



# Red Clay Creek

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

500 McKennans Church Road  
Wilmington DE 19808  
(302) 998-0434 / rccpc.org

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT / SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025 / 10 AM

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*Rooted in Love, Lighting the Way*  
*Welcome to worship, welcome to Red Clay, welcome home!*

*We're glad you're here. If needed, a family area with CCTV is in the narthex near the front doors, and our nursery is open for young children. Restrooms are available by exiting out the side door near the pulpit and turning left. After worship, join us for Coffee Hour in Founders Hall by the main parking lot. Please silence your cell phone as we enter into worship.*

## GATHER

PRELUDE                      Tidings of Comfort and Joy

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

One:            The Lord be with you.

**Many:        And also with you.**

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

*Ewa Papież, Ray & Catherine Shafer, Kathi Way*

**Many:        We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we  
welcome you in Christian love.**

MUSICAL OFFERING        Rise Up, Shepherd and Follow

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP & LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE**

One: Today we light the candle of love, remembering the star that led seekers to kneel before Christ. In that humble place, love took on flesh and lived among us.

**Many: May this light draw us toward the love that holds all things together.**

One: Your love, O God, is the first light we ever knew and the truest light we will ever follow. It shines beyond our divisions, crosses every border, and welcomes every traveler.

**Many: Illuminate our lives with your love, Holy One. Lead us in compassion, mercy, and grace as we follow the star of Christ.**

*(SUNG) There's a star in the east on Christmas morn.*

*Rise up, shepherd, and follow.*

*It will lead to the place where the Christ was born.*

*Rise up, shepherd, and follow.*

*Follow, follow; rise up, shepherd, and follow.*

*Follow the star of Bethlehem. Rise up, shepherd, and follow.*

One: Let us pray. God of love, as this candle burns, remind us that your love reaches us wherever we are. Make space in our hearts for your light to dwell, and help us reflect your love in all we do.

**Many: Amen.**

**\*HYMN 132**

**Good Christian Friends, Rejoice**

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

One: God of signs and stars, we confess that we do not always follow your light. We become distracted by our own paths, drawn toward comfort, familiarity, or fear.

**Many: We lose sight of your leading. We forget to look up. We hesitate to take the next faithful step.**

One: You invite us to trust the light you place before us - but we cling to what we know.

**Many: Forgive us, O God. Lift our eyes again. Set our feet on the path of hope, and teach us to follow the star of Christ.**

## \*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Hear the good news: The same God who set a star in the sky also sets grace in our lives. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

## \*SUNG RESPONSE

Love Has Come

*Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.  
Love is God now asleep in the hay.  
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;  
What is the name her heart is saying?  
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.  
Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.*

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*Please greet those around you, wishing them “peace” or “the peace of Christ.”*

## CHILDREN’S MOMENT & THE LORD’S PRAYER

*At the conclusion, we look forward to welcoming all children through 8<sup>th</sup> grade to the nursery or their Sunday school classes, as the congregation prepares to hear the sermon.*

## SUNG RESPONSE

Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

*Heavy clouds that block the moonlight now begin to drift away.  
Diamond brilliance through the darkness shines the hope of coming day.  
Christ, the morning star of splendor, gleams within a world grown dim.  
Heaven’s ember fans to fullness; hearts grow warm to welcome him.*

## MUSICAL OFFERING

Midnight Noel

# PRAYER

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

## CALL TO THE OFFERING

*We invite you to make an online donation or by placing a check or cash in the collection plate. Envelopes are available in the pews for specified giving. The gray envelopes are for our Roots & Rays Fund, which goes to creative outreach projects in the community.*



MUSICAL OFFERING      See Amid the Winter's Snow      (arr. Lisa Nichols)

\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE      As with Gladness Men of Old  
*As they offered gifts most rare at thy manger, rude and bare,  
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heavenly king.*

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

HYMN 144      In the Bleak Midwinter

## LISTEN

SCRIPTURE LESSON      Matthew 2:1-12

MUSICAL OFFERING      I Wonder as I Wander

SERMON      Follow the Star: Pedals Off      Rev. Dr. Phillips

## SEND

\*HYMN 115      Away in a Manger

BENEDICTION

MUSICAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE      Angel Tidings



Thanks to today's worship participants:

Bell Choir & Chancel Choir, *Music Ministry*  
Charlie Hannagan, Dinyar Vania, *Soloists*  
Mark Cozine, *Usher Captain*  
Karen Beare, *Greeter*

The flowers today are given in honor of the 70<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary  
Ruth & Max Matteson, with love from the Aument Family.



