

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see -I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

~Luke 2: 10-11

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Eve – December 24, 2022 420 Beaver St., PO Box 411 Mars, PA 16046-0411 www.stjohnchurchmars.org Phone: 724-625-1830 email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning! Know that you are welcome here just as you are

If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time visiting us, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin.

Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. As you are comfortable, please rise when there is an * and join in the congregational responses, noted in **bold**.

All songs are marked with numbers. The red book in the pew has all the songs. Look for the large number in the upper corner of the page to find the correct song. During the time of Peace, you are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcomed to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew.

At the time of Offering, you are invited to share a gift as you are comfortable. You may also place any prayer requests for the pastor in the offering plates.

If you need a restroom, restrooms are located on the bottom floor at the far side of the building from the elevator. Restrooms may be accessed either via the stairs in the rear of the sanctuary, the stairs by the Greeting Area, or the elevator.

> For pastoral concerns, please contact Pastor Katie McNeal: 412-407-3166 (cell) or pastorkmcneal@gmail.com

PRELUDE

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

***THE INVOCATION**

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.** Today Christ is born. Alleluia, alleluia. **O come, let us adore him. Alleluia, alleluia.**

*CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION

Many ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed man and woman in his own image;

long after the great flood, when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant;

twenty-one centuries from the time the promise was given to Abraham and Sarah; thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt and Miriam danced in freedom;

eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges;

one thousand years from the anointing of David as king,

in fulfillment of the times and years and months and days discerned by the prophets;

in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;

the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome; the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;

while the whole world enjoyed a span of peace,

Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father,

desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming,

being conceived by the Holy Spirit and nine months of growth in the womb of his mother—

now in our own times is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, God made flesh.



*GATHERING SONG O Come, All Ye Faithful (ELW 283)

***GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. And also with you.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*HYMN OF PRAISE Angels We Have Heard on High (ELW 289) An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly the plains, sing - ing o'er 1 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long? Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing; 2 3 re - ply, and the moun-tains in ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains. which in - spire your heav'n - ly song? What the glad-some tid - ings be come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born king. Refrain Ð Glo ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o; glo 0 d Pa n ri - a in ex-cel-sis De о. -

WORD

God speaks to us in the scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7

A reading from the book of Isaiah: ²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders. the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

CONGREGATIONAL SONG *It Came upon the Midnight Clear* (ELW 282) up - on It came the mid-night clear, that glo - rious song of old, 2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace-ful wings un - furled, be - neath life's crush-ing load, whose forms are bend-ing low, 3 And you, 4 For lo! The days are has -t'ning on, by prophets seen of old. from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold: and still their heav'n-ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world. who toil a - long the climb-ing way with pain - ful steps and slow: when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told, the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king." "Peace on and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing, A - bove its sad look now, for glad and gold-en hours come swift - ly on the wing; ver all the earth its an - cient splen-dors fling, when peace shall o -The world in sol - emn still-ness lay sing. to hear the an - gels its ba - bel sounds the bless-ed an - gels sing. and ev - er o'er oh, rest be-side the wea-ry road and hear the an - gels sing! the world give back the song which now the an - gels and all sing.

SECOND READING: Titus 2:11–14

A reading from the book of Titus:

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*CONGREGATIONAL SONG O Little Town of Bethlehem (ELW 279)

All stand and sing together. During the hymn, candles may be lighted for the reading of the Gospel. Please tilt unlit candles when lighting to avoid dripping wax.

Beth - le - hem, how see thee lie! 0 lit - tle town of we still gath - ered For Christ is born of all Mar - y, and, a bove giv'n! How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is ho - ly child of 0 Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray; A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go bv: while mor-tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won-d'ring love. his heav'n. So God im-parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of cast out our sin, and en - ter in, be born in us to - day. shin - eth the thy dark streets ev - er - last - ing light. yet in Ò morn-ing stars, to geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth. com - ing; but, this world of No ear may hear his in sin, We hear the Christ-mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell; the years are The hopes and fears of all met in thee to - night. God the king, and and prais - es sing to peace to all the earth! where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.

come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

oh,



***GOSPEL: Luke 2:1–20** The holy gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

There will be a moment of reflection in the candlelight after the reading. Candles may be extinguished upon instruction.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR Away in a Manger (at 7:30 pm)

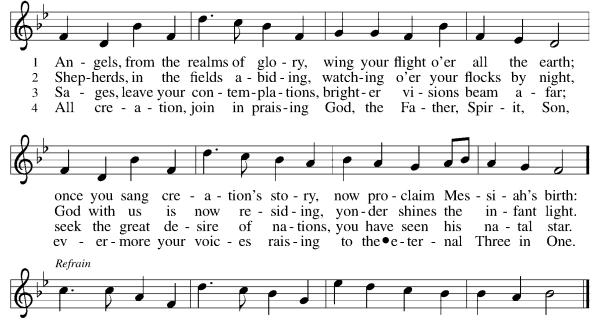
CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

SPECIAL MUSIC

3:00 pm – Solo by Maizy Fisher, Mary Did You Know? 7:30 pm – Choir Anthem, He Sent His Son

*HYMN OF THE DAY Angels, from the Realms of Glory (ELW 275)



Come and wor-ship, come and wor-ship, wor-ship Christ, the new-born king.

