Christmas Pageant and The Holy Eucharist

December 19, 2021
10:00 am

Welcome to St. Thomas!

If you are a guest or visitor, we hope that you will feel warmly greeted and enthusiastically welcomed. If you need any kind of assistance, including a hearing-assistance device, please ask the Greeter at the door.

We provide coloring materials at the back of the church as well as stuffed animals. We also have copies of *The Sunday Paper* and *The Sunday Paper Junior* to help children and their adults understand the day's scripture. Restrooms are located through the back door of the church and in the parish hall.

We encourage you to join us in the liturgy as participation will make your visit much more enjoyable.

Please help us to provide you with more information by filling out one of the cards at the back of the church. You can give the card to a Greeter, the clergy, or drop it in the offering plate; we can send you a Welcome Packet in the mail and contact you by email.

If you have a need or would like to speak with the clergy, please speak to either the Greeter or the clergy. Our clergy are always happy to meet with you to talk about St. Thomas and your own spiritual journey. Whether this is your first Sunday or you have been a member for years, you may contact the Parish Office at 508-824-9595 or at StThomasEpiscopalChurch@comcast.net.

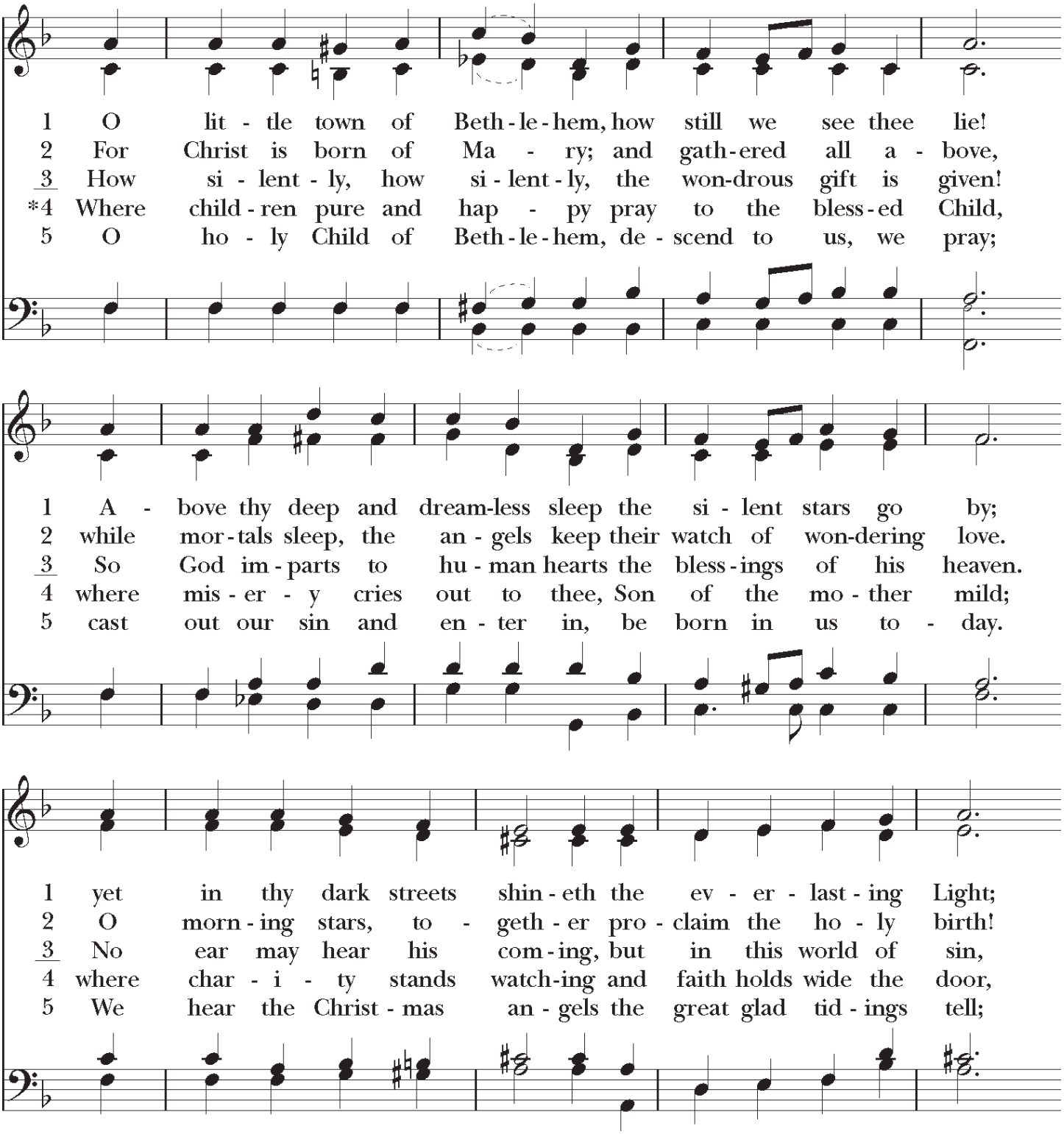
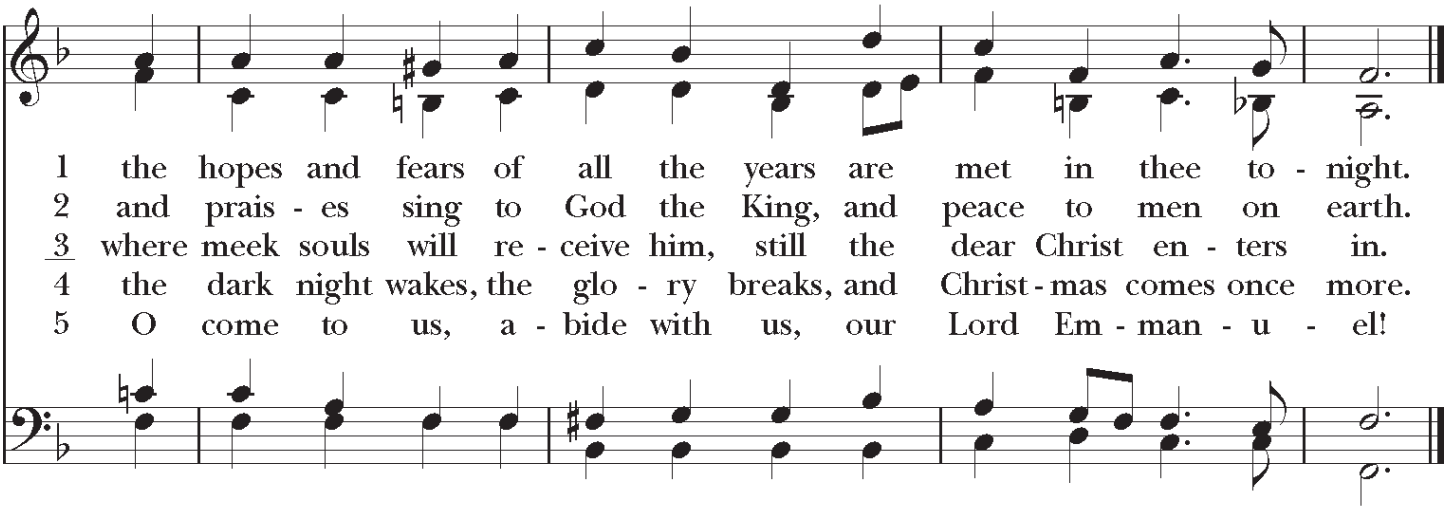
All baptized Christians, including children, are welcome to receive Communion. If you wish a blessing for yourself or your child, just cross your arms at the rail.