Join us for coffee & fellowship in Founders Hall following the postlude!  
We will also be having our Cookie Walk Fundraiser to support our Mission to  
Maine service trip this summer, Cookie Decorating & Pictures with Santa and  
a Christmas Hoodie Pick-Up & Group Photo.

Through a series of in-person messages, devotionals, and worship  
opportunities, we hope to keep you connected to—and nurtured by—the  
Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church community. Make sure you're signed up  
for our Thursday eNews, Facebook, and Instagram accounts. Visit  
[www.rccpc.org](http://www.rccpc.org).



# WELCOME

## *New Members*

*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.*  
—1 Corinthians 12 :12-14

### Ewa Papiez

Ewa calls both Wilmington, DE and Katowice, Poland “home”. She currently enjoys retirement in Hockessin, DE. She is a widow with two adult children, Maja and Adam.



### Kathi Way

I was born in New York City. My family moved to Delaware when I was 4 and I have been in the Newark area for most of my life. I graduated from East Carolina University in 1969. I was married to my husband George in 1976. Although now retired, my career focused on development of services to improve opportunities for children and their families. My son, Tripp Way, is also a member at RCCPC.

# WELCOME

## *New Members*

### **Ray & Catherine Shafer**

Ray and Catherine have lived in the Delaware area for over 50 years. Ray graduated from Salesianum High School and University of Delaware before entering the U. S. Navy/Navy Reserve where he served for 28 years retiring as a Commander. He is most proud of being an Iraq War Veteran. Ray just recently retired, after 21 years of service, from Amtrak Railroad as the Logistics Manager.

As a native Delawarean, Catherine graduated from Christiana High School, Millersville University, and Western Maryland College. After retiring from teaching 27 years, she took a position at Mt. Cuba Center where she learned to love native plants and is constantly adding to her garden beds much to Ray's chagrin.

Together they love to hike, bike ride, volunteer their time, travel and explore, help out their family, and expand their knowledge. They just recently enrolled in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute through the University of Delaware. But most importantly, they love spending time together with their four-legged furry family member, Molly. (If you meet her, don't tell her she's a dog. She hasn't figured it out yet!)



## The Poinsettias in the Sanctuary are given by the following:

### *From:*

Ann Thomas  
Arlene Thompson  
Blanche Pando  
Carol, Kyle Jr., & Eric  
Carolyn Falasca  
Carolyn Geshner Diehl  
Carolyn Geshner Diehl  
Cindy & Bob Gamble  
Dave & Jane Conly  
Debbie Wersinger  
Diane Freed  
Dianne & Bob Carter and Family  
Dianne Whittaker  
Dianne Whittaker  
Donna Reilly  
Gail Ahrens  
Gail Ahrens, daughter  
Gail Bouck  
Gail Bouck  
Green-Kocher Families  
Holly Martinez  
Jacqui Kolle, daughter  
Jane & Bruce Spencer  
Jane Wood  
Jim & Christine Fischer  
Jim & Christine Fischer  
Joyce, Pam, Heather, Stephanie & Lily  
Judy Krein & Family  
Karen & Jim Caldas  
Li-Hwa Tseng  
Linda & Matthew Hanna  
Lorraine & Richard Gilmore  
Lorraine & Richard Gilmore  
Lynn & Jim, Chloe & Sheldon  
Marcia Hastings  
Mary Jane Weldin  
Matthew & Linda Hanna  
Matthew & Linda Hanna and Family  
Noah

