



FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 28, 2025

Preparation for Worship

*We think of him as safe beneath the steeple,
Or cozy in a crib beside the font,
But he is with a million displaced people
On the long road of weariness and want.
For even as we sing our final carol
His family is up and on that road,
Fleeing the wrath of someone else's quarrel,
Glancing behind and shouldering their load.
Whilst Herod rages still from his dark tower
Christ clings to Mary, fingers tightly curled,
The lambs are slaughtered by the men of power,
And death squads spread their curse across the world.
But every Herod dies, and comes alone
To stand before the Lamb upon the throne.*

- Malcolm Guite

Voluntary

Pastorale Sopra Stille Nacht

Carlotta Ferrari
(b. 1975)

Greeting

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

✠ Opening Sentences

✠ Hymn 134 ([see page 8](#))

Joy to the World

ANTIOCH

✠ Prayer of Confession

God of grace and truth,
in Jesus Christ you came among us
as light shining in darkness.
We confess that we have not welcomed the light,
or trusted good news to be good.
We have closed our eyes to glory in our midst,
expecting little, and hoping for less.
Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope,
so that we may receive the fullness of your grace,
and live in the truth of Christ the Lord.

silent prayer

Holy One, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

✠ Declaration of Forgiveness

Believe the Good News. **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

✠ Hymn 132 [\(see page 9\)](#)

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

IN DULCI JUBILO

✠ The Peace

Peace be with you. **Peace be with all.**

Conversation with Children

Infants - Age 4 may go to the Nursery in Room 106.

Prayer for Illumination

Gospel Reading

Matthew 2:13-23

N.T. pg. 59

Holy wisdom, holy Word. **Thanks be to God.**

Anthem

Oh Peter Go Ring-A Dem Bells

arr. H.T. Burleigh
(1866-1949)

Oh, Peter go ring-a dem bells,
Peter go ring-a dem bells,
Peter go ring-a dem bells,
I heard from heaven today.

I wonder where my mother is gone...
I heard from heaven today.

I heard from heaven today...
I thank God, an' I thank you too;
I heard from heaven today.

Oh, Peter go ring-a dem bells...
I heard from heaven today.

African American Spiritual

Sermon

Jesus Christ – Lord, Savior, Refugee

John W. Wurster

silence and stillness

✠ Hymn 154 [\(see page 10\)](#)

Jesus Entered Egypt

KING'S WESTON

✦ Affirmation of Faith

Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God,
 the firstborn of all creation;
 in him all things in heaven and on earth were created,
 things visible and invisible.
 All things have been created through him and for him.
 He himself is before all things,
 and in him all things hold together.
 He is head of the body, the church;
 he is the beginning,
 the firstborn of the dead,
 so that he might come to have first place in everything.
 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
 and through him God was pleased to reconcile all things,
 whether on earth or in heaven,
 by making peace through the blood of his cross. Amen.

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be Thy name.
 Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread,
 and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;
 for Thine is the Kingdom,
 and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Offering

Offertory

✦ Hymn 145 ([see page 11](#))

What Child Is This

GREENSLEEVESE

✦ Prayer of Thanksgiving

✦ Hymn 136 ([see page 12](#))

Go Tell It on the Mountain

GO TELL IT

✦ Charge and Blessing

Voluntary

Offertoire II
 from Pièces d'Orgue

Gervais-François
 (1759-1826)

SERVING TODAY

Pastors

Omar Rouchon | John Wurster

Liturgist

Selena Brinegar

Musicians

Daniel Boyd, guest organist | David Le, baritone | Justin Langham, director of music

WORSHIP NOTES

Today's worship service includes traditional Negro Spiritual music. The Black composers of this music are unknown to history and therefore unable to receive royalties directed to their estates for the use of their songs. To remedy this inequity, a fund has been created and approved by the Session where we will collect voluntary "royalties" for using this music. Anyone may donate to the fund by going to the saintphilip.net homepage and selecting *Make a Contribution*, then selecting Negro Spiritual as the fund. You may also contribute by writing a check with *Negro Spirituals* in the memo line and placing it in the offering plate or mailing it to the church office. This small gesture of reparation seeks to help heal the long history of injury to Black persons. Contributions received over the course of the year will be donated annually to a local organization supporting Black musical traditions.

