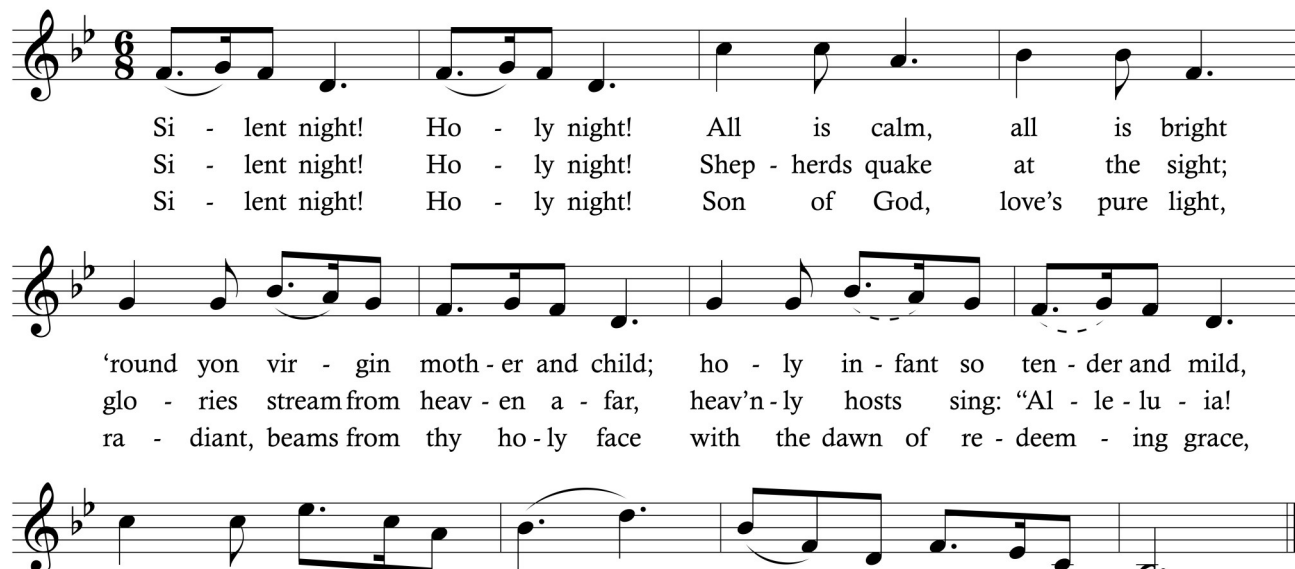
PASSING THE LIGHT

John M. Edgerton

CAROL *seated*

Silent Night! Holy Night!

STILLE NACHT



Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright
Si - lent night! Ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight;
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 mild,
glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, heav'n - ly hosts sing: "Al - le - lu - ia!
ra - diant, beams from thy ho - ly face with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace,

sleep in heav - en - ly peace! Sleep in heav - en - ly peace!
Christ the Sav - ior is born! Christ the Sav - ior is born!"
Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth! Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth!

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1816; English trans. John Freeman Young, 1863

Tune: STILLE NACHT, Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818

Silence is kept.

BENEDICTION

John M. Edgerton

*CAROL *see next page*

Joy to the World!

ANTIOCH

POSTLUDE

A Joyous Christmas

John Leavitt, *arr.*

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NEW YEAR'S AT OLD SOUTH

BOSTON FIRST NIGHT: PIPES AND POPS CONCERTS

Wednesday, December 31, 6:30 and 8 pm, Old South Church in Boston

The best of Boston's brass and percussion artists join organist Mitchell Crawford in a supersonic program of popular classics. Featuring fun and engaging programming for the whole family, this concert includes a seasonal sing of "Let There Be Peace on Earth." Experience Old South's incredible E. M. Skinner organ, with over 7,000 room-shaking pipes! Free and open to the public.

PAJAMA CHURCH

Sunday December 28, Single Worship Service at 10am

Come for a relaxed celebration of Christmastide as we worship God who is with us, Emmanuel. Come in your pajamas or coziest of clothes, bring a loved one and settle in with us to experience the love of God coming into our world.

Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth
Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns: let all
No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns
He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes
re - ceive her King! let eve - ry heart pre - pare him
their songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
in - fest the ground: he comes to make his bless - ings
the na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous -
room, and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing!
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1719, alt.

Tune: ANTIOCH, attr. George Frederick Handel, 1742;

arr. Lowell Mason, 1836

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

*Many members and friends have given donations to the
Allston-Brighton Food Pantry
 in lieu of flowers this festive season.
 A booklet listing those who gave is on the table at the back of the Sanctuary.*

A Merry Christmas
 to you & yours from the
 Old South Church Staff!

Old South Church *in* Boston invites you
to its *Signature Services and Events* during the coming year.

HOLY WEEK 2026

Palm Sunday — March 29 | 9AM & 11AM

Maundy Thursday — April 2 | 6PM

Good Friday — April 3 | 7PM

EASTER SUNDAY

April 5, 2026 | 9AM & 11AM

The triumph of the Christian story of resurrection informs a service of worship that is characterized by joyous celebration.

