



December 28, 2025, 10:30 am
1st Sunday of Christmas

Welcome to worship! Led by the Holy Spirit, we glorify God, nurture the faith with each other, and witness the fullness of Christ's love in the world. Beyond the pews, we hope you will grow in faith with us on Sunday mornings and throughout the week. Our weekly announcements are posted online. We are glad you are here today!

ORDER OF WORSHIP

◇We rise in body or spirit.

We say or sing words in bold together.

GATHERING

Prelude

What Child Is This?

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Elizabeth Lovell Milford

Gathering Prayer

God of good news, you meet us here. You listen to our fears. You remind us that we are not alone. You surround us with people who love us. You show us where we are strong. You walk beside us. And you give us a new song to sing. Joy to the world! You have come! Amen.

Congregational Introit (Carol 132, verse 1) *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

Call to Worship

Liturgist: Chelsea Land

In worship, we hear God's story and we ask,

"What did God do long ago?"

In worship, we hear God's story, so we ask,

"What is God doing, here and now?"

In worship, we hear God's story, then we ask,

"What can I do to respond to it all?"

Listen, God is speaking.

Listen, it may be time to act.

Let us worship our moving, inspiring, with-us God.

◇Carol 123, verses 1 & 5 *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,

From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:

*"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all-gracious King":
the world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.*

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,

when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,

when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,

and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

◇Prayer of Confession

Emmanuel, God with us, scripture tells us that you were a refugee, but we love to forget that information. We love to forget every act of violence. We love to forget how many people go hungry, or how many students do not have access to good education. We love to forget the injustices in our world that feel too big for us to face. But you are a God who refuses to forget. So today we pray: make it impossible for us to overlook the stories of those in need. Make it impossible for us to sweep injustice under the rug. Open our eyes along with our hearts, so that the anger we feel around injustice might fuel a fire for action. With hope for a better tomorrow we pray, amen.

◇Assurance of Pardon

On our best days and on our worst days, we belong to God.

We are invited into community. We are held in God's grace.

We are forgiven. And we are sent to serve.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

◇Joyful Response (Carol 119, verse 3, refrain)

***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!"***

◇Peace and Greeting

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer for Illumination

Natasha Taylor

Scripture Reading: *Jeremiah 31:7-8,12-14*

p. 898 in the pew Bible

Poetry

Honeysuckle

Carol 129 (verses 1 & 3) *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

*Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming, by faithful prophets sung.
It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

This flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
Enfleshed, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us and lightens every load.*

Scripture Reading: *Isaiah 63:7-9*

p. 848 in the pew Bible

Poetry

God in the Kitchen

Carol 124

Still, Still, Still

*Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill!
The virgin's tender arms enfolding, warm and safe the child are holding.
Still, still, still, he sleeps this night so chill.*

*Sleep, sleep, sleep, he lies in slumber deep
while angel hosts from heaven come winging, sweetest songs of joy are singing.
Sleep, sleep, sleep, he lies in slumber deep.*

Scripture Reading: *Hebrews 2:10-18*

p. 265 in the pew Bible

Poetry

Until We Reach the Sun

Carol 145 (verse 1)

What Child Is This

*What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!*

Moment with the Children

Carol 115 (verses 1 and 3)

Away in a Manger

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

*Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.*

Scripture Reading: *Script for four voices based on Matthew 2:1-23*

Poetry

A Step Toward Home

Carol 147 (verses 3-5)

The First Nowell

*And by the light of that same star three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went.
Refrain: Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.*

*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 entered in those wise men three, full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense.
[Refrain]*

Scripture Reading: *Psalms 148*

p. 716 in the pew Bible

This is the word of faith that we proclaim. **Thanks be to God.**

◇Carol 134 (verses 2 and 4) *Joy to the World*

*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.*

*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.*

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

◇Affirmation of Faith

**We have seen the valley. We have seen a sky without stars.
We have seen the longest night, and *still* we believe.
We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow.
We believe that good news is louder than fear.
We believe this good news is for all people.**

**So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles,
even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news.
We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst.
We will sing songs of joy. We will proclaim: *Unto us, love is born.*
We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love.
So *still*, we believe. Amen.**

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

... forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ...

Presentation of Offerings

Gifts, tithes, and offerings may be placed in the plates at the Sanctuary entrance. We also give thanks to God for offerings given via mail and online at fredericksburgpc.org/give.

◇Song of Praise (Carol 151, verse 5 and refrain)

***Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and Sacrifice:
Alleluia! Alleluia! sounds through the earth and skies.
O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!***

◇Prayer of Dedication

SENDING

◇Carol 136

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

*Refrain: Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!*

*While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. [Refrain]*

*The shepherds feared and trembled when lo! above the earth,
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. [Refrain]*

*Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. [Refrain]*

◇Charge and Benediction

◇Postlude

Postlude on "Antioch"

arr. Gerald Peterson

Go in peace, sharing the good news of Christ's birth with joy!



Serving in Worship Today:

Choirmasters: Mary Ann & Larry Casey

Organist: Amy Shirk

Ushers: Sherman Brown, Erik Fino

Elevator Assistant: Jerry Zekert

Sanctuary Guild: Joan Darby, Maryann Piersall

Videographers: Trey Talmadge, Les Johnson

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It Came Upon the Midnight Clear--Text: Edmund Hamilton Sears, 1849, alt.; Public Domain
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Away in a Manger—Text: Stanzas 1-2, Little Children's Book for Schools and Families, c. 1805; Music: James R. Murray, 1887; Public Domain
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We Three Kings of Orient Are—Text: John Henry Hopkins Jr. 1857; Public Domain
Go, Tell It on the Mountain – Text: African American Spiritual, John W. Work II, 1940; Music: African American spiritual; arr. John W. Work III, 1940; harm. Melva Wilson Costen, 1987, Music Harm. ©1989 Melva Wilson Costen
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