

**First Sunday of Christmas
December 31, 2023**

Gathering
God invites us to enter His presence

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Preparation for Worship (*Time for Silent Preparation*)

! Call to Worship (*Responsively*)

Hob Pusey

Lift up your hearts in prayer:
lift up your voices in praise.
Let your eyes rise in expectation
and your hands in exultation,
for the Lord has drawn near
and dwells among us.
We lift them up. Amen.

! Invocation

Hob Pusey

O God, our Father, creator of the universe,
whose Son, Jesus Christ, came to our world,
pour your Holy Spirit upon your church,
that all people of our world,
being led through the knowledge of your truth to worship you,
may offer the gold of intellect,
the frankincense of devotion,
and the myrrh of discipline
to him who, with you and the Holy Spirit,
lives and reigns for ever, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

! Hymn 145

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Confessing
God invites us to be honest with Him

Call to Confession

Hob Pusey

Today we celebrate that Jesus, our Lord, came to earth as a human,
just like us but without sin. He came so that we who sin may be freed
from sin. With the peace that comes from knowing Jesus came, let us
confess our sins and be forgiven.

Prayer of Confession *(Responsively)*

Hob Pusey

Generous God, you give us the greatest gift of all, yourself,
but often we find it hard to take notice; we are caught up with our own
gifts, given and received.

**Forgive us, generous God, for the casual way we treat your gift of
love. Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.**

Time for Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Hob Pusey

When the fullness of time had come,
God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,
in order to redeem those who were under the law,
so that we might receive adoption as children.

Leader: This is the Promise of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God!

 **Gloria Patri**

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
And to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning,
Is now and ever shall be, world without end.
A-men, A-men.*

Offering

Thankful of the gifts God has given us, we offer ourselves to Him

Invitation Let us give thanks to the Lord with all our being.
In the company of the upright, let us honor God for the
blessings and goodness we have received.

Offering

Offertory

 **Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A-men.*

 **Prayer of Dedication**

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 him my heart.

 **Hymn 152**

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

Proclaiming
God speaks to us through His Word

Scripture Reading

Galatians 4:1-7

⁴ Now I say that as long as the heir is a child, he differs in no way from a slave, though he is the owner of everything. ² Instead, he is under guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. ³ In the same way we also, when we were children, were in slavery under the elements of the world. ⁴ When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “*Abba, Father!*” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir.

Luke 2:17-20

¹⁷ After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard, which were just as they had been told.

Matthew 2:11-12

¹¹ Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And being warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route.

Sermon

“Christmas is About Christ”
Rev. Dr. Dennis Leshner

 **Hymn 138**

Go Tell it on the Mountain

Responding
We respond to God’s Word

 **Profession of Faith** (Belgic Confession)

**We believe that Jesus Christ,
according to his divine nature,
is the only Son of God—**

eternally begotten,
not made or created,
for then he would be a creature.
He is one in essence with the Father; coeternal;
the exact image of the person of the Father
and the "reflection of God's glory,"
being like the Father in all things.
Jesus Christ is the Son of God
not only from the time he assumed our nature
but from all eternity,
as the following testimonies teach us
when they are taken together.
Moses says that God created the world;
and John says that all things were created through the Word,
which he calls God.
The apostle says that God created the world through the Son.
He also says that God created all things through Jesus Christ.
And so it must follow
that the one who is called God, the Word, the Son, and Jesus
Christ
already existed before creating all things.
Therefore the prophet Micah says
that Christ's origin is "from ancient days."
And the apostle says that the Son has "neither beginning of days
nor end of life."
So then, he is the true eternal God, the Almighty,
whom we invoke, worship, and serve.

—Belgic Confession, Art. 10

Prayers of the People (*Responsively*)

All the ends of the earth
have seen the salvation of our God. Alleluia!
Shout to the Lord, all the earth. Alleluia!
O Christ, splendor of God's eternal glory,
the mighty Word, sustaining the universe:
Renew our lives by your presence.
Lord, have mercy.
O Christ, born into the world in the fullness of time
for the liberation of all creation:
Release all into your promised freedom.
Lord, have mercy.
O Christ, begotten of the Father before all time,
born in a stable at Bethlehem:
May your church be a sign of hope and joy.
Lord, have mercy.
O Christ, truly God and truly human,
born to a people in fulfillment of their expectations:
Fulfill our desires in you.
Lord, have mercy.
O Christ, born of the virgin Mary,
child of wonder and splendor,
Mighty God of all ages, Prince of Peace:
May the whole world live in peace and justice.
Lord, have mercy.

Commissioning

God sends us out into the world as His witnesses

 **Hymn 166**

We Three Kings

 **Benediction & Blessing**

 **Postlude**