We are glad you are here and hope you will feel warmly welcomed!

The Word of the Lord

Please stand.

Processional Hymn *Sung by all.*

O little town of Bethlehem — The Hymnal 1982 #79



Words: Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) Music: *St. Louis,* Lewis H. Redner (1831-1908)

Opening Acclamation

The people standing, the Celebrant says

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.**

The Collect for Purity

The Celebrant says

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Let us pray.

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

Invitation to Children

Fr. Joseph invites the Sunday School children to lead us in the Christmas Pageant.

The Christmas Pageant

This night is like no other night. It is a time to dream and sing our way to Bethlehem. The children will show us how to go.

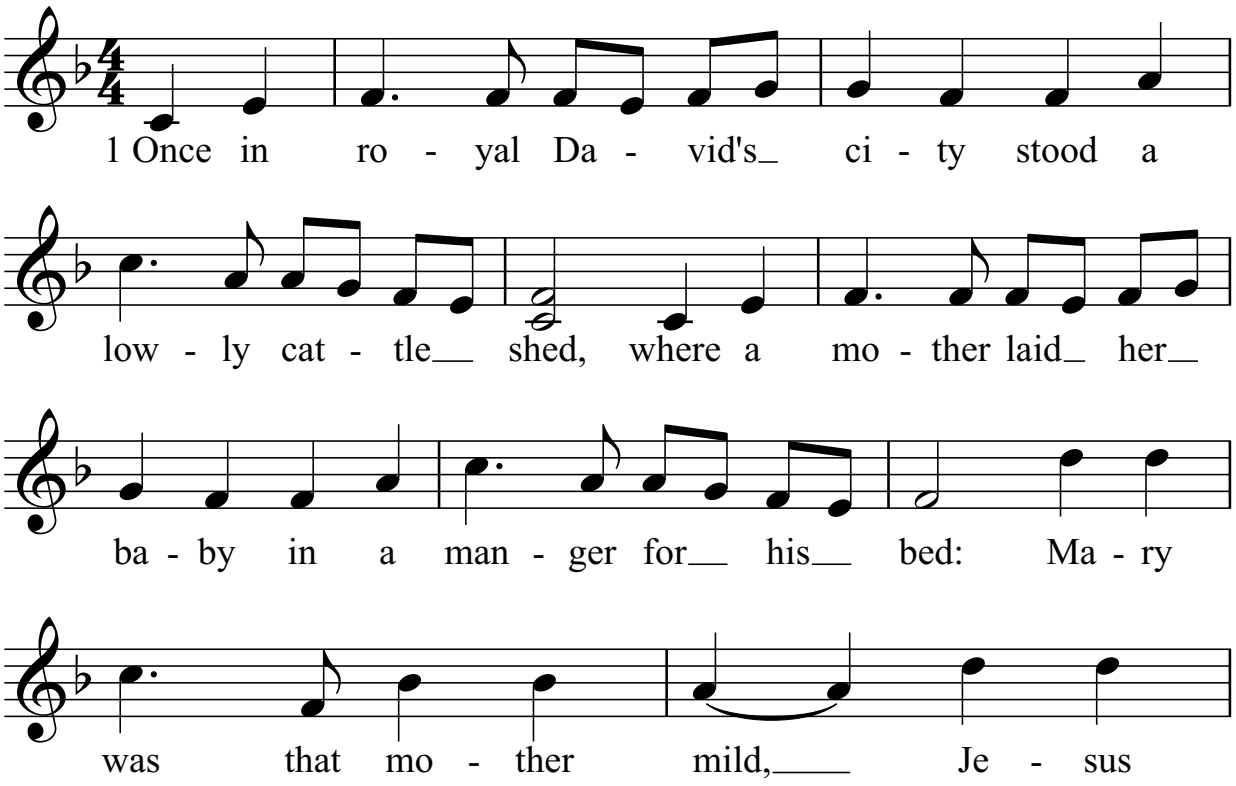
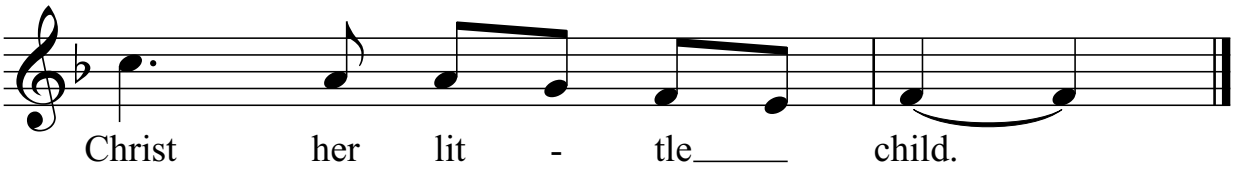
The little town we seek sits in the hill country some ten miles south of Jerusalem. For thousands of years the houses have gathered there on the hilltop like a family breaking bread. “Bethlehem” means “House of Bread.”

