

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



First Congregational Church of Fresno
United Church of Christ
2131 N. Van Ness Blvd.
Fresno, CA 93704

Rev. Dr. Norman Broadbent
Guest Pastor

Our Gathering

(*Congregation may stand | Responses: Liturgist/**Congregation/all**)

Prelude Christmas Organ Works of Gordon Young Scott Horton, organ

Welcome Rev. Dr. Norman Broadbent

***Call to Worship** Maggie Kalashian, Liturgist

In snow-capped cathedral churches and in open-air desert sanctuaries,
God's people gather across the world in joy as we all continue to celebrate a birth.

With hopes littering human hearts like wrapping paper scattered under a tree,
We join Christians on each side of the equator as in local celebrations- borne of hope and promise- Christ comes to us as grace swaddled in love.

With eyes and minds wide open like little children, and hearts full of wonder and laughter.

We embrace God's wonder and the Spirit's presence as we take our part in the heavenly songs of praise.

Through this worship, may the Love and creativity that breathes life into all humanity and all of creation

Be vibrant and birthing in us today.

***Hymn** "Once in Royal David's City" #145, pew hymnal

Morning Prayer Maggie Kalashian

(From "Each Christmastide," New Zealand Methodist resource)

Each Christmastide gives us space for a journey, journey to places that dwell deep within.

Here we find sparkles of night's silent stillness, wombs where re-birthing of spirits begin.

Wombs of our newness hold angels' sweet voices singing the songs that the Cosmos still sings; lowing songs of cattle and all of creation, nurturing mangers that Nature still brings.

God was not absent till Mary bore Jesus, God did not need to be freed from the skies;
Christ came to waken our sense of God's presence, present in laughter and present in cries.

Each day can be Christmas for wonder-filled pilgrims, each day holds birthing God calls us to choose,

Birthing within the great womb of God's Mystery, Mystery that points to the Gospel's good news.

A Cadence of Carols (*Remain seated for the first two Carols*)

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" #144 verses 1 & 3
"Away in a Manger" #128 verses 1 & 4
*"Angels From the Realms of Glory" #126 verses 1 & 4

Time for Discovery [*children are invited to the chancel steps with the Pastor*]

***Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still;
let this be our song — no one stands alone,
standing side by side. Draw the circle wide.***

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There will be no Sunday School following Time for Discovery

The Lord's Prayer

***Our Creator, 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,
the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.***

***Hymn** "Child of Blessing, Child of Promise" #325 pew hymnal

Scripture Lesson Luke 2:22-40 Maggie Kalashian

(When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons.")

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law Simeon took him

in his arms and praised God, saying, “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.)

This concludes today’s reading. For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God within us, and the Word of God as lived through us.

Thanks be to God.

Message

“A Christmas Baptism”

(Adapted from a story by Michael Lindvall “Good New From North Haven”) Maggie Kalashian
Rev. Dr. Broadbent

Sung Invitation to Prayer

Lord, listen to your children praying:

Lord send your Spirit in this place.

Lord, listen to your children praying:

Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

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Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Dr. Broadbent

Invitation to Generosity

Maggie Kalashian



Here at the Big Red Church, everyone counts, and every gift counts!

- ⇒ *There are two donation boxes and giving envelopes for your gifts in the Narthex (the area where an usher handed you an Order of Worship).*
- ⇒ *You can also give through the Givelify App by scanning the QR code with your smartphone camera.*
- ⇒ *BigRedChurch.org/giving/ has more instructions, links, and information about giving to the church. Thank you for supporting and joining in the ministry of this church.*

Offertory

"Gloria for the Flutes" - arr. A. Jordan

Scott Horton, organ

***Doxology and Dedication**

***We give You but Your own, whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Yours alone, we give it gratefully. Amen.***

Responsive Prayer of Dedication

Rev. Dr. Broadbent

*We rejoice in the new world God is creating around us and with us.
May our gifts proclaim the way of Jesus and strengthen a faithful people.*

***Hymn**

"Now Swiftly Greet the Changing Year"

#431, pew hymnal

***Words of Parting**

Rev. Dr. Broadbent

*The God we worship is never confined to this holy place or time.
So go and travel with the God who is found in ordinary and surprising places.
**And may we leave this place seeking an uncharted and freely chosen way to
wholeness, knowing we have companions along the way as we enter a new year.***