MARATHON SUNDAY

April 19, 2026 | 9AM & 11AM

Hundreds of marathoners join us for worship, where we will pause to acknowledge the runners, their families, and volunteers in a special “Blessing of the Athletes.”

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

November 1, 2026 | 11AM

In a solemn service of sacred music, we gather to name and remember our own beloved dead who now rest from their labors in the arms of God.

MEETING HOUSE SUNDAY

November 26, 2026 | 11AM

We return to our ancestral home, the Old South Meeting House at Washington & Milk Streets, to give thanks for God's many blessings and the rich history of our faith.

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2026

Family Service with Impromptu Pageant | 5PM

Lessons and Carols | 8PM

Carols and Communion | 11PM

WEEKLY WORSHIP

Join us in person, on Facebook, and YouTube

FIRST Worship Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

FESTIVAL Worship Sundays at 11:00 a.m.

THURSDAY NIGHT CHURCH Thursdays at 6:00 p.m.

HEALING Worship, the second Sunday at 5p.m. via Zoom

WELCOME TO OLD SOUTH CHURCH

Welcome to Old South Church in Boston. We are a progressive Christian church first gathered in 1669. The Church played a significant role in early American history. Today, Old South Church continues to serve as a sanctuary in the city of Boston.

NEW AT OLD SOUTH?

Welcome! We are so glad you're here! If you have any questions or would like to talk to a minister to learn more about the church, contact Associate Minister Ashley Popperson at ashley@oldsouth.org.

Children are welcome in all aspects of worship. We also offer childcare from 8:20am-12:30pm every Sunday and Church School at 10am. For questions about our children's and family ministries, email children@oldsouth.org.

For LARGE print bulletins or children's bulletins, please ask an Usher.

An accessible, single-stall restroom is available near Reception. More restrooms are available, ask at the reception desk.

HEARING ASSISTANCE

Our hearing loop works directly with devices equipped with a "T-Coil." The sound is best if you sit further inside the pews, away from the aisles. The loop does not work in the upper galleries. If you would like to borrow a device paired with our system, please ask an usher.

LEARN MORE

Check out the church website www.oldsouth.org for more on the history and ministries of Old South. See www.oldsouth.org/calendar for a calendar of current events.

CCLI #2802138 ☆CCS #12028 ☆ OneLicense #A-700000

OLD SOUTH CHURCH *in* BOSTON — MINISTERS, OFFICERS, & STAFF

John M. Edgerton, *Senior Minister*

Ashley J. Popperson, *Associate Minister* ❖ Rachel J. Barton, *Associate Minister for Transformation*

Kat Woodard, *Taylor Resident for Mission in the City* ❖ Justin Dickerson, *Seminarian*

Donald A. Wells, *Theologian in Residence* ❖ June R. Cooper, *Theologian in the City*

David F. Story, *Wedding Minister* ❖ Kenneth H. Orth, *Healing Worship Minister*

James W. Crawford, *Senior Minister Emeritus* ❖ Nancy S. Taylor, *Senior Minister Emeritus*

Mitchell Crawford, *Minister of Music*

Jonathan Reddix, *Collaborative Pianist* ❖ Jan Christoph Hadenfeldt, *Visiting Organist*

Audrey Woodhams, *Creative Director for Thursday Night Church*

Tim Harbold, *Director, Gospel Choir* ❖ Peter Coulombe, *Director, Old South Ringers*

Kate Nintcheu, *Director, Children & Family Ministries*

Summer Marsh, *Director, Old South Preschool*

Aislin Kate Anderson, *Children's Choir Director* ❖ Yuexuan Joyce Wang, *Children's Choir Accompanist*

Rory Razon, *Youth Group Co-Leader*

Amelia Gerrard, *Director of Administration* ❖ Rebecca Pasipanodya, *Director of Operations*

Rémy Hatfield-Gardner, *Administrative Assistant* ❖ Kathleen Steen, *Staff Accountant*

Emily Ross, *Archivist* ❖ Karen Hand, *Wedding Coordinator*

Jamie Garuti Sage, *Multimedia Director* ❖ Ava Welling, *Director of Audio*

Rémy Hatfield-Gardner & William Wei, *Livestream Production Assistants*

Elias Perez, *Senior Sexton* ❖ Tahmina Akter, Richard Serebour, & M.D. Rahman, *Sextons*

Corey Spence, *Weekday Receptionist*

Shirley Bivins, Shelia Randolph, & William Wei, *Evening & Weekend Receptionists*

Maren Batalden, *Moderator* ❖ Rob Gabler, *Clerk* ❖ Donna Matson, *Treasurer*

Debby Kuenstner, *Chair, Board of Trustees* ❖ Kate Silfen, *Historian*

Rebecca Bowen & Laurie Stickels, *Senior Deacons*

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



OLD
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