In the center of the village is a small inn. On this night it is over-flowing with people seeking sleep and a place to eat. Behind the inn is a dark stable. A gray donkey chews his barley and broken straw while a weary cow leans and rests after the day’s plowing in the valley. A sheep nearby is nearly asleep. All is still and quiet in the little town.

As night gathers, the last two travelers come slowly up the road. Look, there is a young woman about to be a mother. She is walking with her husband. They are Joseph and Mary from Nazareth! They have walked for six days to come to this city where King David was born, so long ago.

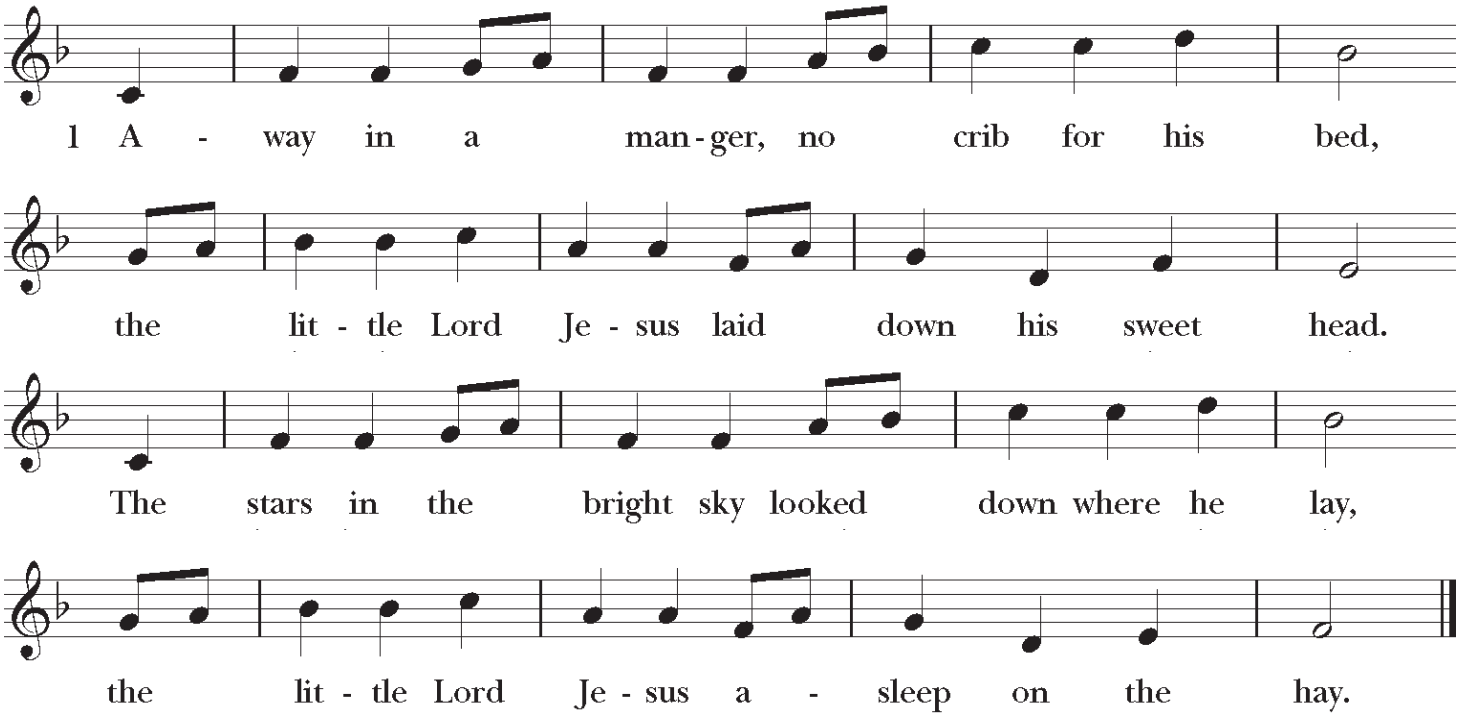
They have come, like so many others, because the Roman emperor wants to count each one, so he can take their money as a tax.

But it is late, and Mary is so weary. Where will they sleep? There is no room in the inn. They decide to sleep with the animals.

The people sing verse one of the hymn “Once in Royal David’s City.” – Hymn 102



Stars brighten slowly in the sky. All creation holds its breath. Suddenly, from the stable, comes the cry of a newborn child! Mary gently wraps the baby in a blanket and lays him in the feed box that his father has filled with straw.