***Sung Benediction** *(We turn toward center aisle so to bless one another)*

***Go now in peace, never be afraid;
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.
Go now in peace, steadfast, strong, and true;
Know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love and show you believe
Reach out to others so all the world will see
God will be there watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.
Amen. Amen. Amen.***

[Our tradition is to be seated for the Postlude]

Postlude

"Joy to the World" - arr. R. Wilson

Scott Horton, organ

This Week at Big Red

Monday, January 1 - Office is closed

- ♦ 5:00pm: Yoga - Room 1

Tuesday, January 2

Wednesday, January 3

- ♦ 8:00am: Bible Study - Zoom
- ♦ 6:00pm: Handbell rehearsal - Music Room
- ♦ 7:00pm: Chancel Choir rehearsal - Sanctuary

Thursday, January 4

Friday, January 5

Saturday, January 6

Sunday, January 7

- ♦ 10:00am: Worship - Sanctuary
- ♦ 11:00am: Coffee Hour

Upcoming Dates to remember

- * Epiphany - Jan 7
- * Youth outing (6th grade and up) - Jan 12
- * Elders' Meeting - January 14, following worship service
- * "Let's Eat Out" BRC Pantry Fundraiser at Old Spaghetti Factory - Jan 23
- * Annual Meeting - Jan 28, following worship service

First Congregational Church of Fresno

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Guest Pastor

Rev. Dr. Norman Broadbent

Music Director/Organist

Scott Horton

Caretaker/ Event Coordinator

Pat Morales

Accountant

Penny Leas Peterson

Office Administrator

Kymberly Lindsey

Office@bigredchurch.org

Technicians

Karisa Garza

Brad Jenkins

Assisting in Today's Service

Organist: Scott Horton

Liturgist: Maggie Kalashian

Ushers: Mike Gostanian, Teresa Fuentes, Pat Morales

Acolytes: Hudson and Addison

Technician: Karisa Garza

Altar Flowers: Jacqui Shore

FCCF Open and Affirming Statement

We believe that all people are sacred creations of a loving God. We affirm the diversity that exists among us. We strive to answer the call of Christ by extending his love, compassion and acceptance to everyone. In this spirit, we open our family of faith to people of every religious background, sexual orientation, family composition, physical and mental ability, race, age and gender.

As Christians, we experience God's reconciling love. In response we stand with those who suffer discrimination, isolation and alienation.

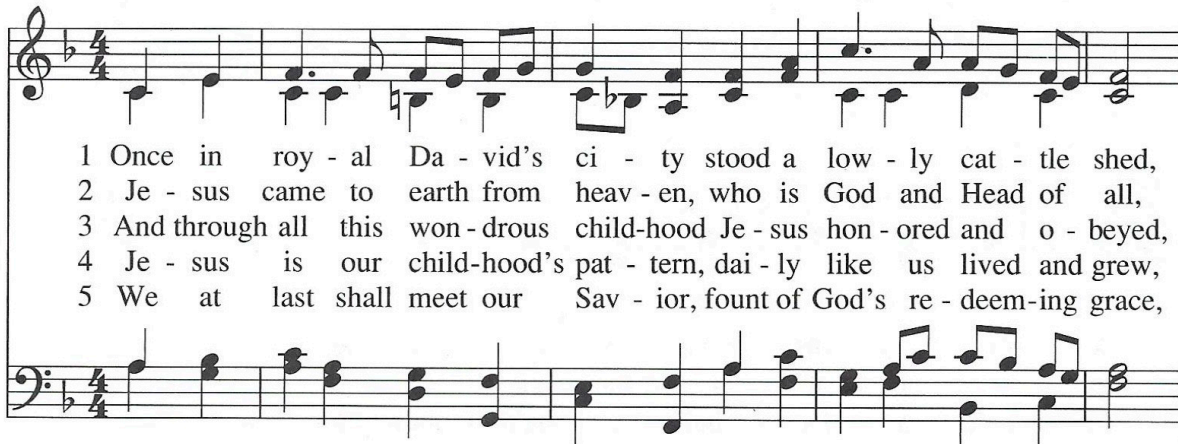
We welcome all people to participate fully in our church's life and ministry. We celebrate the variety of talents and perspectives which flow into our spiritual community, continuing to enrich us in ways we could not have predicted or envisioned.