***NICENE CREED**

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father: through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven. was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

With wonder and thanksgiving for Christ's coming into the world, we pray for the church, the life of the earth, and the whole human family. *A brief silence*.

Emmanuel, your infinite love is born to us this night. With choirs of angels the church proclaims the good news. Send us out as messengers of the hope that has come to all people. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

You dwell with your creation and the whole earth sings for joy. Renew your splendor from the smallest cell to the widest galaxies. Guide us to be wise stewards of your gifts for the sake of generations to come. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your authority is over the nations. Break the rod of oppression in every land and free all people from fear. Bring peace where there is war and compassion where there is suffering. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You cherish those who are most vulnerable. Protect infants and children, and bless those who care for them. Shelter those who have no home. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your lovingkindness embraces everyone in need. Help any for whom this season is lonely or joyless. Comfort those among us, or known to us, who are experiencing distress of body or mind, or missing loved ones especially Jeff, Bob, Katie, Marcia, Geneva, Cherry, Winnie, Chuck, Henry, Harry, Roy, Ellen, Ruth, Sally, those on our prayer list, and all whom we remember aloud or in our hearts. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You welcome those who have died into the joyous light of glory. We give thanks for the saints of every time and place who have praised you with lives of faith and humility. Inspire us by their example to love you by serving others. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Pondering the mystery of eternal love made flesh in Christ Jesus, we commend all for whom we pray to the mercy of God. **Amen.**

***SHARING THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always. And also with you.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

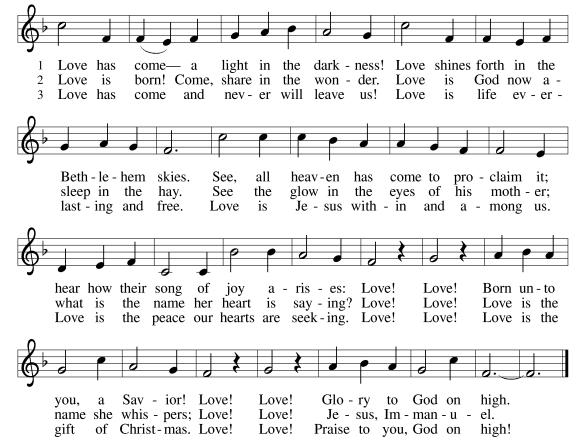
SPECIAL MUSIC

3:00 pm – Solo by Maizy Fisher, Christmas Angels 7:30 pm – Choir Anthem, An Angel's Prayer

OFFERING

OFFERING HYMN Love Has Come (ELW 292)

**Rise on the 3rd verse*



OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God with us: You came as a baby to a manger. You slept on straw and greeted shepherds. You come again in bread and wine. Remind us how good you are at blessing ordinary things. And then, through these gifts, help us to bless the lives of others in the strength of your holy name. **Amen.**

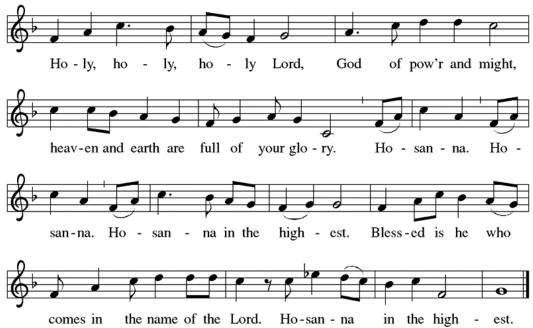
*GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels,

with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your Word brought light into the world. In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your beloved children.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son. Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray. 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, forever and ever. Amen

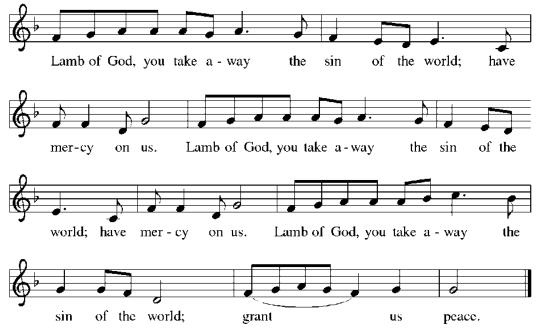
INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace.

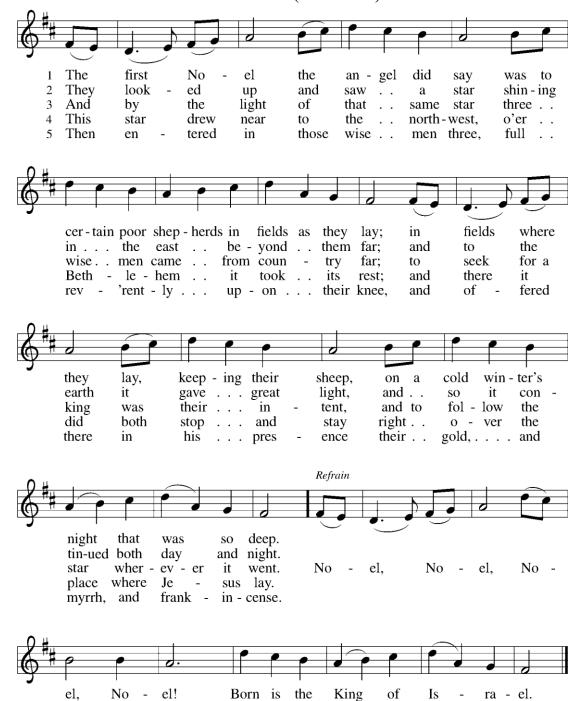
Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life, and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. In response to Jesus' invitation, all are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Those who do not receive the bread and wine are invited to come forward for a blessing.

