

CHRISTMAS I WORSHIP

December 31, 2023

Gathering Hymn: "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

Hymnal #89

**1 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 men,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.**

**2 Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains,
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.**

**3 Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And warring humankind hears not
The tidings which they bring -
O hush the noise and cease your strife
And hear the angels sing!**

**4 For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet 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 send back the song
which now the angels sing.**

The Opening Verse & Invitatory

Officiant Behold, the dwelling of God is with humankind. God will dwell with them, and they shall be God's people; and God Themselves shall be with them, and be their God. *Revelation 21*

Officiant Lord, open our lips.

People **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Glory to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God;

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

Officiant Alleluia. Unto us a child is born: Come let us adore him. Alleluia.

Canticle: The Benedictus (Song of Zechariah)

Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel, *

you have come to your people and set them free.

You have raised up for us a mighty Savior, *

born of the house of your servant David.

Through your holy prophets you promised of old

to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us,

To show mercy to our forebears, *

and to remember your holy covenant.

This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham, *

to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship you without fear, *

holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *

for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,

To give God's people knowledge of salvation *

by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God

the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *

and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Psalms 147:1-12

Alleluia! How good it is to sing praises to you, O God; *

how pleasant it is to honor you with praise!

For you rebuild Jerusalem *

and gather the exiles of Israel.

You heal the brokenhearted *

and bind up their wounds.

You count the number of the stars *

and call them all by their names.

Great are you and mighty in power; *
there is no limit to your wisdom.

You lift up the lowly, *
but cast the wicked to the ground.

We sing to you, Most High, with thanksgiving; *
we make music to you upon the harp,

For you cover the heavens with clouds *
and prepare rain for the earth;

You make grass to grow upon the mountains *
and green plants to serve humankind.

You provide food for flocks and herds *
and for the young ravens when they cry.

You are not impressed by the might of a horse; *
you have no pleasure in human strength;

But you have pleasure in those who fear you, *
in those who await your gracious favor.

Glory to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

The First Reading: Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Reader A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.

The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.

You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Reader The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel Reading: Mt 1:20-21, 24-25; 2:13-17

Reader A reading from the Gospel of John.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Reader The word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Shared Reflection

The Prayers

Officiant We will continue in prayer. Let us hold a brief silence now, while we allow things to

come into our minds and hearts that we want to hold in prayer with our community

today, or blessings we would like to share.

A brief silence is kept.

Officiant You may wish to bow your head, open your hands, or prepare your body for prayer in some other way.

The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Officiant Now, let us pray as God's beloved children, using the prayer Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.**

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever.
Amen.**

The Prayers of the People

prayers@stdunstans.com.

Send prayer requests to to

Officiant Let us continue in prayer. We will hold up our needs and blessings to God.
You can speak your prayers out loud, type them into the Chat area, or hold them in your heart. As you are able, please hold others' prayer requests before God in your heart as well.

Officiant Let us pray for all churches and their leaders, and for all God's people everywhere.

The people may offer their prayers aloud.

Officiant Let us pray for all those in authority.

The people may offer their prayers aloud.

Officiant Let us pray for all nations and peoples.

The people may offer their prayers aloud.

Officiant Let us pray for the earth and the whole created order.

The people may offer their prayers aloud.

Officiant Let us pray for the communities where we live.

The people may offer their prayers aloud.

Officiant Let us pray for those in any need or trouble, especially those on our parish prayer list: You are invited to name others in need of prayer, and to hold up your own struggles to the light of God's love.

The people may offer additional names.

Officiant Let us pray for all who have died, and for those who mourn.

The people may offer additional names.

Officiant Let us pray for our common life and work as God's people.

The people may offer their prayers aloud.

The Collect of the Day

Officiant

Let us pray. Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ

our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Officiant may read one of the following Collects as well:

A Collect for Peace

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Collect for Grace

Lord God, almighty and everlasting One, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Collect for Guidance

Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sharing of Blessings

Announcements

The Peace

Celebrant In the tender mercy of our God,
the Dayspring from on high shall break upon us,
to give light to those who dwell in the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

People The peace of the Lord be always with you!

And also with you!

Shared Reading: "Ring Out, Wild Bells"

Alfred, Lord Tennyson;

altered & expanded by Pamela Grenfell Smith

First Reader Ring out, wild bells, to the wild, wild sky,
the flying cloud, the frosty light!
The year is dying in the night.
Ring out, wild bells, and let it die!
Ring out the old, ring in the new,
ring, happy bells, across the snow!

People **The year is going - let it go.**
Ring out the false, ring in the true!

<i>Second Reader</i>	<p>Ring out our selfish, heedless waste, the shattered trees, the poisoned earth. Ring in new joy at nature's worth, new trust in God's indwelling grace. Ring out the shame that turns our eyes from suffering creatures, ruined streams.</p>
<i>People</i>	<p>Ring in new roots for human dreams in livelihoods grown just and wise.</p>
<i>Third Reader</i>	<p>Ring out the want, the care, the sin, The faithless coldness of the times; Ring out, ring out thy mournful rhymes, But ring a fuller music in. Ring out false pride in place and blood, The civic slander and the spite;</p>
<i>People</i>	<p>Ring in the love of truth and right, Ring in the common love of good.</p>
<i>Fourth Reader</i>	<p>Ring out the grief that saps the mind, For those that here we see no more, Ring out the feud of rich and poor, Ring in redress to humankind. Ring out the engines of deceit, the rage for power, the lust for gold.</p>
<i>People</i>	<p>Ring out the thousand wars of old. Ring in, ring in the world at peace!</p>
<i>Officiant</i> <i>People</i>	<p>Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Thanks be to God!</p>