Once in Royal David's City

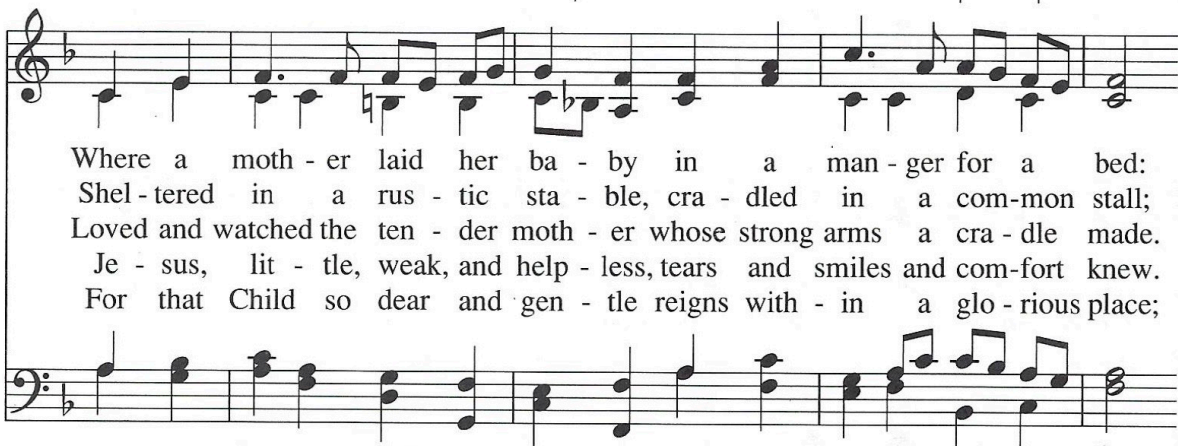
145

Cecil F. Alexander, 1848; alt.

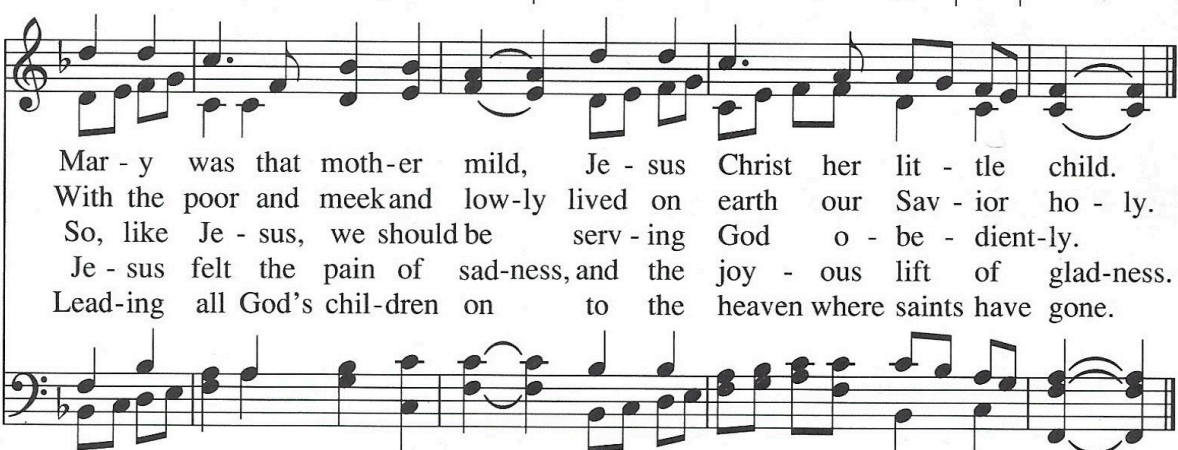
Luke 1:26-35; 2:1-7; 1 Thess. 4:13-18



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's ci - ty stood a low - ly cat - tle shed,
 2 Je - sus came to earth from heav - en, who is God and Head of all,
 3 And through all this won - drous child - hood Je - sus hon - ored and o - beyed,
 4 Je - sus is our child - hood's pat - tern, dai - ly like us lived and grew,
 5 We at last shall meet our Sav - ior, fount of God's re - deem - ing grace,