### *In Memory Of:*

Meredith "Tom" Thomas  
Leon L. Thompson  
Jim Pando  
Kyle Outlaw  
Angelo Falasca  
Eileen, Kathleen, Judy, Michael & Richard Diehl  
Glenn, Nancy & Robert Geshner  
The Brooks and Gamble families  
Our parents  
Jim & Mary Hunter  
Herbert & Elizabeth Freed  
Wanda & James Corrigan  
Beloved Parents, MaryLou & Jim Taylor  
Patty & Steve Taylor  
JoAnne Strickler  
Jim Ahrens  
Wanda & James Corrigan  
Fraser & Beryl Bouck  
Steven Yamazaki  
Doris & Bill Green and Linda Kocher  
My brother, John, Uncle Bob and Uncle Ron  
Joseph & Caroline Fedena  
Our daughter, Melissa  
Henry Eby Herr  
Wallace & Pearl Fischer  
Joseph & Jean Celano  
Roger McClellan  
Edward Krein  
Darden & Lynn Rodden  
My parents, Fu-Yun & Hsu Hsin Tseng  
Phyllis Musser  
Joseph & Helen Ambrogio  
Lisa Febre  
Missy  
Loved Ones  
My husband, Paul Weldin  
John & Connie Hanna  
Phyllis Musser  
My Mom





## **The Poinsettias in the Sanctuary are given by the following:**

### ***From:***

Pamela Saylor Droke  
Patricia Nash Christel & family  
Peggy Keay Germain  
Pei-Yi Lo  
Rev. Emily Schwenker  
Ron & Linda Reisor  
Ron & Linda Reisor  
Sharon Meyer  
Sharon Meyer, daughter  
Steve & Mary Cay  
Steve & Mary Cay  
Suzanne Courter-Jann  
The Brown & Kissell Families  
The Christel Family  
The Galinat Family  
The Haggertys  
The Klair Family  
The Klair Family  
The Phillips Family  
The Putscher Family  
Tosh & Norm Carlson  
Vicki Smith & Ted Harting

### ***From:***

John & Susan Welsh  
  
Pamela Saylor Droke  
Rich & Debbie Behling

### ***To the Glory of God:***

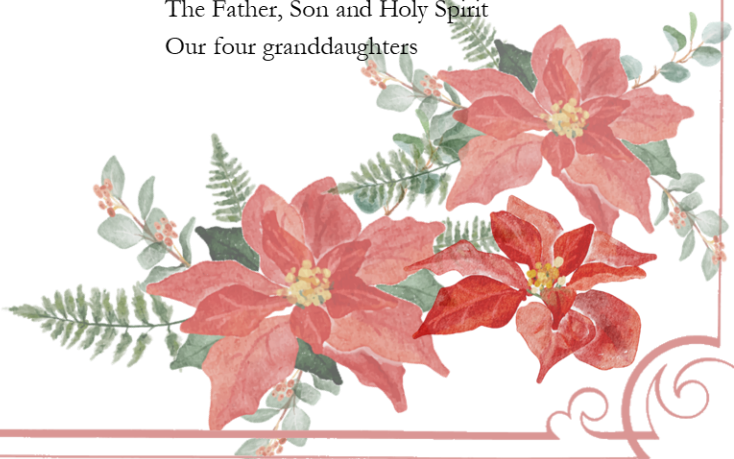
Barbara P. Fox  
Dave & Mary Young  
Deborah McNesby  
Ellen Hinrichs  
Rev. Emily Schwenker  
The Galinat Family  
The Gast Family

### ***In Memory Of:***

Family, friends & loved ones  
James Nash  
Bill Keay  
My parents, Tso-Hsun & Juo-Chu Chang Lo  
Loved Ones who have passed  
Ron's parents, Peg & Johnny Reisor  
Linda's Parents, Nancy & Don Hogeland  
Harry Meyer, Jr.  
Grover Hale  
Steve & Virginia Armstrong  
George & Rosemary Sausen  
William & Eleanore Courter  
Margaret K. Kissell  
Scout Christel (our beloved furry family member)  
Loved Ones  
Kenny Haggerty, Jr.  
Richard & Barbara Klair  
Marc Klair  
Gary Buzzell  
Elizabeth Rada  
Loved Ones  
Our parents

### ***In Honor Of:***

Our Grandchildren: Reagan, Logan & Emma Rose  
Welsh and Andrew & Emma Lynn Hoagland  
The Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
Our four granddaughters



Red Clay Creek Presbyterian invites you to  
its *Signature Services & Events* during the coming year.

**CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE — December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

- ♦ Family Service with Impromptu Pageant | 4PM
- ♦ Holy Night Service with Candlelight | 8PM
- ♦ Candlelight & Communion | 11PM

**ROOTS AND RAYS SERVICE CHALLENGE — Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>–Mar. 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026**

A month-long service effort each year, that directs our intention to the needs of our community.

**HOLY WEEK 2026**

- ♦ Maundy Thursday — April 2<sup>nd</sup>; Good Friday — April 3<sup>rd</sup>
- ♦ Resurrection Remembrance Service — April 5<sup>th</sup> | 9:30AM Worship
- ♦ Easter Sunday — April 5<sup>th</sup> | 10AM Worship

**KIRKIN' O' THE TARTAN — April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 10AM**

Kirk is the Scottish word for church, so a church celebration and blessing of the tartans in our Presbyterian church honors both local and church heritage since it was the Scots who brought the Presbyterian Church to America.

**OUTDOOR SERVICE & PICNIC — June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 10AM**

Join us in the back meadow for worship and our annual picnic.

**SUMMER ARTS CAMPS — July 2026 | 9AM-12PM**

Kids will have music, drama, visual arts, snacks, and FUN, culminating with BINGO and performance night, as well as Youth Sunday.

**HOMEcoming SUNDAY — September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 10AM**

We mark our return to regular church programming with the start of our fall sermon series and Sunday School kick off.

**FALL CELEBRATION SUNDAY — October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 10AM**

A joyous worship service where we give Bibles to our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and dedicate our pledges, followed by outdoor trunk-or-treat and a flag football game.

**ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY — November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 10AM**

We give thanks for God's many blessings and our rich history of over 300 years.

# WELCOME TO RED CLAY

For LARGE print bulletins or children's bulletins, please ask an Usher.  
Restrooms are available. Just ask!

Welcome to worship, welcome to Red Clay, welcome home! Rooted in God's abiding love for all, our church is lighting the way for friendship, compassion, and service. All are welcome, for Jesus gathers us together even as we divide ourselves by politics, denomination, or whatever labels the world puts on us. Please join us for coffee hour in Founder's Hall after service, and stop by the welcome cart by the front entrance to learn more about our community. We hope you will worship with us again soon! If you are interested in deepening your participation, or if you just love Red Clay, it's time to think about membership! Contact Elder Karen Vordemberge at [kvordemberge@gmail.com](mailto:kvordemberge@gmail.com).

Here at Red Clay, we have numerous groups that are open and that welcome newcomers, including, e.g., Quilters, Crafters, "Friends and Fellowship" free luncheon for seniors, Bible study, ROMEOs ("Retired Old Men Eating Out"), Centering Prayer and "The Arcaders" social group for GenX and Millennials. Details can be found at [www.rcpc.org](http://www.rcpc.org)!

Children: Nursery care is available from 9:45AM through the conclusion of worship in Room 305 (just down the hallway from the sanctuary). After the Children's Moment, Pre-K - Kindergarteners will adjourn to Room 303, Grades 1-3 will adjourn to Room 206, and Grades 4-8 will adjourn to Room 202/204.



## UPCOMING EVENT SPOTLIGHT

### **TONIGHT— A Red Clay Family Christmas at 7:00 PM!**

All are invited to join us in the sanctuary TONIGHT at 7 pm for this holiday songfest. Following the event, we will have food (including a chocolate fountain!) and fellowship in Founders Hall.

All are welcome!

