



FOR THE BEGINNING

— THE ROAD ISN'T STRAIGHT —



EPIPHANY CELEBRATION

JANUARY 5, 2025

10:30AM SERVICE



First Presbyterian
Church of Albany

Welcome!

Whether you are worshipping with us for the first time or have grown up here at FPC,
we are glad you are worshipping here this morning!

The Gathering

**indicates when to rise in body or spirit*

Prelude

Meditation

Maurice Duruflé

Welcome & Announcements

Ringing of the Bell

Choral Introit

Break Forth, O Beauteous, Heavenly Light

J.S. Bach

First Presbyterian Chancel Choir

Break forth O beauteous heavenly light and usher in the morning.

Ye shepherds, shrink not with affright, but hear the angel's warning.

This child now weak in infancy our confidence and joy shall be.

The power of Satan breaking, our peace eternal making.

***Call to Worship**

One: The day of Epiphany has come. How did you get here?

All: By faith, with our eyes cast toward the sky, looking up, following the star.

One: Some of us walked.

All: Some of us ran, longing for a love that is bigger than any of us.

One: Some of us tumbled and fell, stepping tenderly and carefully.

All: Some of us rambled and ambled, meandering like a river, caught up in God's flow.

One: Some of us crawled, thankful for the earth below our knees.

All: All of us came by God's grace and love's pull.

One: There is room for all of us in God's house. Let us worship our gracious God.

***Hymn No. 147**

The First Nowell

THE FIRST NOWELL

***Prayer of Confession**

All: God of new beginnings,

**We admit that we often follow the well-worn path,
simply because others have been there before.**

**Sometimes this is holy and humble,
but there are days when a new path needs to be tread.**

**On those new-beginning days, O God,
give us the courage to follow your star.**

Give us the courage to go home another way.

**Give us the courage to kick up some dust and walk in a new direction for the
sake of justice, love and neighbor.**

For when you are doing a new thing, we want to have the courage to follow.

With hope in our hearts we wander, we travel. Amen.

***Kyrie Eleison No. 551**

Lord, Have Mercy

LAND OF REST



Lord, have mer - cy; Christ, have mer - cy; Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.



Lord, have mer - cy; Christ, have mer - cy; Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

***Declaration of Forgiveness**

***The Welcome and Peace**

One: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you.

The congregation greets one another with words and signs of peace.

***Gloria Patri No. 582**

Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me

GLORY TO GOD



1. Glo - ry to God, _____ whose good - ness shines on me, and to the
2. World with - out end, _____ with - out end. A - men. World with-out

Son, _____ whose grace has set me free, and to the Spir-it, _____ whose love has
end, _____ with - out end. A - men. World with-out end, _____ with - out

set me free. As it was in the be-gin-ning, is now and ev-er shall be. A - men.
end. A - men.

The Word

Old Testament Lesson

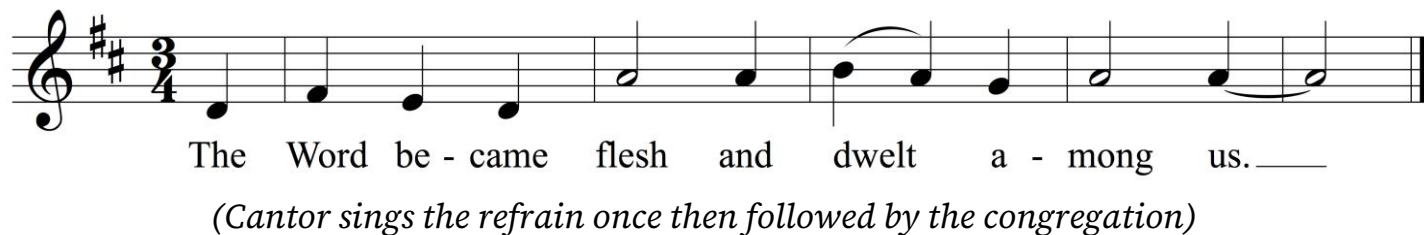
Isaiah 43:16-23 (O.T., pp. 672-673) Kendra Smith-Howard