Where a moth - er laid her ba - by in a man - ger for a bed:
 Shel - tered in a rus - tic sta - ble, cra - dled in a com - mon stall;
 Loved and watched the ten - der moth - er whose strong arms a cra - dle made.
 Je - sus, lit - tle, weak, and help - less, tears and smiles and com - fort knew.
 For that Child so dear and gen - tle reigns with - in a glo - rious place;



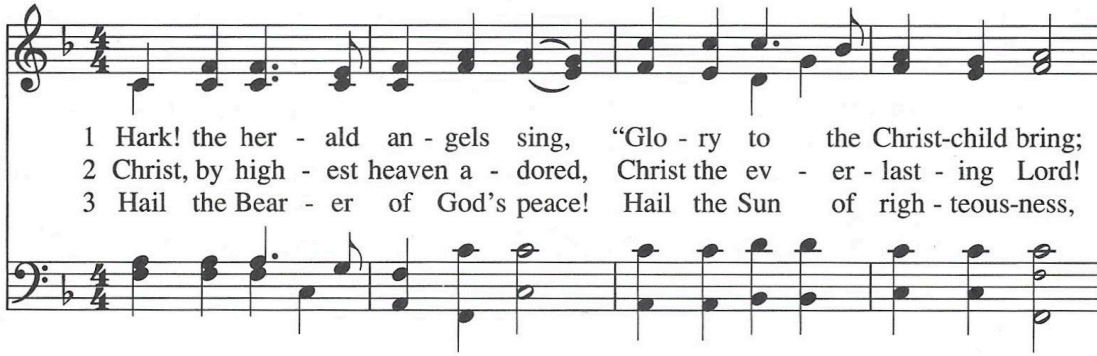
Mar - y was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
 With the poor and meek and low - ly lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
 So, like Je - sus, we should be serv - ing God o - be - dient - ly.
 Je - sus felt the pain of sad - ness, and the joy - ous lift of glad - ness.
 Lead - ing all God's chil - dren on to the heaven where saints have gone.

Cecil Frances Alexander, wife of the bishop of Ireland, wrote a series of children's hymns commenting on the Apostles' Creed. This hymn, elaborating on the words "... born of the Virgin Mary," tells the whole life of Christ.

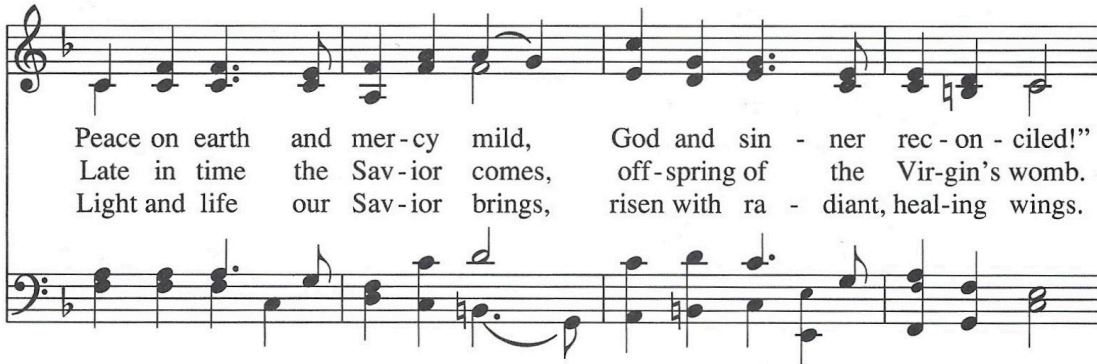
Tune: IRBY 8.7.8.7.7.7.
 Henry J. Gauntlett, 1849
 Harm. A. H. Mann, 1919