## RED CLAY CREEK PRESBYTERIAN — MINISTERS, STAFF & CHAIRS

Rev. Dr. Nathaniel D. Phillips, *Senior Pastor/Head of Staff*  
Rev. Emily Schwenker ❖ Rev. Dr. Philip Jones

Jeffrey Miller, *Director of Music*  
Deena Andrews, *Director of Children's Choir*  
Lisa Nichols, *Bell Choir Director*

Rachele Gilmore, *Director of Community Life* ❖ Ben Andrews, *Director of Christian Formation*  
Barbara Vanderkraats, *Pastoral Care Coordinator*  
Jamie Russell, *Director of Children's Ministries*  
Judy Lozier, *Nursery Director* ❖ Sofia Martin, *Nursery Support*  
Delaney Christel, Josephine DeCaire, Quiara Smith, *Sunday School Teachers*

Julie Reeder, *Office Coordinator* ❖ Dinyar Vania, *Facilities Manager*  
Kelley Norton, *Administrative Assistant* ❖ Anthony M. Condoluci-Smith, *Financial Associate*

Charlie Hannagan, *Technology Support*  
A. Leonhard, S. Armstrong, K. Barton, A. Bloom, D. Howarth, J. Schubel, P. Worrell, *Livestream Production*

Nancy James, *Clerk of Session* ❖ Kathy Ciabattoni, *Deacon Moderator*  
Bill Ciabattoni, *Belong Chair* ❖ Darlyn Green-Kocher, *Nurture Chair*  
Linda Reisor, *Reach Chair* ❖ Lois Galinat, *Rejoice Chair*  
Brandon Wallace, *Finance Chair* ❖ John Gast, *Personnel Chair*  
Mark Cozine, *Home Chair* ❖ Scott McHenry, *Administration Chair*  
Andrew Bloom, *Community Partners* ❖ Marcia Kelly, *Memory Garden Chair*

*\* For a complete list of all Session Ruling Elders and Board of Deacons members, please refer to <https://www.rccpc.org>. \**

### A NOTE ON THE LOGO

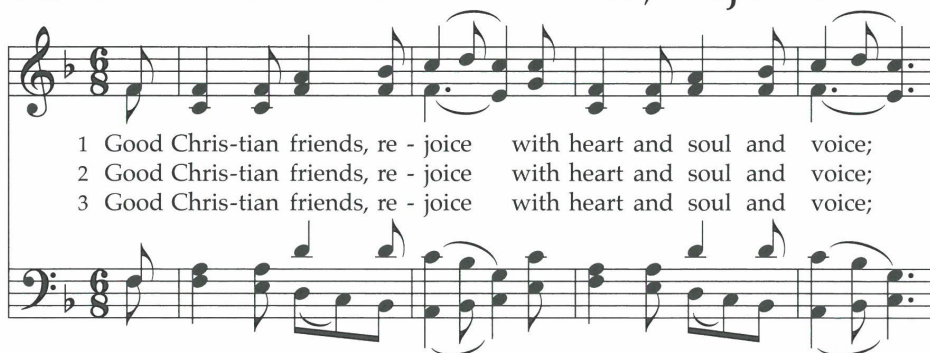
Our church has "**roots**" in the community that date back to 1722. We have been a good neighbor when we were surrounded by farmland up until now when we are surrounded by the suburbs. Our history helps us remember a time when people helped one another out because that was the right thing to do. We hope to be a sign that this kind of community can still exist. We also believe that, in order for that community to exist, we need to stay "rooted" in the Good News that God has chosen to love us - not because of who we are, but because of who God is. We call that grace.

That is where the "**rays**" come in. We hope to extend our love, and the love we know from the graciousness of God, in many ways today. This means engaging in friendships with those that Jesus would have made friends with - those that feel isolated for any number of reasons. We know we will never be perfect at that, but we will try! We are especially aware that churches have long held back from friendship with others based on age, economics, sexuality, race, disability, and the list goes on. We seek to be something different than that. There are so many stories about how Jesus entered into life-affirming friendships with those that others wouldn't. We seek to be like Jesus.