One: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 147

Michael Lister, *tenor*



The Word be - came flesh and dwelt a - mong us. _____
(Cantor sings the refrain once then followed by the congregation)

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; Zion, praise your God. God has strengthened the bars in your gates; all your children are blessed. **(R)**

The Lord brings peace to the people and feeds us with finest wheat. Order is made sure through-out all the earth; God's promise has been made known **(R)**

God's word is revealed to Jacob, the statues and decrees to Israel. To us alone God's word has gone out. Sing praise to the Lord. **(R)**

Anthem*The Three Kings*

Peter Cornelius

Daniel Hoke, *baritone*

First Presbyterian Chancel Choir

1. Three Kings from Persian lands afar to Jordan follow the pointing star:
And this the quest of the travellers three,
where the new-born King of the Jews may be.
Full royal gifts they bear for the king; gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.

(Chorus) How brightly shines the morning star!
With grace and truth from heaven afar our Jesse tree now bloweth.

2. The star shines out with a steadfast ray; the kings to Bethlehem make their
way, and there in worship they bend the knee, as Mary's child in her lap they
see;
Their royal gifts they show to the King; gold, incense, myrrh are their offering.

(Chorus) Of Jacob's stem and David's line, for thee, my bridegroom, king divine,
my soul with love o'erfloweth.

3. Thou child of man, lo, to Bethlehem the Kings are travelling, travel with them!
The star of mercy, the star of grace, shall lead thy heart to its resting place.
Gold, incense, myrrh thou canst not bring; offer thy heart to the infant King.

(Chorus) Thy word, Jesu, inly feeds us, rightly leads us, Life bestowing.
Praise, O praise such love o'erflowing.

Gospel Lesson

Matthew 2:1-12 (N.T., p. 2)

One: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise be to you, O Christ.**Sermon***The Road Isn't Straight*

Glenn D. Leupold

Our Response

***Hymn No 145**

What Child is This

GREENSLEEVES

Prayers of the People

Betsy Hadden

*There is a “Prayers of the People” book on the table in the back of the sanctuary. We encourage the congregation to write their concerns and thanksgivings in the book before the service so they can be included in the Prayers of the People. Several petitions are offered, each concluding with: O God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Offering of Ourselves and Our Gifts

Ushers will pass the offering plates to each pew. There are also offering receptacles located in the back of the sanctuary. You may place your offering in one on the way into worship or as you leave. You may also donate online at <https://firstpresalbany.org/give/> or scan the QR code to the right.



Offertory

In the Bleak Midwinter
Rose Hunsberger, soprano
Joshua Gurwitz, tenor

Harold Darke

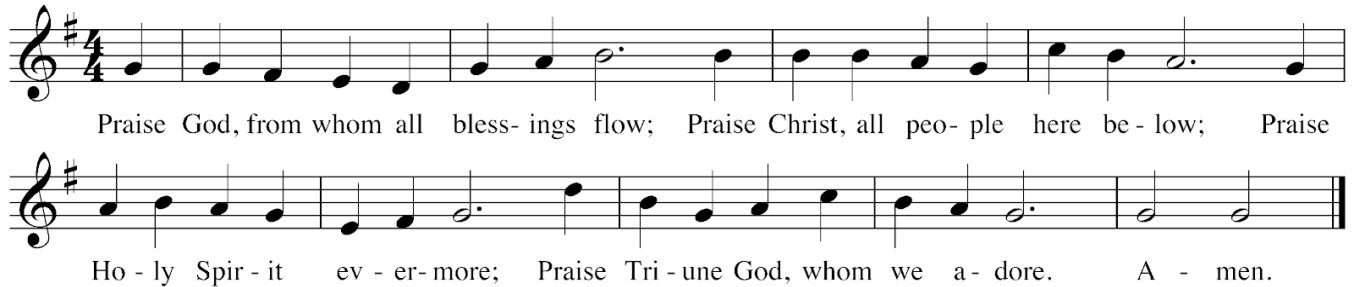
In the bleak mid-winter, frosty wind made moan,
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow
on snow, in the bleak mid-winter long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter, a stable-place sufficed the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air,
but only his mother in her maiden bliss, worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

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 my heart.