Today's Lectionary readings:

- Isaiah 63:7-9 — *The people were saved not by an angel, but by the Lord's presence.*
- Psalm 148 — *Let everything in the whole creation praise the name of the Lord.*
- Hebrews 2:10-18 — *Jesus calls us brothers and sisters; he became human to save us.*
- Matthew 2:13-23 — *Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt to escape persecution from Herod.*

MUSIC NOTES

On this first Sunday of Christmastide, our **opening voluntary** continues the final hymn from our Christmas Eve service *Stille Nacht* ("Silent Night"). Although the melody is not tampered with, it is enhanced through the lens of a reflective and somewhat whimsical pastorate—an instrumental piece meant to depict rural scenes using a compound meter and bass drones.

The traditional spiritual "*Oh Peter Go Ring-A Dem Bells*" has several layered meanings, but is primarily sung as a joyful call to spiritual awakening and community. Deeply rooted in African American history, "bells" and "heaven" were often used to symbolize—covertly—hope and free-

dom. Today, the bells ring in celebration and hope found in the birth of Jesus.

Part of the famous Couperin family of composers and organists Gervais-François studied with his father Armand-Louis, eventually replacing him as organist at the famous Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, and later his brother Pierre-Louis as organist at Notre Dame. As a composer, his modest output includes collections of keyboard pieces that he likely performed often in his several prominent positions in France, such as today's **closing voluntary**.

—Notes by Justin Langham

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover art by Diana Weiss. Preparation for Worship and the Prayer of Confession taken from the Book of Common Worship (2018). Music reprints and online streaming by permission under OneLicense.net account A-720890.

IN OUR PRAYERS

A memorial service for Tom Lewis, who died On December 14, is scheduled for January 10 at 11 a.m.

St. Philippians and their families – Joyce Fox; Jacqueline Hamilton Taylor; Kay Cash; Pam Taylor; Deb Burks; Sondra Sullivan; Emily Estill; Joy Maguire; Bonnie Moore; David Winship; Bob Ardell; Diane Clarke; Mary Herlitz; Dick Nunn; Ben Dees; Joe Harwood; Kathryn Harwood; Nancy E. Johnson; Eleanor Grant; Judy Nunn; Molly Boren-Whitney; Don Padgett; Steve Adger; Arlette Keene; Mezgebe Gebray; Wilma Grether – mother of Kurt Grether; Kathy Bailey and family–sister of Peg Palisin; Jo Hadley Smith – cousin of William Rowe; Katie Forbes – daughter of Marise Robbins-Forbes; Guinn Blackwell-Eagleson and partner John Bonica; Ann Perenyi – mother of Lad Perenyi; and Ann Perkins Cloud – cousin of Stephen Paine.

Homebound – Elizabeth Arp; Beverly Baker; Carolyn Keeble; John Bobbitt; Joan Boelens; Jan Ostendorf; Joyce Randolph; George and Lorraine Scott; and Mary Sinderson.

Friends of St. Philippians – Greg Anderson – friend of Lorrie Castle; Ann Swanson – friend of Deborah Unruh; Kitty Manson and family; Sidney Roach, Lori Childers O’Connell, Joyce Freudenberg – friends of Stephen Paine; Chris Deflandre – friend of Cara Biddle; Mary Ann Thomas; Erin McDougal and Marianne Keeswood – friends of Kate Burkart; Elaine Ende – friend of Beth Atkinson; Carter Lindley, Tandi Porter, Audrey Eubank Harris, Jay Stokes & Anna Domonte, friends of Curt & Sharon Webb; Marianne Hash – friend of Jane Cooper; Mary Watters and Mindy Cooper-Smith – friends of Bill and Jacqueline Hamilton Taylor; Kenneth and Donna Benton – friends of William Rowe; Patty Ryan and Tom Barnett – friends of Robin and Gary Willis; and Shirley Stubblefield – friend of Barbara Runge.

If you have a pastoral care need or a prayer request you would like to share, please email: deacons@saintphilip.net

Prayer List is a powerful tool for bringing comfort, healing, and peace to those in need. So, let's keep it up to date and continue to lift up our brothers and sisters in prayer.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES START AT 9:45 A.M. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

GODLY PLAY—Ages 3—Kindergarten—ROOM 103

CHILDREN: Grades 1-4—Room 105

YOUTH—Grades 5-12—DINING ROOM—On recess until January.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY—ROOM 204—On Nov. 30, we began our study of Isaiah in Volume 2, *Prophets*, in Dr. Robert Alter's *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary* (2019). Join us as we seek to deepen our understanding of God's faithfulness to all God's people. All are welcome.

CHURCH & SOCIETY—ROOM 201—Join us from **9:30 AM—10:40 AM** with presentations in person and by Zoom. Jan. 4 - Rev. Dr. John Wurster with an update on St. Philip Presbyterian Church. If you would like the Zoom link for the classes, email:

jshartman01@gmail.com.