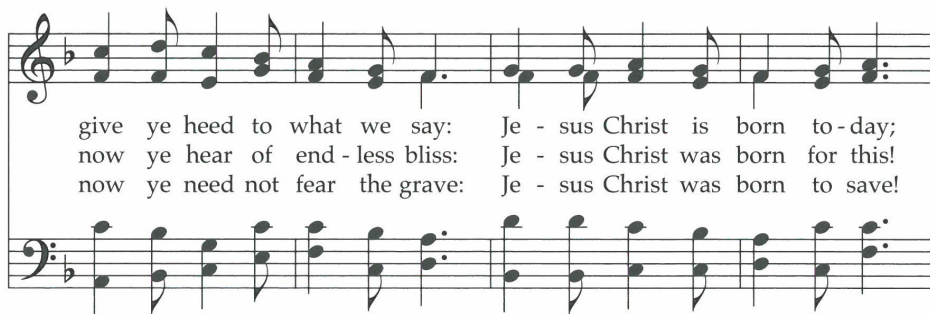
Right there, in the center of it all, is the **cross**. For us, the cross is a "Tree of Life." It represents how God broke into this world to establish a new way of being alive. It symbolizes how God calls us to love with freedom, with recklessness even, if it means connecting the world to the wonder of God's transformative presence.



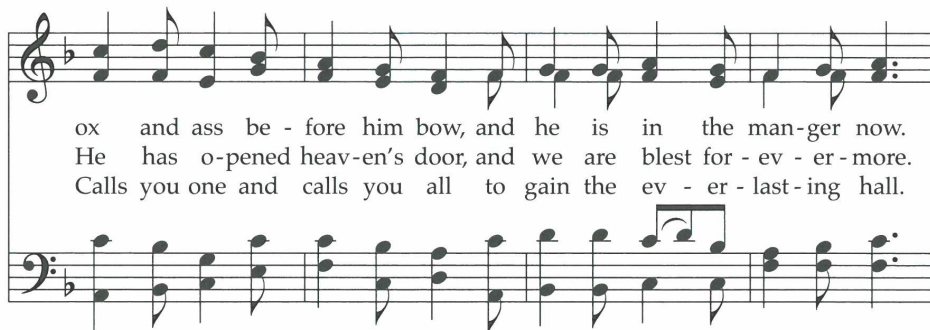
# 132 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice




1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;  
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;  
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!  
 now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

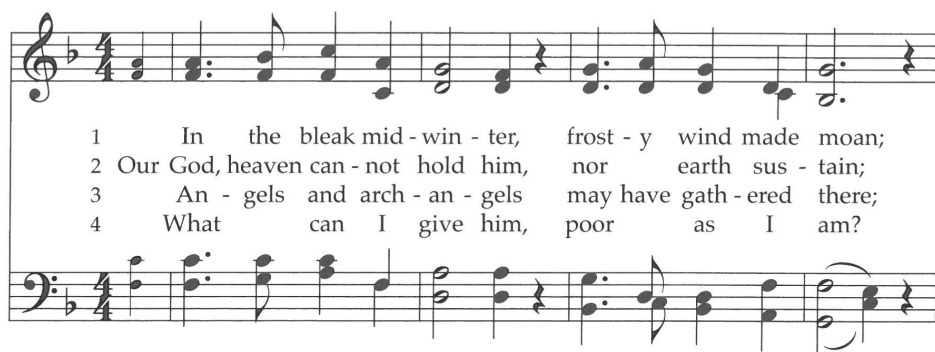


ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.  
 He has o-pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.  
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

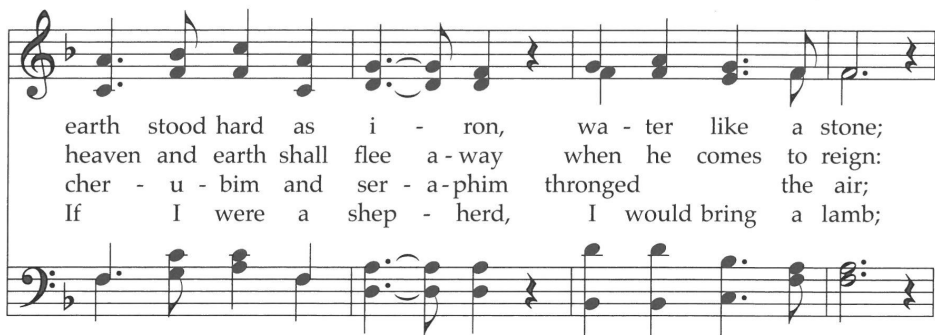


Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!  
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!  
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