Luke 2:10-11, 25-32; 24:46-51;
1 Thess. 4:13-18; Isa. 60:19-20

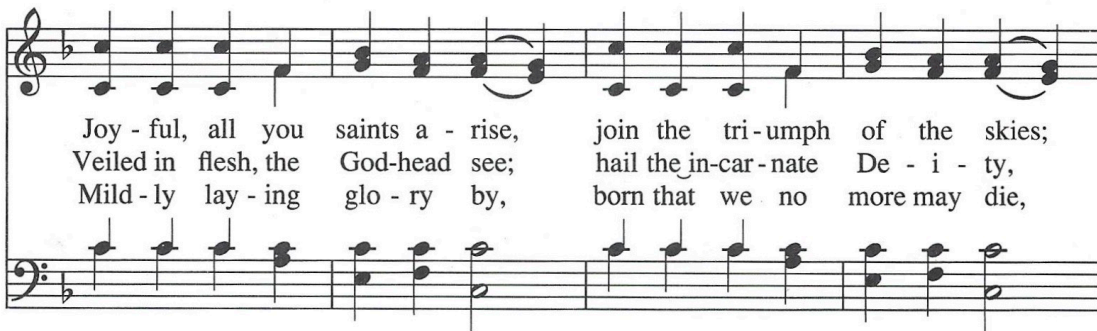
Charles Wesley, 1739; alt.



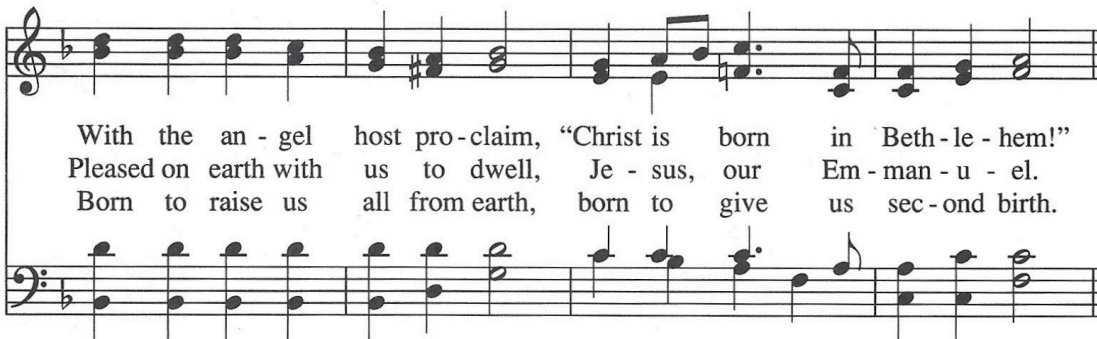
1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the Christ-child bring;
2 Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored, Christ the ev - er - last - ing Lord!
3 Hail the Bear - er of God's peace! Hail the Sun of righ - teous-ness,



Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ner rec - on - ciled!"
Late in time the Sav - ior comes, off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb.
Light and life our Sav - ior brings, risen with ra - diant, heal - ing wings.



Joy - ful, all you saints a - rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;
Veiled in flesh, the God-head see; hail the in-car-nate De - i - ty,
Mild - ly lay - ing glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,



With the an - gel host pro-claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"
Pleased on earth with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.
Born to raise us all from earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

Refrain



Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the Christ-child bring!"

Away in a Manger

124

Anon., United States, 1885; st. 3, 1892; alt.

Luke 2:7

F B♭ F

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

C7 F

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

F B♭ F

stars in the sky looked down where he lay, the
love you, Lord Je - sus; pro - tect me, I pray, and
all the dear chil - dren in your ten - der care, and

C7 F B♭ C7 F

lit - tle Lord Je - sus, a - sleep on the hay.
stay by my side un - til night turns to day.
fit us for heav - en to live with you there.

This anonymous United States carol is often misattributed to Luther. The poem first appeared in a Lutheran hymnal for schools and families. Though he never credited himself with it, the tune most likely was composed by Murray.

Tune: AWAY IN A MANGER 11.11.11.11.
(MÜLLER)


Attrib. to James R. Murray, 1887

Angels, from the Realms of Glory



126

James Montgomery, 1816; alt.


Luke 2:8-20; Matt. 2:1-2, 9-11



1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er all the earth;
 2 Shep-herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch-ing o'er your flocks by night,
 3 Sag - es, leave your con - tem-pla-tions, bright-er vi - sions beam a - far;
 4 Saints, be - fore the al - tar bend-ing, watch-ing long in hope and fear,

As you sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, now pro-claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
 God with us is now re - sid - ing, yon - der shines the in - fant light:
 Seek the great De - sire of Na-tions, guid - ed by Christ's na - tal star:
 Sud-den - ly, your prayers at - tend-ing, Christ be - side you shall ap - pear.



Refrain



Come and wor-ship, come and wor-ship, wor-ship Christ, give thanks and sing.