The people sing verse one of the hymn "Away in a Manger." – Hymn 101



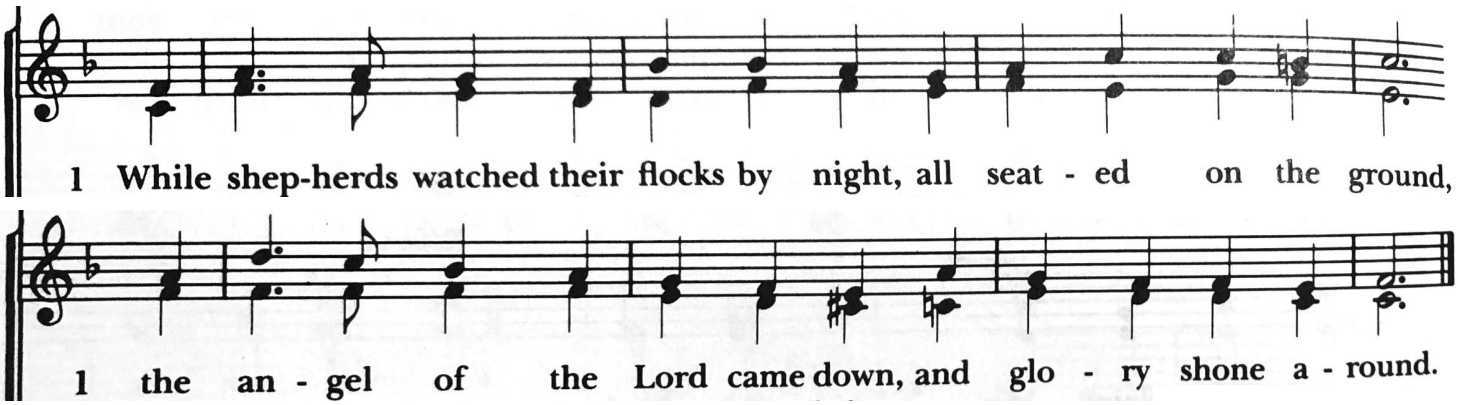
In the hills outside Bethlehem, shepherds watch their shadowy sheep. All at once, the dark is lost in light, and in the midst of the light is something even brighter: the faces of angels.

The fearful shepherds then hear music in the sky, and a voice says clearly, "Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by all people. Today in the City of David a Savior is born! He is Christ, the Lord."

Then more angels appear a whole heavenly host of them, praising God and singing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will to all people, everywhere."

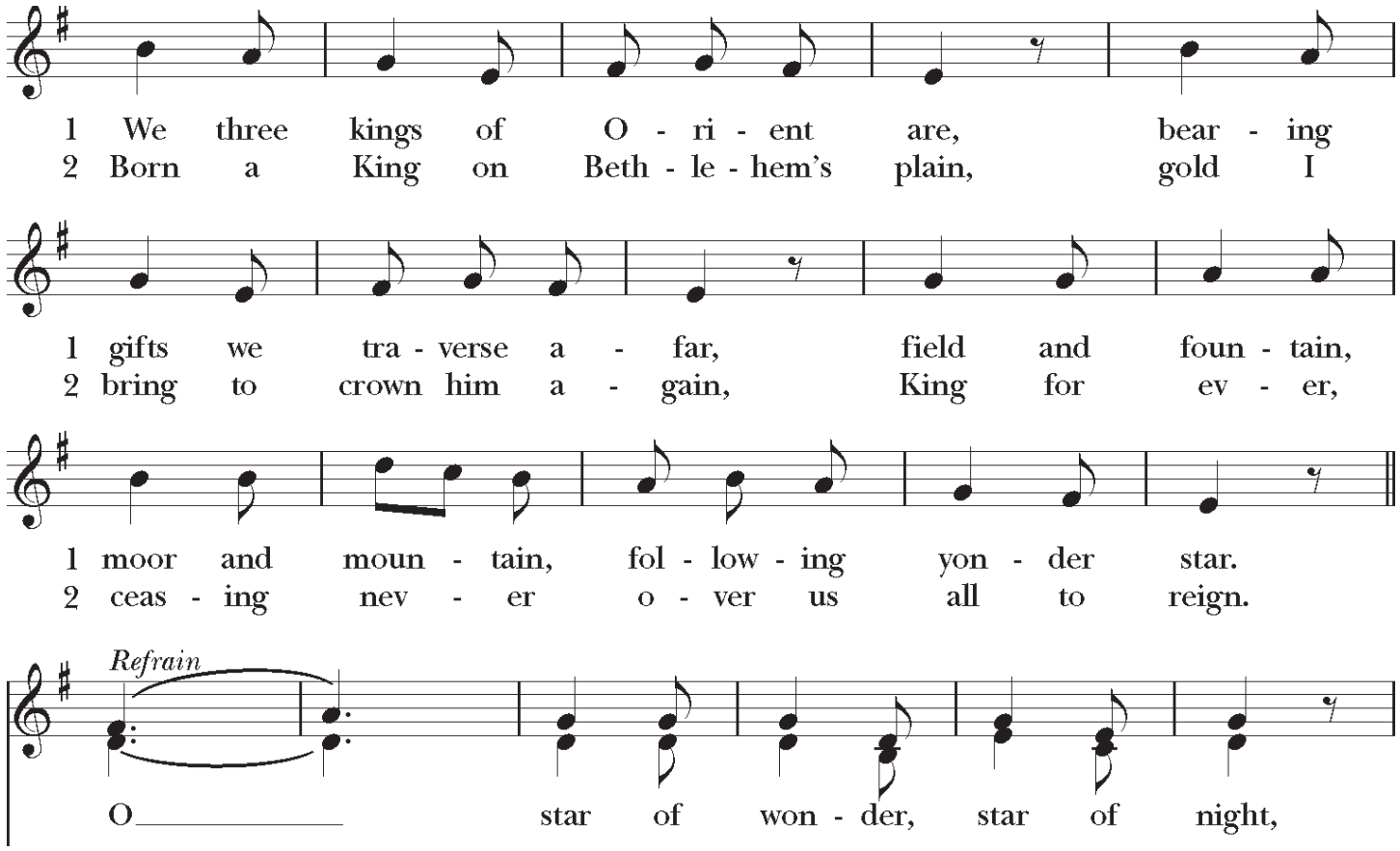
The shepherds run with joy across the fields to Bethlehem to the barn behind the inn. There they find the Holy Family and creep forward, overwhelmed with mystery, to find Nativity itself in the center of all that love.