***Doxology (sung in unison)**



Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; Praise Christ, all peo-ple here be-low; Praise
Ho-ly Spir-it ev-er-more; Praise Tri-une God, whom we a-dore. A-men.

***Prayer of Dedication**

The Eucharist (Thanksgiving)

Invitation to the Lord's Supper

All those, including children, who seek the way of Christ and desire fellowship in the church are invited to the Lord's Table to share in our common meal of Thanksgiving.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.


One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

(prayer continues with)

One: ...We praise your name and join their unending hymn:

All Sing:



Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san-na in the high-est.
Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est.

One:In union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All Sing:



One:All glory and honor is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

All Sing:



One: And now with the confidence of the children of God, we are bold to pray:

All: 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.

Breaking of the Bread and Communion of the People

The congregation is served at the front of the sanctuary, coming forward by the center aisle and returning by the side aisles. Communion is by intinction – take a piece of bread from the loaf or a piece of pita from the plate, dip it into the cup of juice, and eat. When served, you may respond by saying “Amen,” “Thanks be to God,” or another response. You may choose a sealed prepackaged communion element from one of the baskets – the ones with “GF” are gluten-free. If you prefer to receive communion in the pew, you may remain in your seat and signal an usher. Servers will bring you the elements.

Communion Music

My Lord has Come

Will Todd

Michael Lister, *tenor*

Shepherds, called by angels, called by love and angels:
no place for them but a stable. My Lord has come.

Sages, searching for stars, searching for love in heaven;
no place for them but a stable. My Lord has come.

His love will hold me, his love will cherish me, love will cradle me.

Lead me, lead me to see him, sages and shepherds and angels;
no place for me but a stable. My Lord has come.

Prayer after Communion

All: God of all nations, we give you thanks for this feast of your goodness and grace. As you have nourished us in Christ Jesus, send us forth to feed and serve others—sharing your peace with the whole community and showing your faithful love in the world; through Jesus Christ, the bread of life for all. Amen

The Sending

***Hymn No. 142**

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime

UNE JEUNE PUCELLE

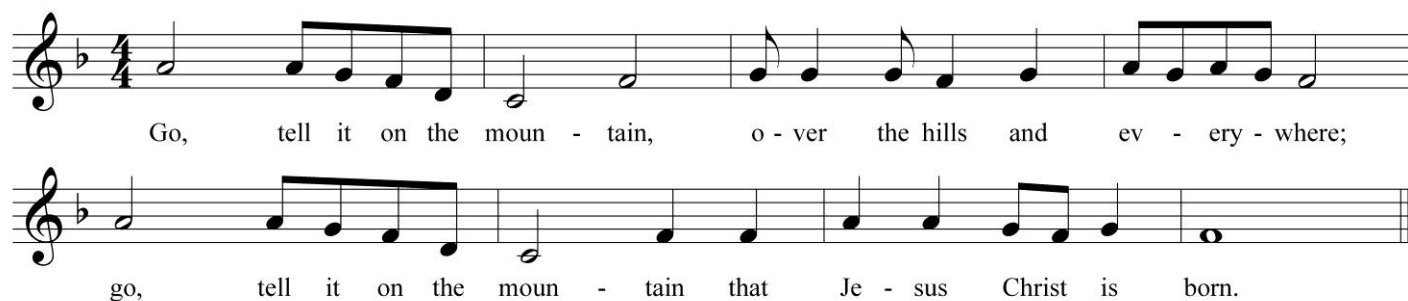
***Charge and Blessing**

***Response by the People (in unison) Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Amen.**

***Responsive Hymn No. 136**

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

WAITING (CASON)



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.