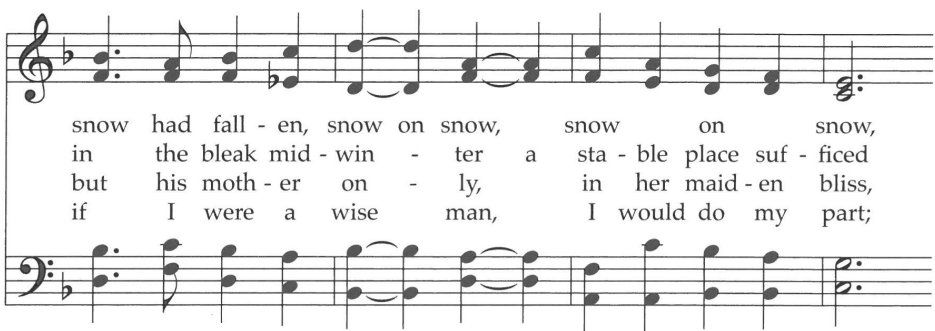
Carols using two languages, like this one dating from at least the 14th century, belong to a special group called "macaronic," the original languages here being German and Latin. Though the present version is only in English, it is sung to the traditional German folk melody.



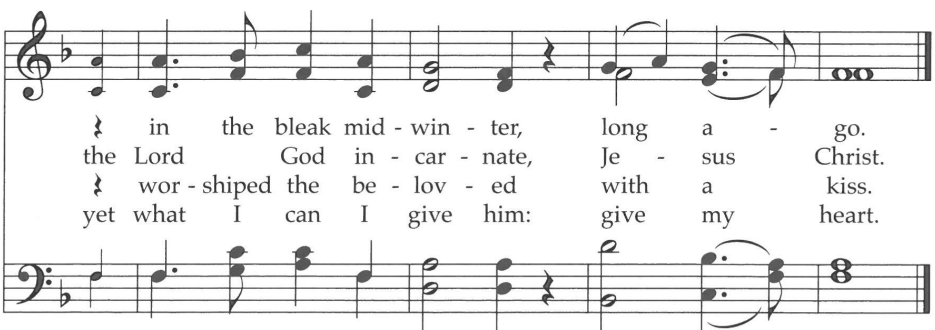
1 In the bleak mid-win-ter, frost-y wind made moan;  
 2 Our God, heaven can-not hold him, nor earth sus-tain;  
 3 An-gels and arch-an-gels may have gath-ered there;  
 4 What can I give him, poor as I am?



earth stood hard as i-ron, wa-ter like a stone;  
 heaven and earth shall flee a-way when he comes to reign:  
 cher-u-bim and ser-a-phim thronged the air;  
 If I were a shep-herd, I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall-en, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
 in the bleak mid-win-ter a sta-ble place suf-ficed  
 but his moth-er on-ly, in her maid-en bliss,  
 if I were a wise man, I would do my part;



⁊ in the bleak mid-win-ter, long a-go.  
 the Lord God in-car-nate, Je-sus Christ.  
 ⁊ wor-shipped the be-lov-ed with a kiss.  
 yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

Though this text describes winter weather in England rather than in Palestine, the poet is using familiar surroundings as a means of making the Nativity more immediate and personal. The tune name honors a Gloucestershire village near the composer's birthplace in Cheltenham.

## Away in a Manger

Capo 3: (D) F (G) B $\flat$  (D) F



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed,  
 2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the poor ba - by wakes,  
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask thee to stay

(A7) C7 (D) F



the lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head.  
 but lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes.  
 close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.

(G) B $\flat$  (D) F



The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
 I love thee, Lord Je - sus; look down from the sky,  
 Bless all the dear chil - dren in thy ten - der care,

(A7) C7 (D) F (Em) Gm (A7) C7 (D) F



the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.  
 and stay by my side un - til morn - ing is night.  
 and fit us for heav - en to live with thee there.

Though erroneously attributed to Martin Luther, this anonymous carol has North American roots, probably originating among Pennsylvania Lutherans. Although more than forty melodies have been connected with these words, this tune was among the earliest written for them.