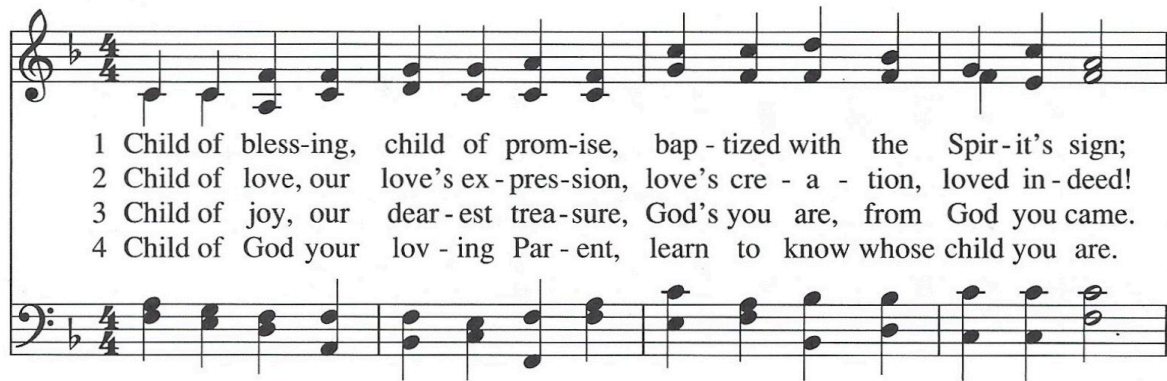
James Montgomery, English journalist, raised a strong voice against injustice in his newspaper Sheffield Iris, in which this hymn was first printed on December 24, 1816. The tune is named for Regent Square Church in London, today a congregation of the United Reformed Church in England and Wales.

Tune: REGENT SQUARE 8.7.8.7.8.7.
 Henry T. Smart, 1867

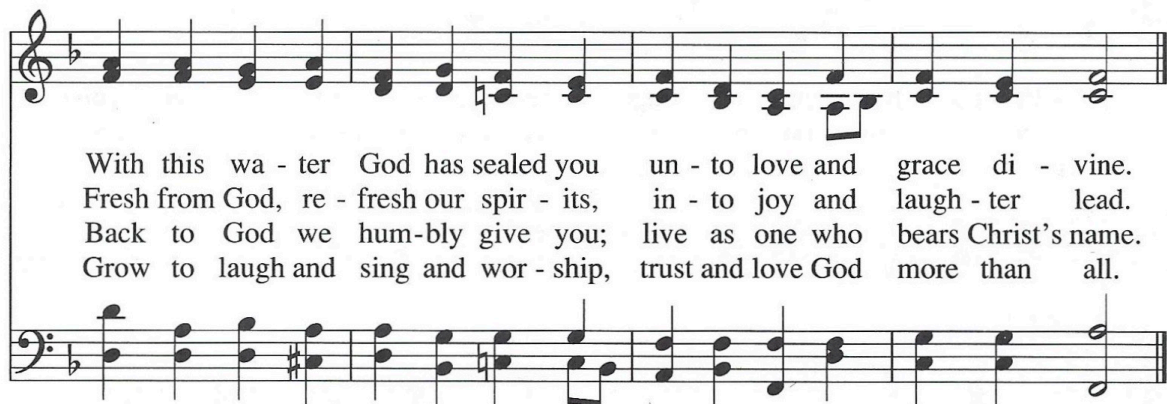
Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

325

Ronald S. Cole-Turner, 1981



1 Child of bless-ing, child of prom-ise, bap - tized with the Spir-it's sign;
2 Child of love, our love's ex-pres-sion, love's cre - a - tion, loved in-deed!
3 Child of joy, our dear-est trea-sure, God's you are, from God you came.
4 Child of God your lov - ing Par - ent, learn to know whose child you are.



With this wa - ter God has sealed you un - to love and grace di - vine.
Fresh from God, re - fresh our spir - its, in - to joy and laugh - ter lead.
Back to God we hum-bly give you; live as one who bears Christ's name.
Grow to laugh and sing and wor - ship, trust and love God more than all.

Ronald Cole-Turner, a teacher of theology, is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. He is an award-winning author on the interface of science and religion.