Postlude

Chorale *“How Lovely Shines the Morning Star”* Dietrich Buxtehude

You may be seated if you wish to listen to the postlude.

Please come to Assembly Hall for Fellowship Time.

For your convenience and as an aid to your worship experience, large print hymnals and Bibles are available on the table at the back of the sanctuary.

The music is reprinted under CCLI License #2853455 and OneLicense #A-716938.

Prayers by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed of A Sanctified Art LLC sanctifiedart.org

All are Welcome in this Place!

New faces and voices are always welcome and add to the spirit of our worship, education, mission and fellowship. Let us know you worshipped with us by either filling in the yellow card in the pew in front of you or by scanning the QR code. Pastors Miriam & Glenn use email addresses to share congregational email and important announcements about the life of the church.



First Presbyterian Church

is a community for all people where apprentices of Jesus seek to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.

We are called by God to envision and work toward eradicating systemic poverty, eliminating structural racism and sharing the experience of the good news of God's love, peace and joy.

We welcome children to our worship services. Nursery care for children ages birth through kindergarten is provided on the second floor of the Christian Education Building. Nursery care is available from 8:45am to 12:15pm and is staffed by experienced childcare providers Morgan Odom and Mary Margaret Cabuhat.

Parking is available on Sunday mornings in Washington Park. There is also a parking lot on Washington Avenue just west of Lark Street available during church services on Sunday mornings. The church parking lot on Sunday mornings is reserved for visitors and for those who, for physical reasons, need close access to the church. Please note the spaces reserved for those with disabilities, and please do not block other cars.

We continue to livestream our Sunday worship services on Facebook.

Christian Education on Sunday mornings

9:15-10:15 Education Classes in the Education Building

Godly Play in the Preschool Class on 2nd floor (age 3 thru kindergarten)

Godly Play in The Upper Rooms on 3rd floor (Grades 1-5)

Youth Education in the Youth Room on 2nd floor (Grades 6-12)

Adult Education is the Rose Room

THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

Sunday, 1/05 11:45am Fellowship Time
1:00pm Aging with Pride Monthly Potluck

Tuesday, 1/07 5:45pm Outreach and Mission Committee Meeting

Wednesday, 1/08 7:00pm Dad's Small Group

Thursday, 1/09 7:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Next Sunday, 1/12

9:15am Adult Education
9:15am Children's Education (1st through 5th grade)
9:15am Preschool Education
9:15am Youth Education
9:30am Chancel Choir Rehearsal
10:30am Worship Service in the sanctuary and livestreaming on
Facebook
11:45am Fellowship Time

Serving you on Sunday, January 5

Sanctuary Ushers/Greeters: John Abunaw, Kate Pruzek, Sahil Yashib, Jeff Durgee
Online Worship Assistant: Jeff & Meddy Jacques
Scripture Reader: Kendra Smith-Howard
Prayer Reader: Betsy Hadden
Communion Servers: Amy Robinson & Kendra Smith-Howard
Offering Counters: Leslie Cheu & Marc Boucher
Audio Visual Specialist: Kevin Fuscus

Serving you on Sunday, January 12

Sanctuary Ushers/Greeters: Jeff Durgee, Ellen Kemp, Rachel Smith, Roseline
Takor
Online Worship Assistant: Mary Rogers
Scripture Reader: Linda Stevens
Prayer Reader: Kate Pruzek
Communion Servers: Kevin Fuscus & Roger Green
Offering Counters: Ron Geuther & Amy Robinson

Announcements

Today the **Adult Education Class** explored the meaning of Epiphany. **Next Sunday, January 12**, our guest leader will be Lisa Mendel, a lawyer specializing in immigration law. She will share options for immigration status and provide some basic know-your-rights information. Invite your friends impacted by this issue.