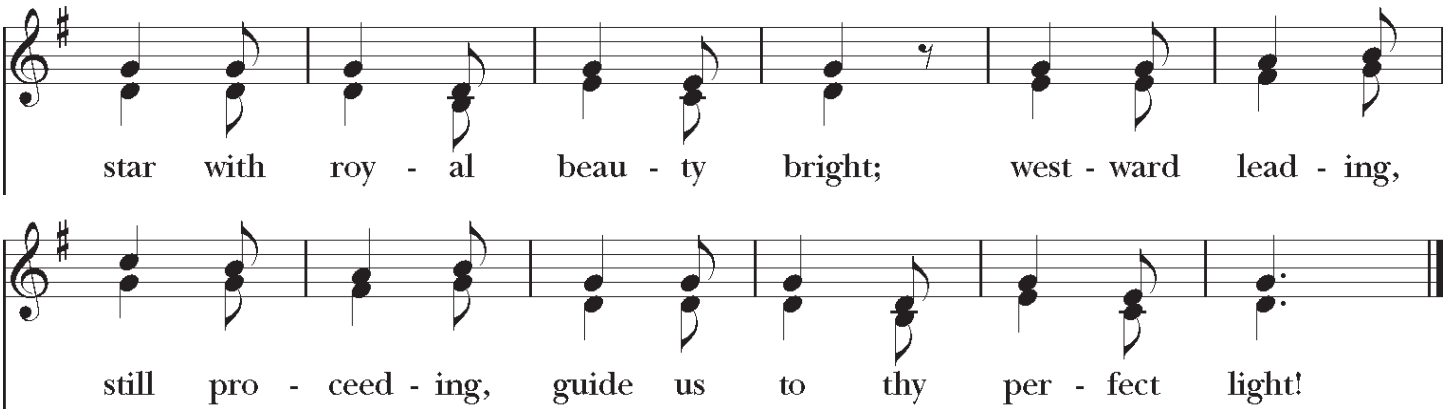
The people sing verse one of the hymn "While Shepherds Watched." – Hymn 94



Three camels plod up the road to Bethlehem. They have come from the East, far beyond the Arabian Desert, perhaps from as far as the Caspian Sea. The camels carry three kings, the wise ones, the Maji. They are following the wild star, the destiny they had never seen before, and they are following it, wherever it goes, to find the King its shining shows them.

The people sing verse one and two of the hymn "We Three Kings." – Hymn 128





The kings' journey ends in a new kind of king. Their restlessness rests at last. They fall to their knees and give them bright old, sweet-smelling frankincense and bitter myrh, brought so far with so much love.

So now we all come, following the star, to find God-with-us. We come, as people have come all through the ages, to bring our own gifts to this Child, God's gift to us.

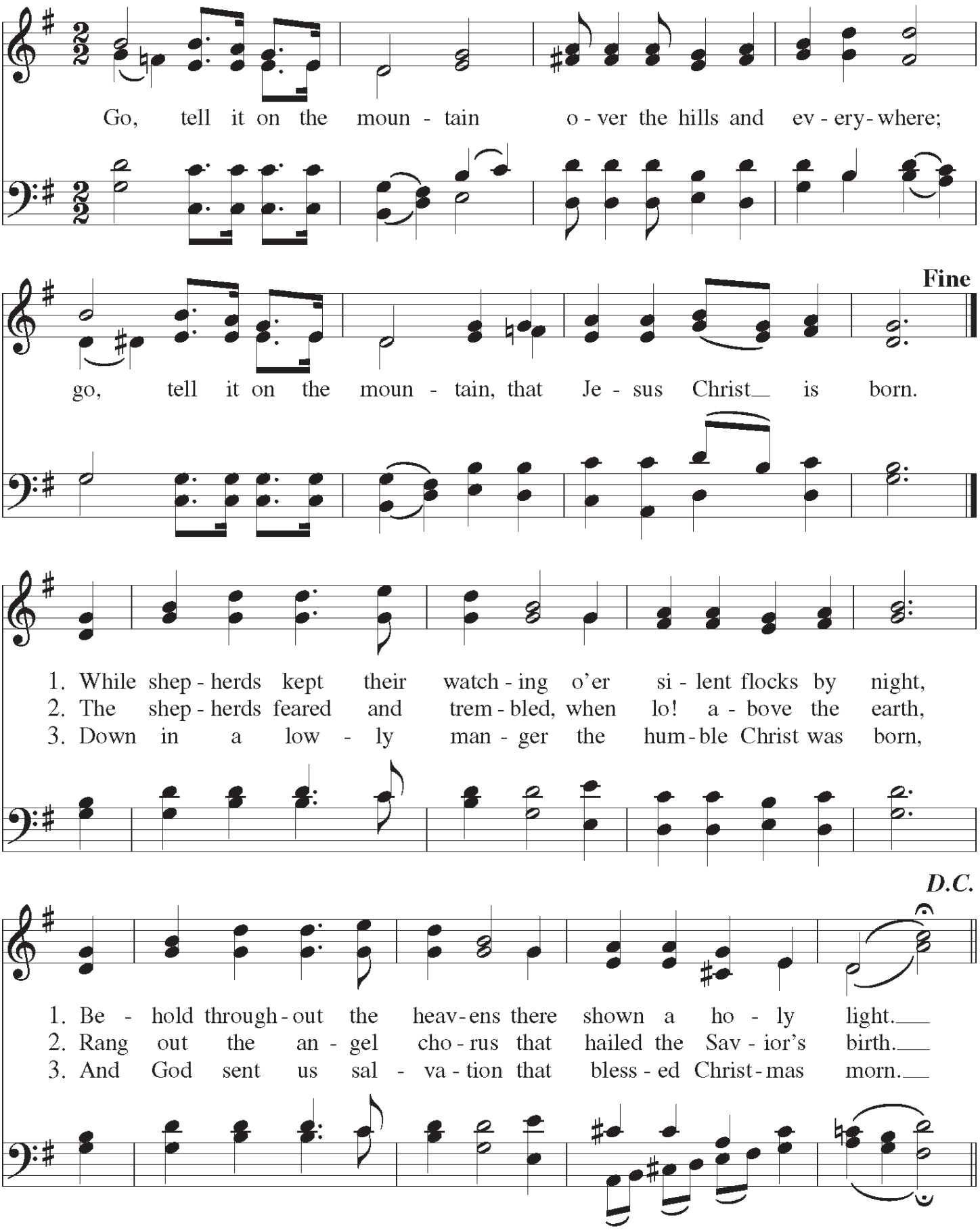
Come forward now. Bring your gifts of stars and of yourselves to place around the manager. Show us the way into the Mystery of Christmas, as we sing, for this night is holy and filled with over-flowing silence.