CHILDREN'S CHAPEL—In the Children's Chapel, our young disciples learn the whos, whats, wheres, whens and whys of worship in the chapel, while also praying, seeing and hearing God's word at an age-appropriate level. Children return to join the congregation in the first few pews on the lectern side of the church for the last hymn. The Children's Chapel is held every 2nd and 4th Sunday when we have Sunday School classes. Children are able to participate in this during the worship service.

ST. PHILIP DURING THE WEEK

LAMBETH STUDY—Keatan King leads young adults in study every Monday evening at 7:00 PM via Zoom. It is a time of study, reflection, and prayer. If you would like more details, email Keatan King at:

keatan@saintphilip.net.

SOCIAL JUSTICE STUDY GROUP—This group meets by zoom on first Monday nights, 7-8 PM to read and discuss our faith responses to social justice issues. The current study book is Barbara McQuade's *Attack from Within; how disinformation is sabotaging America*. Join us! Interested persons can contact Sara Jean Jackson at:

sjj10223@gmail.com.

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY—Wednesday Bible Study with John Wurster meets weekly at 9:30 a.m., and is a hybrid format with an in-person option in the Office Conference Room and also a Zoom option. Bible novices, Bible experts, and everyone in between is welcome to join us as we look at the lectionary passages for the coming Sunday! Returns Jan. 7. To get on the list for the Zoom links, send a note to: john@saintphilip.net.

PRESBYTERIAN MEN'S WEEKLY FELLOWSHIP—on recess until Jan. 10, 2025. Men of all ages are welcome to participate in this self-led group. The Men's Weekly Fellowship meets each Friday in person in the office Conference Room and via Zoom at 11:45 AM. We are learning from *Too Busy Not to Pray* by Bill Hybels. If you would like to join them please contact Gary Gardner at: ggardne148@aol.com.

WOMEN'S MONTHLY BOOK CLUB—This self-led, interactive group produces lively discussions and wonderful fellowship. The next meeting is Jan. 15 at 7:00 PM. *Frostbite: How Refrigeration Changed Our Food, Our Planet, and Ourselves* by Nicola Twiley. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Nina Lambright at: nnl@lambrightlaw.com.

SAY IT WITH FLOWERS

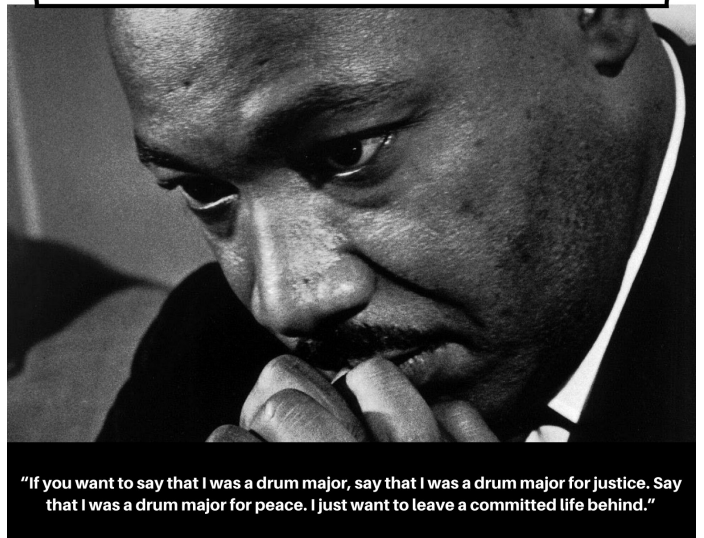
Celebrate your wedding anniversary, family birthdays, or memorialize your mother and father by sponsoring the chancel flowers on Sunday morning. Please sign up to sponsor the flowers on the date which you prefer. If you have any questions, contact Lorrie Castle at 713-622-4807 or lorrie@saintphilip.net. Sandra Truxillo, Flower Coordinator, will call you the week you chose to sponsor flowers to discuss the type of flowers and the message you would like in the bulletin. The standard arrangement for chancel flowers is \$130, special requests or exotic flowers may cost more. Order by clicking below or scanning the QR.



[CHANCEL FLOWERS]

[Reserve Chancel Flowers](#)

Community Music Center of Houston's
Scott Joplin Community Chamber Orchestra presents
The 42nd Annual Birthday Tribute Concert to
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Sunday, January 18th, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.
Hosted by the Peacemaking and Social Justice Committee



"If you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I just want to leave a committed life behind."