As 2024 draws to a close, please remember to submit all 2024 check requests in to the office by the deadline, **TODAY, Sunday, January 5, 2025**. Thank you!



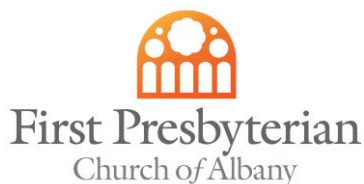
Aging With Pride
Monthly Potluck
Today, 1:00pm - 3:00pm First Pres

Church. This is a wonderful opportunity for LGBTQ+ seniors to come together in a welcoming, supportive environment to share food, stories, and laughter.

Each month the **FOCUS Food Pantry** requests items from its member churches. FPC's January donation is toilet paper. All items must be new and unopened. The **FOCUS Food Pantry** is also requesting one-pound bags of rice. Please leave donations in the box in Assembly Hall. Questions? Call Susan Sneeringer at 518-496-4793.

The **paraments** (the cloth on the pulpit, lectern, and communion table) and the **pastors' stoles** (the cloth around their necks) are white, the liturgical color for the Christmas season. White symbolizes days and season of joy and mark pivotal events in the life of Christ (Christmas and Easter). The Christmas season is 12 days long beginning December 25 and ending on January 5.

Offering Envelopes are available in the Assembly Hall if you are interested in having them for 2025. These are not dated or numbered and can be used at any time. They are in groups of 12. Please take as many as you need.



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firstpresalbany.org

*Glenn D. Leupold, Co-Pastor • Miriam Lawrence Leupold, Co-Pastor • Michael C. Lister, Director of Music
Trevor Kahlbaugh, Organist • Molly Dowell, Youth Director • Steven Minchin, Office Administrator*

1 The first Now-ell the an-gel did say was to cer-tain poor
 2 They look - ed up and saw a star shin-ing in the
 3 And by the light of that same star three wise men
 4 This star drew nigh to the north-west; o'er Beth - le -

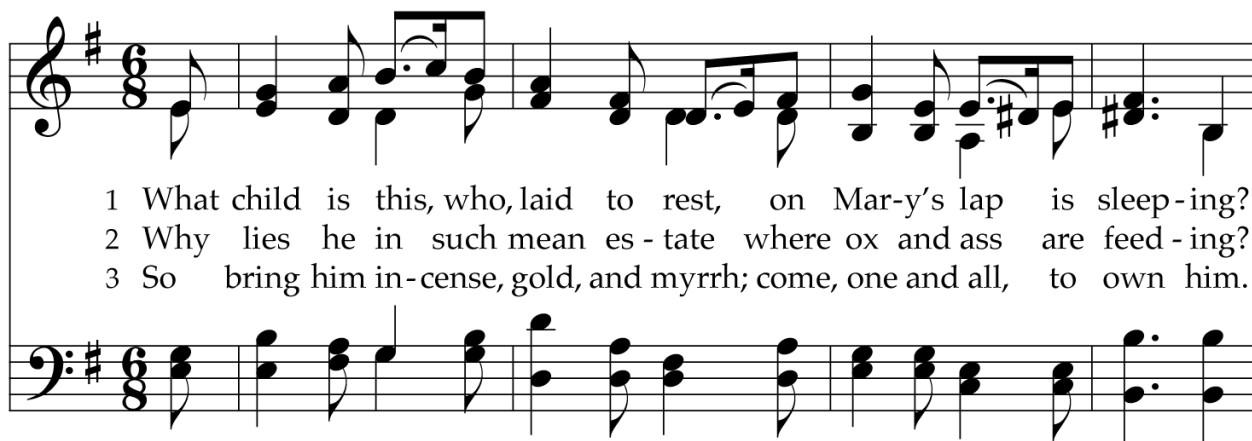
shep-herds in fields as they lay, in fields where they lay keep-ing
 east be-yond them far; and to the earth it gave
 came from coun - try far; to seek for a king was their
 hem it took its rest, and there it did both stop

their sheep, on a cold win-ter's night that was so deep.
 great light, and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.
 in - tent, and to fol - low the star wher-ev - er it went.
 and stay, right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.