The people sing verse one of the hymn "Silent Night." – Hymn 111

Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace.
Sleep in heavenly peace.

At this time everyone brings forth a star to place around the manger.

Gospel Acclamation *We sing verses 1-2 before the Gospel, verse 3 after.*

Go, tell it on the mountain LEVAS 21

Holy Gospel

Luke 1:39-45

All stand and turn to face the Gospel.

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

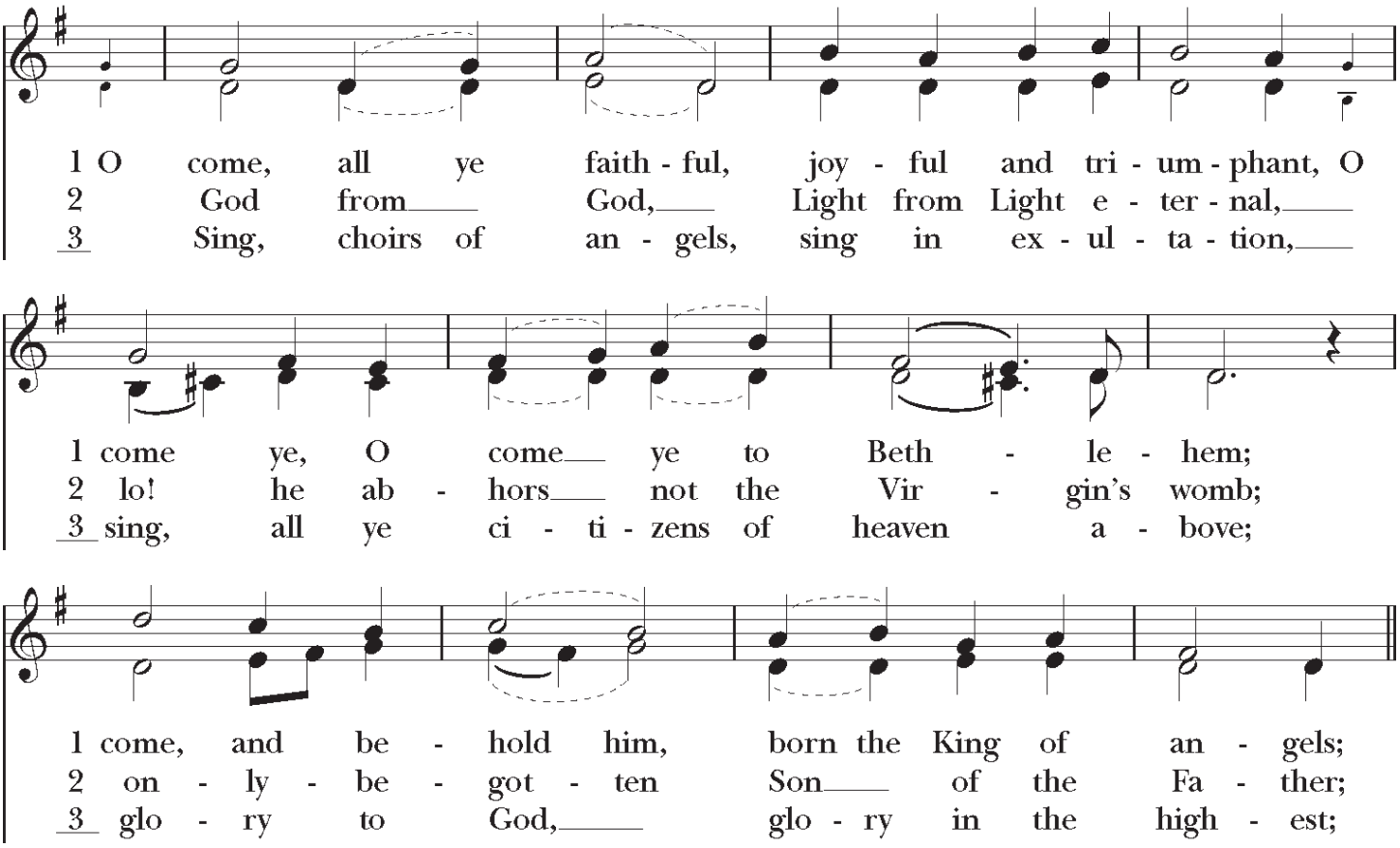
The Homily

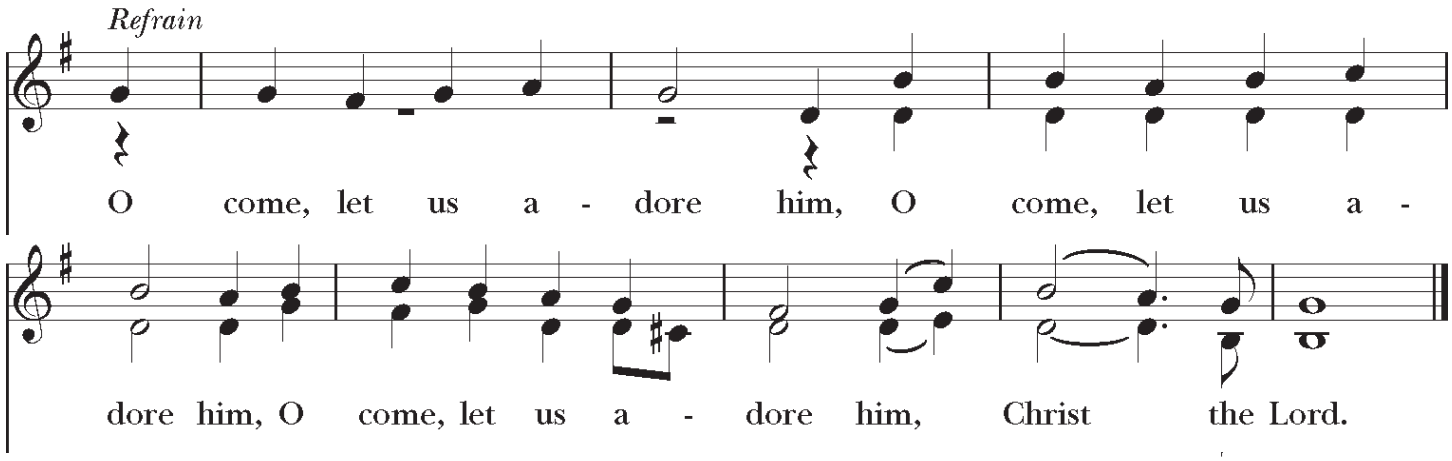
The Rev. Joseph Mumita

Hymn *Sung by all.*