St. Phillip's Presbyterian Church
4807 San Felipe, Houston, TX 77056
Presented by St. Phillip's Presbyterian Church &
Community Music Center of Houston
Bring your friends and family to this free concert
www.cmchouston.org/713-523-9710



[GUEST BOOK]

Welcome to Worship at St. Philip
Please register your attendance by scanning the QR code or by visiting the Live Stream tab at saintphilip.net.

AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST,
we seek to be an inclusive,
grace-filled community,
engaging the world with open minds,
willing hands and generous hearts.

WE LONG
for deeper faith,
vibrant hope
and boundless love
for everyone, every day, everywhere.

Thank you for joining us today! We hope that you find our worship together to be joyous, meaningful, and thought-provoking. **Children of all ages** are welcome to worship with their families. Activity bags containing worship aids for children are available in the narthex on the way into the sanctuary.

Nursery care is available throughout the morning from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Infants to age 4 are invited to our Nursery which is staffed by professional childcare providers. Please find our Nursery has returned to the Education Bldg. and can be accessed from the hall off the Gathering Area on the first floor. An usher or a greeter will be happy to direct you there.

A Hearing Loop is installed within the sanctuary. If you have a hearing aid equipped with a telecoil, please activate your "T switch" to hear the worship service most clearly. If you need assistance with hearing the service clearly and do not have a t-coil equipped hearing aid, please ask an usher for wireless headphones. **LARGE PRINT COPIES OF TODAY'S BULLETINS ARE IN THE NARTHEX.**

Connect with St. Philip through saintphilip.net and our social media. To join our e-mail list for regular news updates, send a note to lorrie@saintphilip.net.

If you are interested in joining St. Philip Presbyterian Church by profession of faith, by reaffirming your faith, or by transferring your membership, please speak with one of the ministers today or call the church office during the week. **The Session meets the third Sunday of each month after the 11:00 worship service in the Library for the purpose of receiving new members.**

Worship with us, whenever, wherever. Our 11:00 a.m. Sunday service is live-streamed at saintphilip.net. Services can be viewed live or later in our video archives.

Contributions, pledge payments, communion gifts and other donations to support the Church can be made anytime through our website, or sent to the Church Office at 4807 San Felipe, Houston, TX 77056. To make stock contributions contact Denise Ferrell at denise@saintphilip.net.



[MAKE A CONTRIBUTION]

St. Philip Day School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing high-quality childcare at no cost to low-income families. To support the school, **please make all contributions directly to St. Philip Day School**, rather than to St. Philip Presbyterian Church. Please make checks payable to "St. Philip DAY SCHOOL" You are welcome to leave in the church offering plate or mail to St. Philip Day School, 4807 San Felipe, Houston, 77056. If you have any questions, please contact Candice Harris, Program Director, at Director@stphilipdayschool.org.

Lost & Found—did you leave a pair of glasses, umbrella, or other item during worship? There is a canvas basket in the library where these items may be found. Jewelry, phones and more valuable items are turned into Lorrie Castle in the Church Office, lorrie@saintphilip.net or 713-622-4807.

I Give Electronically—in response to parents' hopes that their children might be able to see their ongoing commitment to St. Philip and with the intent to better represent the totality of our giving as a congregation, we have available in the pews giving cards that can be placed in the offering plate by our electronic givers.



Nametags—Please wear your nametags not just in the sanctuary, but as you socialize before and after worship and at other events. To make it easier, if you don't want to bring your nametag home, there are labeled wicker BASKETS by several exit doors for you to return your nametag at the last possible moment! Those returned tags will be replaced on the boards in the narthex before the following Sunday morning. Visitor nametags are available in the pews and from an usher.

Hymn 134

Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their songs
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na -

her king; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow
 tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
 and heaven and na - ture sing,

and

sing, and heaven, and heaven 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.

heaven and na - ture sing,

While Isaac Watts did not write this text strictly for Christmas use, he did purposely cast his paraphrase of Psalm 98:4-9 in Christian terms, titling it "The Messiah's coming and kingdom." So "the Lord" here is Jesus Christ, rather than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

TEXT: Isaac Watts, 1719, alt.

MUSIC: Attr. George Frederick Handel, 1742; arr. Lowell Mason, 1836

ANTIOCH
CM with repeat

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Hymn 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.