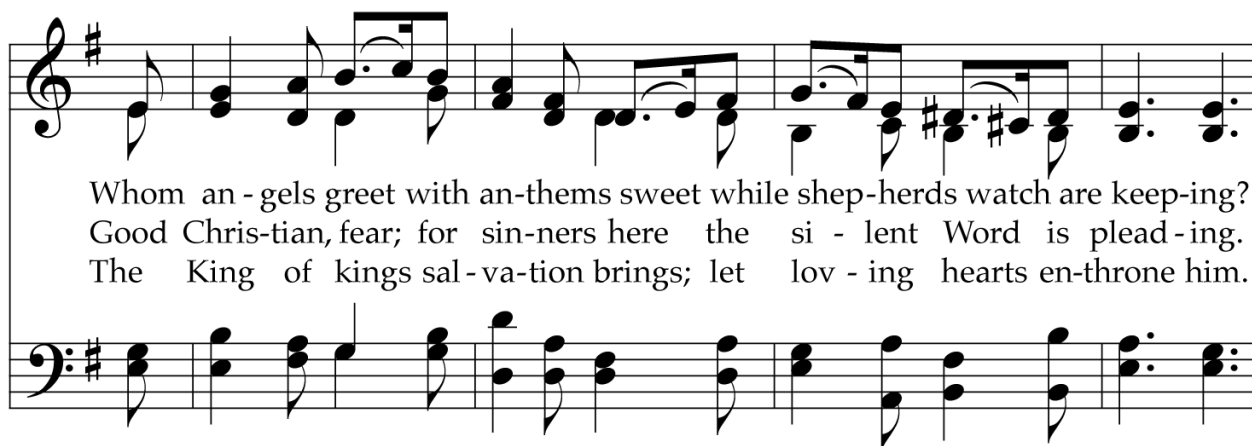
Refrain

Now - ell, Now - ell, Now - ell, Now - ell,

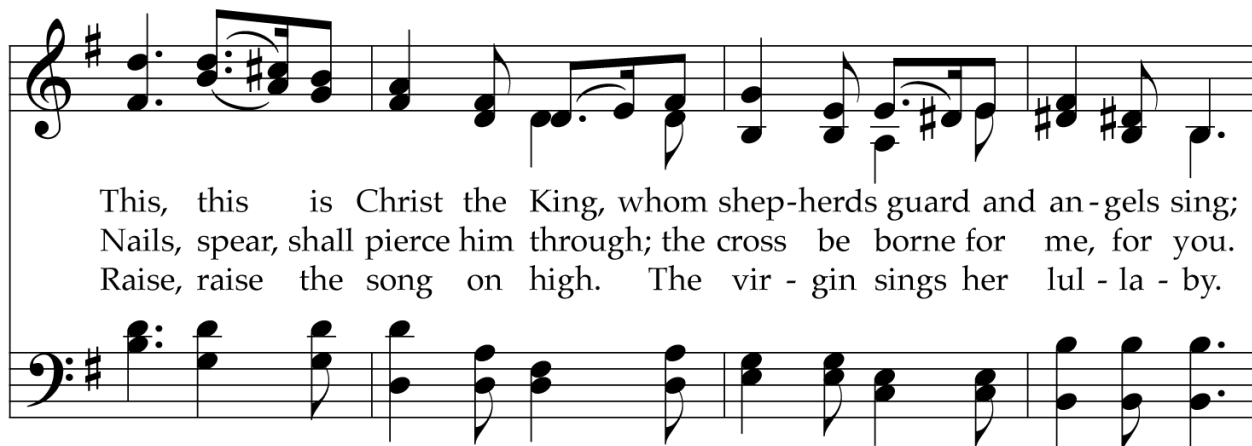
"Nowell" is the English form of the French "noel," a shout of joy formerly used at Christmas (as in Chaucer's "Franklin's Tale"), a clue that the word is older than its first printing. It may have Latin and French roots related to "born" (*natus / nē*) as well to "news" (*nova / nouvelle*).