O come, all ye faithful

The Hymnal 1982 #83, Verses 1-3, 6





6 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing;

Refrain

Peace *All stand.*

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Then the Ministers and the People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Morning Announcements

The Holy Communion

The Celebrant says

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. *Ephesians*

The people remain standing.

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

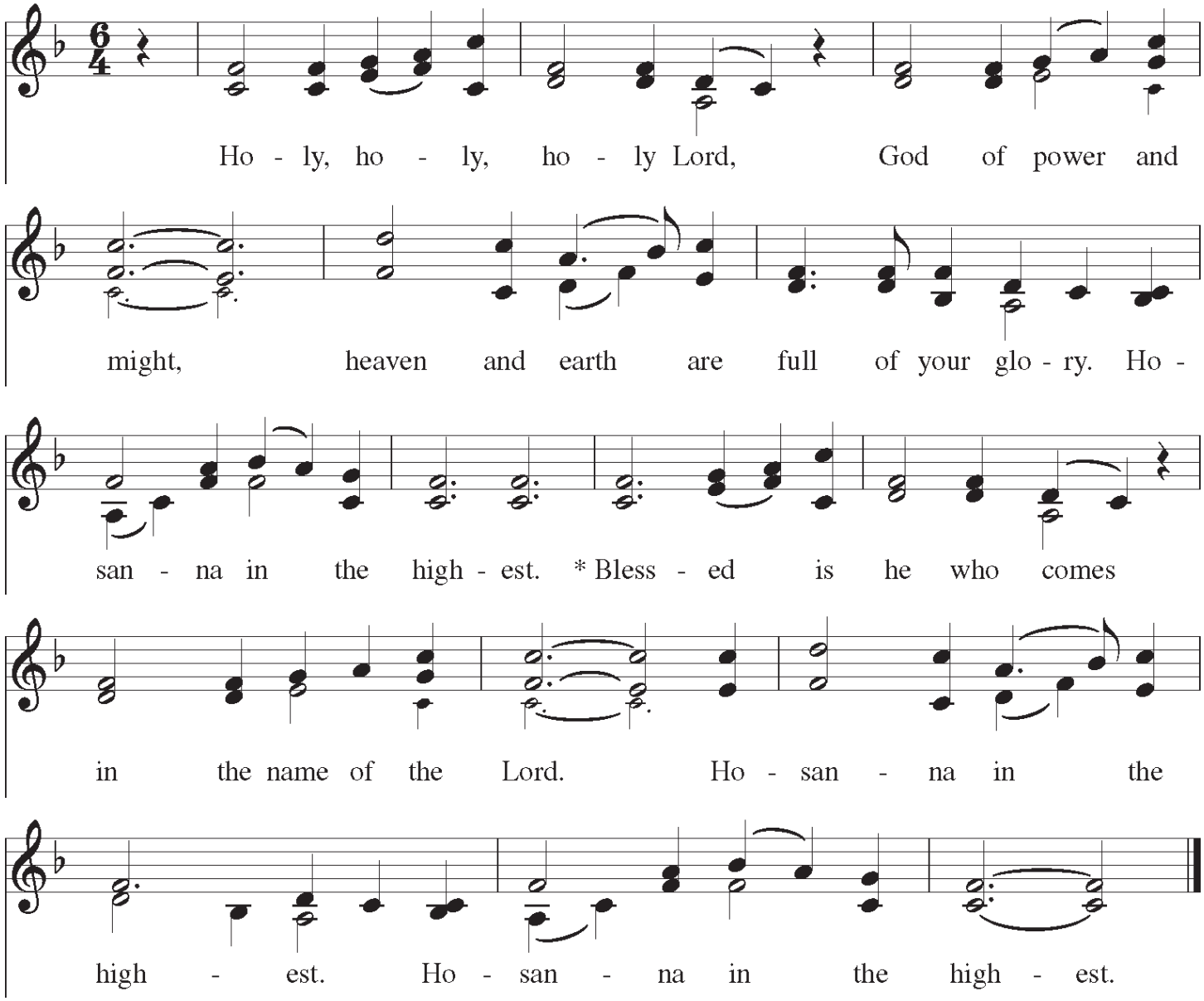
Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