Tune: STUTTGART 8.7.8.7.
Attrib. to Christian F. Witt (1660–1716), in
Psalmody Sacra, Gotha, 1715

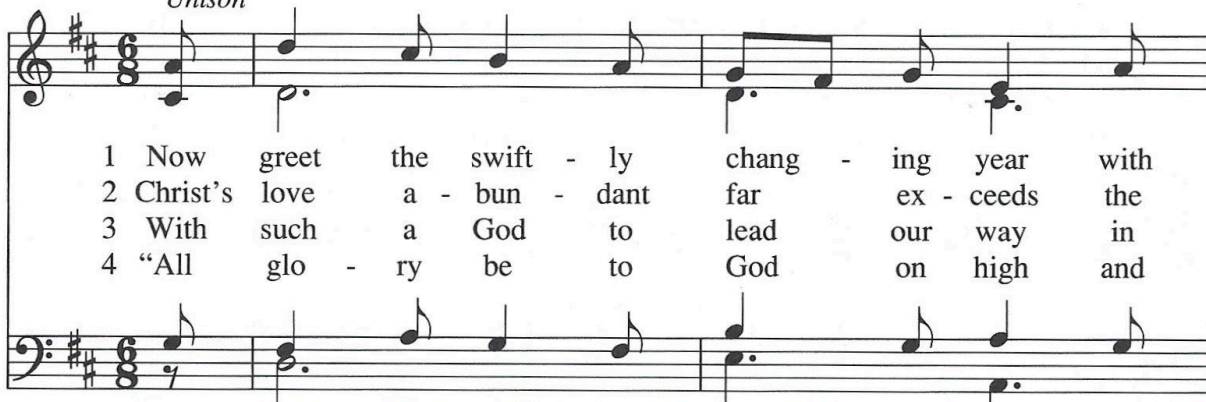
Now Greet the Swiftly Changing Year

Luke 2:8-14

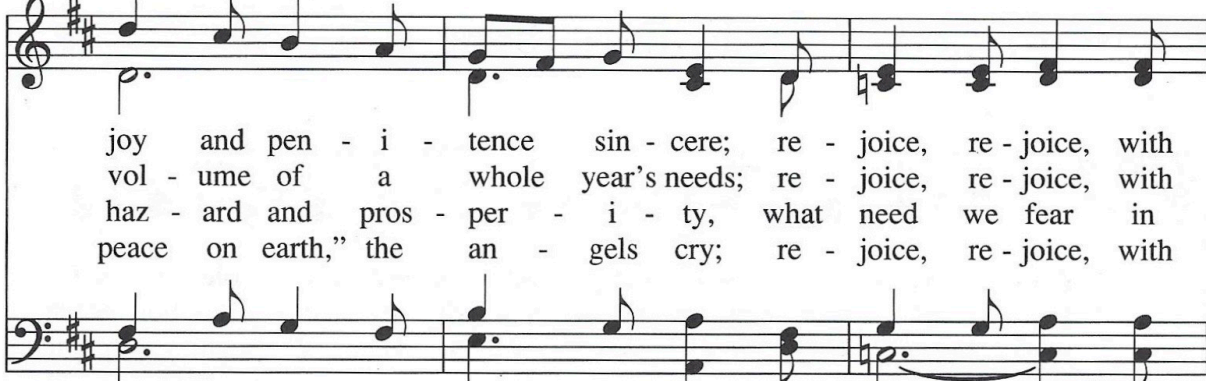
17th-century Slovak

Transl. Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1969; alt.

Unison



1 Now greet the swift - ly chang - ing year with
 2 Christ's love a - bun - dant far ex - ceeds the
 3 With such a God to lead our way in
 4 "All glo - ry be to God on high and



joy and pen - i - tence sin - cere; re - joice, re - joice, with
 vol - ume of a whole year's needs; re - joice, re - joice, with
 haz - ard and pros - per - i - ty, what need we fear in
 peace on earth," the an - gels cry; re - joice, re - joice, with



thanks em - brace an - oth - er year of grace.
 thanks em - brace an - oth - er year of grace.
 earth or space in this new year of grace?
 thanks em - brace an - oth - er year of grace.

This seventeenth-century New Year's hymn was included in the Tranoscius, a collection published by the Czech Lutheran pastor Juraj Tranovský (1591-1637). Translator Jaroslav Vajda is also known for his original hymn texts.

Tune: SIXTH NIGHT 8.8.8.6.
 Alfred V. Fedak, 1984