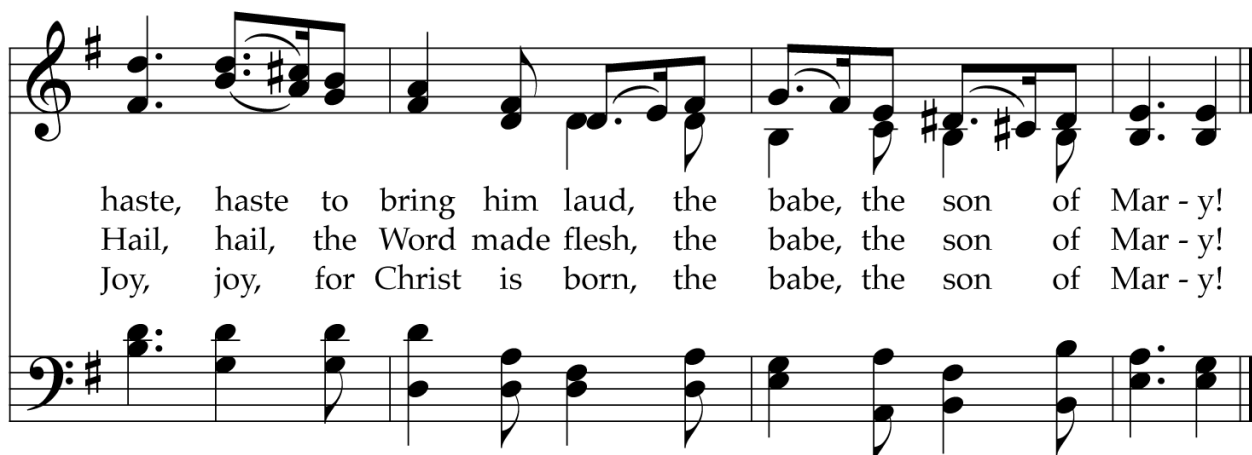
1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?
 2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?
 3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.



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.

'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime 142

Capo 3: (Em) (Am) (Bm7) (Em)
 Gm Cm Dm7 Gm



1 'Twas in the moon of win - ter - time, when all the birds had fled,
 2 With - in a lodge of bro - ken bark the ten - der babe was found.
 3 The ear - liest moon of win - ter - time is not so round and fair
 4 O chil - dren of the for - est free, the an - gel song is true:

(Em) (Am) (Bm7) (Em)
 Gm Cm Dm7 Gm



Great Spir - it, Lord of all the earth sent an - gel choirs in - stead.
 A rag - ged robe of rab - bit skin en - wrapped his beau - ty round.
 as was the ring of glo - ry on the help - less in - fant there.
 the ho - ly child of earth and heaven is born to - day for you.

(Bm) (Am) (G)
 Dm Cm B^b



Be - fore their light the stars grew dim and wan - dering
 But as the hunt - ers brave drew nigh the an - gel
 The chiefs from far be - fore him knelt with gifts of
 Come kneel be - fore the ra - diant boy who brings you

Refrain

(C) (Am) (Bm7) (Em) (Bm)
 E^b Cm Dm7 Gm Dm



hunt - ers heard the hymn:
 song rang loud and high: Je - sus, your king, is born;
 fox and bea - ver pelt.
 beau - ty, peace, and joy.

(C) (Bm) (Em) (Am) (Bm7) (Em)
 E^b Dm Gm Cm Dm7 Gm



Je - sus is born. In ex - cel - sis glo - ri - a.

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

This English text preserves the earliest known Canadian hymn, originally written in the Huron language by a missionary, later translated into French, and eventually paraphrased in English. It is set to a French Noël tune old enough to have been used for the original version.