Grape juice and gluten free wafers are available upon request. Communion may also be brought back to the pews for those who are unable to come forward.

COMMUNION SONG Lamb of God

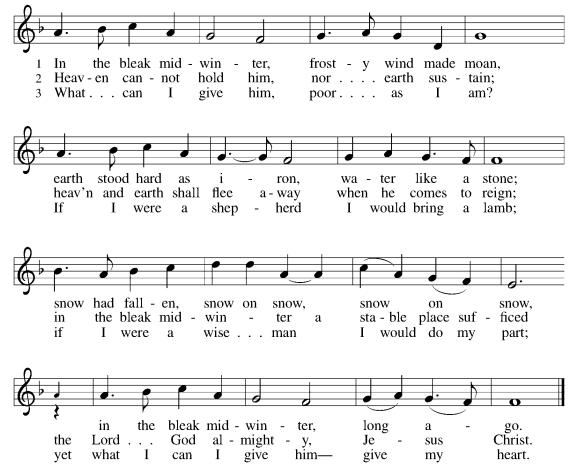


DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION



COMMUNION HYMN The First Noel (ELW 300)

In the Bleak Midwinter (ELW 294)



What Child is This? (ELW 296)



***POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in grace. **Amen.**

***POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray.

God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table

with gifts of grace, truth, and life.

As you have gathered us in joy,

send us forth as messengers of your peace.

Make us shine with the good news of your glory,

Born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the word.

***BLESSING**

God bless you and keep you, + Jesus grant you grace and truth, and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts, now and forever. Amen.

*SENDING SONG Silent Night, Holy Night (ELW 281) Stil le Nacht. hei - li-ge Nacht! Al les schläft, Si lent night, ho ly night! All is calm, 1 2 Si lent night, ho ly night! Shep - herds quake 3 Si _ lent night, ho ly night! Son of God, ein - sam wacht das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar. nur bright - gin moth - er and child. all is round yon vir sight; glo - ries at the stream from heav - en a - far, ra - diant beams from your ho-ly love's pure light face, Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher Hold - er Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! heav'n-ly Christ, the Sav - ior, is with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh. peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace. born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! birth, Je sus, Lord, at your birth. -



*DISMISSAL Glory to God in the highest! Peace to God's people on earth! Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news. Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Our altar flowers are from John and Ruth Ann Tully with wishes for the happiest of holidays.

Our Christmas celebration continues... Sunday, December 25, Christmas Day – 9:00 am Sunday, January 1, Service of Lessons and Carols – 9:00 am

Today's Music

O Come, All Ye Faithful. Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2, Music: attr. John Francis Wade. Public Domain.

Angels We Have Heard on High. Text: French carol; tr. H.F. Hemy, The Crown of Jesus Music, 1864, Music: French carol; arr. Edward S. Barnes, 1887-1958. Public Domain.

It Came upon the Midnight Clear. Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876, Music: Richard S. Willis, 1819-1900. Public Domain.

O Little Town of Bethlehem. Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893, Music: Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908. Public Domain.

Angels, from the Realms of Glory. Text: James Montgomery, 1771-1854, alt., sts. 1-3; Salisbury Hymn Book, 1857, st. 4, Music: Henry T. Smart, 1813-1879. Public Domain.

Love Has Come. Text: Ken Bible, b. 1950, Music: F. Seguin, Recueil de noëls composés en langue provençale, 1856. Music Services, Inc. / Augsburg Fortress.

The First Noel. Text: English traditional, Music: English traditional; arr. John Stainer, 1840-1901. Public Domain.

In the Bleak Midwinter. Text: Christina Georgina Rossetti, 1830-1894, Music: Gustav Holst, 1874-1934. Public Domain.

What Child Is This. Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898, Music: English ballad, 16th cent. Public Domain. *Silent Night, Holy Night.* Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885, Music: Franz Gruber, 1787-1863. Public Domain.

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Special Music:

He Sent His Son. Text: Mabel Jones Gabbo, Music: Michael Finlinson Moody, Arr. Sally DeFord. *An Angel's Prayer*. Text and Music: Beth Shurtleff

Away in a Manger. Text: North American, 19th cent., Music: William J. Kirkpatrick, 1838-1921; arr.

David Willcocks, b. 1919. Public Domain /Oxford University Press (New York).

Mary Did You Know. Text and Music: Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene

Christmas Angels. Jonas Myrin and Michael W. Smith