The Celebrant proceeds

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you sent your beloved

Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus Wonder, Love, and Praise #858

The people kneel.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and

made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,
We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

The People kneel

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Celebrant then continues

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People and Celebrant

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread *A period of silence is kept.*

Alleluia, Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The Celebrant says

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

All baptized Christians, regardless of age or denomination, are invited to the altar to receive communion. You may kneel or stand at the Altar Rail. The bread is received in the open palm, right hand over left. The wine, if desired, may be taken as an individual cup. If you do not wish to receive Communion, but would like a blessing, come forward to the Altar Rail and cross your arms over your chest.

Communion Hymns

Creator of the Stars of Night

Creator of the stars of night, Your people's everlasting light,
O Christ, Redeemer of us all, We pray You, hear us when we call.
When this old world drew on toward night. You came, but not in splendor bright.
Not as a monarch, but the child of Mary, blameless mother mild.
To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One,
Praise, honor, might, and glory be from age to age eternally.

Mary's Song

My soul rejoices, for God has chosen me,
To be blessed among His nations for all eternity.
But, how can this come to pass? I am small and so afraid.
What is this that He has asked of such an unworthy maid

But, my soul rejoices, for God has chosen me,
To help redeem His people from their iniquity.
I don't fully understand, how a woman insignificant
And never even knowing man, gives life to such an infant.

A Man to rescue us all – to rescue us all.

My soul rejoices, for God has chosen me,
To be His servant for all eternity.
My soul rejoices, for God has chosen me.
My soul rejoices – For He's chosen me.
He's chosen me. He's chosen me…

Postcommunion Prayer *After Communion, the Celebrant says*

Let us pray.

Celebrant and People

**Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us
as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Blessing *The Celebrant says the blessing. The people respond* **Amen.**

Recessional Hymn *Sung by all.*

The first Nowell — The Hymnal 1982 #109

**The first nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Refrain: Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
born is the King of Israel.**

**They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. *Refrain***

**And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. *Refrain***

**This star drew nigh to the north-west:
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest;
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay. *Refrain***

Then entered in those wise men three,
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there, in his presence,
their gold and myrrh and frankincense. *Refrain*

Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord
who hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood mankind hath bought. *Refrain*

Dismissal

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.
People **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Please come to the coffee hour in the Parish Hall following the service.

Prayers

Prayer is a very important part of our life at St. Thomas.

Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEVs) deliver communion and prayers to the ill and homebound each month. To sign up for this important ministry, please call 508-824-9595.

In the Parish Cycle of Prayer, we pray for five households each week. This is a way for us to reach out in prayer to all our members on a systematic and regular basis. This week we pray for Andrew Schultz; Bilha Sedita; Jennifer Shallcross; Geraldine Shallcross; Steven Shallcross. Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you.

Prayers for the Homebound and Ill members of our parish include……Paul Yagman, Luke Yagman, Mark M., Sharon DiRubio, Cindy Quinn, Jim Medeiros, Carole Silvia, Virginia Ames, Joe Andrade, Frank Capron, Janice Crepeau, Ken LeGrice, Judy Lincoln, Jay Medeiros, Julie Moore, Wayne Perkins, Jessica Pollard, Louie Raposa, Carol Russell, Sherry, Sandy Trauterman, Jacqui White, and Esther Wilbur.

Prayers for those who serve in the Armed Forces and Overseas… Megan Drewniak, Adam Dyke, William Marsh IV, Donald Souza, Noel Souza, Ryan Vohnoutka, Christopher French, Scott Larson, and Jay Devenger.

In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer this week we pray for the Parishes of the Alewife Deanery: Episcopal Chaplaincy at Harvard, Cambridge; Lutheran Episcopal Chaplaincy at Mass. Institute of Technology, Cambridge; The Society of St. John the Evangelist, Cambridge; Hospital Chaplaincies & Healthcare Chaplains.

Memorial flowers are given in memory of Bonnie and Rob Beaulieu by Rick & Sandi Mongiovi; The Kingman & Stephens Family by Family; John & Mary Cleathero by the Cleathero Family; Frank & Ellen Wilkins by Kenneth Wilkins; William & Alice Carter; Audrey Werner by Mrs. Durwood Ward; Harriet Haworth; Dorothy McCarty; Lorraine Anita Mogus by Lorraine A. Custer; Joseph L. Kidd; Sandra, Antone & Dorothy Roderick by Gordon Roderick.

Participants

The Rev. Joseph Mumita, *Celebrant and Preacher*
Ed Seaholm, *Music Director*
Louis Raposa, *Guitarist*

Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols and Holy Eucharist 6:00 pm

2021 Fundraisers

December: **Calendar Raffle**
Available in the back of the church. $10 each, with 7 chances to win in January. Makes a great stocking stuffer!

Ongoing: **St. Thomas Wear**
Adult sizes range from Small through Extra-Extra-Large.
Short-Sleeve T-Shirts $15.00 • Long-Sleeve T-Shirts $20.00
Women's Polo Shirts • $35.00 • Men's Polo Shirts $35.00
1/4-Zip Sweatshirts $40.00 • Hoodies $40.00