TEXT: Medieval Latin; trans. and para. John Mason Neale, 1853, alt.
 MUSIC: German folk melody, 14th cent.; harm. David Hugh Jones, 1953
 Music Harm. © 1955, ren. 1983 John Ribble (admin. Westminster John Knox Press)

IN DULCI JUBILO
 6.6.7.7.7.8.5.5

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Hymn 154

Jesus Entered Egypt

1 Je - sus en - tered E - gypt flee - ing Her - od's hand,
 2 Je - sus was a mi - grant liv - ing as a guest
 3 Je - sus cross - es bor - ders with the wan - dering poor,



liv - ing as an a - lien in a for - eign land.
 with the friends and strang - ers who could of - fer rest.
 search - ing for a ref - uge, for an o - pen door.



Far from home and coun - try with his fam - i - ly,
 Do we hold wealth light - ly so that we can share
 Do our words and ac - tions an - swer Je - sus' plea:



was there room and wel - come for this ref - u - gee?
 shel - ter with the home - less, and a - bun - dant care?
 "Give the low - ly wel - come, and you wel - come me"?

Human beings create divisions for many political, social, economic, and military reasons, but God is no respecter of the boundaries we erect. Jesus taught us to look for and respect the image of God that can be found in every human being, and to care for "the least of these."

TEXT: Adam M. L. Tice, 2007
 MUSIC: Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1925
 Text © 2009 GIA Publications, Inc.
 Music © 1925 Oxford University Press

KING'S WESTON
 6.5.6.5.D

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Hymn 145

What Child Is This



1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.



Whom an - gels greet with an - thems sweet while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?
 Good Chris - tian, fear; for sin - ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.
 The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.



This, this is Christ the King, whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing;
 Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.
 Raise, raise the song on high. The vir - gin sings her lul - la - by.



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar - y!

This Victorian text gains scope and power by having the original second halves of stanzas two and three restored. They give a stark forward glimpse of what lies ahead for this "babe, the son of Mary!" The tune is much older, dating from Tudor England.

TEXT: William Chatterton Dix, 1871
 MUSIC: English ballad, 16th cent.; arr. *Christmas Carols New and Old*, 1871

GREENSLEEVES
 8.7.8.7.6.8.6.7

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Hymn 136

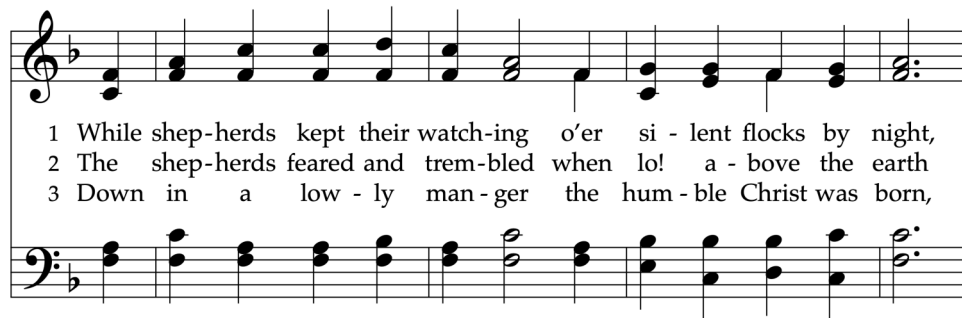
Go Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain 

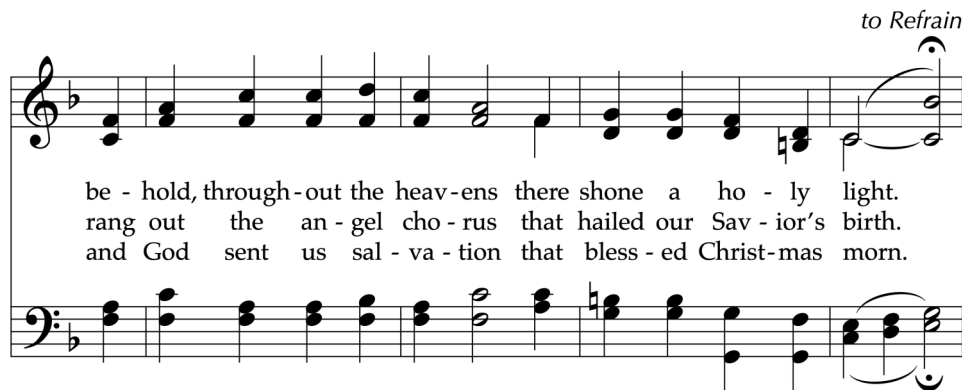

Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;



go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth
3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,



to Refrain

be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

Like other material from oral traditions, 19th-century African American spirituals flourished without being written down. Their refrains were their most stable parts, and narrative stanzas were often improvised to fit. These Nativity stanzas attempt to recall that tradition.

TEXT: African American spiritual; stanzas, 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

GO TELL IT
7.6.7.6 with refrain

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