

**ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, SIGHTHILL
31ST DECEMBER 2023**

THEME: GOD IN OTHER PEOPLE



GATHERING SONG:

Verse 1

O come all ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant
O come ye O come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him
Born the King of angels

Chorus

**O come let us adore Him
O come let us adore Him
O come let us adore Him
Christ the Lord**

CCLI Song # 4758525, C. Frederick Oakeley/John Francis Wade, Public Domain

CALL TO WORSHIP – BASED ON ISAIAH 61:10

Leader: Come worship the Lord,
All ye that greatly rejoice in the Lord;
All whose all being exults in my God,

for he has clothed us with the garments of salvation;
He has covered us with the robe of righteousness,
As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Oh Come, all ye faithful.

Come worship the Lord God Almighty.

Leader: A year comes to a close

All: and a New Year awaits.

Leader: Christmas lights still twinkle

All: yet the story strides on.

Leader: We travel into the wilderness

All: and there find something new.

Leader: We come to worship God,

All: make straight the way of the Lord.

Leader: In humility and wonder

All: we join in our praise.

OPENING HYMN: IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR

1. It came upon the midnight clear
That glorious song of old
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold
Peace on the earth good will to men
From heaven's all gracious King
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing
2. Still thro' the cloven skies they come
With peaceful wings unfurled

And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing

3. But with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long
Beneath the angel strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong
And man at war with man hears not
The love song which they bring
O hush the noise ye men of strife
And hear the angels sing

4. For lo the days are hastening on
By prophet bards foretold
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing

CCLI Song # 31078, Edmund Hamilton Sears | Richard Storrs Willis,

OPENING PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

At the end of the year, O God, we come to remember.

We remember all your goodness to us.

We remember all your goodness to us.

We remember acts of kindness
and glimpses of your love at work.

We remember good times and difficult times,
giving thanks that, in all times, you were present.

As we remember, we ask your forgiveness
for the times we failed you and failed one another.

At this threshold between the old and the new
we ask that you will help us to go with confidence into a new year, knowing
that your faithfulness is for ever.

May the knowledge of your presence, in the old and the new, comfort and
sustain us as we leave behind the old and walk with you into the new life you
give us every day. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BIBLE READINGS: Luke 2: 22-40

HYMN: GOD, YOUR GRACE HAS NOW APPEARED

WINCHESTER OLD 8.6.8.6 ("While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks")

1. O God, your grace has now appeared
In Mary's tiny boy.
In this, your story, may we hear
Good news of wondrous joy.
2. Your gift of peace was heard that night
And shepherds were amazed.
Like them, may all your church delight
In angels' songs of praise.

3. As Mary and as Joseph heard
What shepherds came to say,
May we find wonder in your word —
For still you speak today.

4. God, by your Spirit, may we find
In words we've long confessed,
Your grace that calls us to respond —
To live as we've been blessed.

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Tune: George Kirbye, in Thomas Este's *Whole Book of Psalms*, 1592 ("While Shepherds Watch

REFLECTION:

SONG/OFFERING: ON THIS DAY OF CELEBRATION

HYMN TO JOY 8.7.8.7 D ("Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee")

1. On this day of celebration, at this time when hopes are new,
God, we gather as your people, called to put our trust in you.
You have made the world we live in; you have worked through history.
In your plan we find our purpose, in your love, our unity.

2. On this day, we pause and wonder what the future years will bring,
Yet we know you clothe each flower and you make each sparrow sing.
How much more will you protect us with your guiding, caring hand!
By your Spirit, lead us boldly in the future you have planned.

Tune: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824 ("Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee")

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PRAYER FOR OFFERINGS

Holy God, we marvel at your love and faithfulness! At the right time, your Son Jesus lived among us and invited us to call you our heavenly Father. Because of His obedience, you have adopted us into your beloved family. We are grateful that you have brought us through challenging times in the past. As we look forward to the new year, send your Spirit to help us trust that you will continue to guide us.

Let our gifts and offerings be pleasing in your sight, for this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

PRAYERS FOR INTERCESSION By David Campbell.

God as we prepare to say goodbye to one year and to welcome in another, abide with us and help us to see echoes of the miracle you perform daily in making all things new.

We thank you that you have been with us through the days of this past year. We thank you that you are constantly with your people, and that you have enabled us to persevere in grace. You have comforted our hearts. You have heard our prayers. You have come so often to our aid.

Perhaps many a day we have not felt you near. Perhaps at times some have even felt that you have forsaken them and forgotten them, but we thank you that it has never been so. You are always with us.

We thank you that with that promise girding us, we can go forward with confidence and in your peace. We pray that you will help us to walk with you in this new year better than we have ever done before.

There is none of us who knows what the new year will hold, but we thank you that every moment of that year is in your hands, and that you will continue to be with your people.

We pray for those for whom tomorrow will be simply another day: because they are still hungry, still homeless, still suffering the violence of the world.

We pray that you will be with all who mourn, those for whom this is a time of sadness or regret. We pray for those for whom this is a time of uncertainty or fear.

Lord in every opportunity you give us, may we be mindful of others, and not just mindful but moved to make a difference. Give us resolve to step out in faith with you to be the change we want to see, to be co-creators with you in the healing of the nations.

May this coming year hold out hope and the promise of your kingdom come, your will be done. Grant to us, as the days of the new year unfold, an ever-closer walk with you.

Help us to gladly yield our lives unreservedly to you, to be as great givers, to be generous and kind, to look to the needs of others and not be consumed by only our own.

May we be lovers of truth, may the fruits of your spirit be evident in our lives - your love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Go with us in the new year and may you receive all the glory in all that we say, thing or do.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: CH3 611- O GOD OUR HELP IN AGES PAST

Verse 1

O God our help in ages past
Our hope for years to come
Our shelter from the stormy blast
And our eternal home

Verse 2

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure
Sufficient is Thine arm alone
And our defense is sure

Verse 3

Before the hills in order stood
Or earth received her frame
From everlasting Thou art God
To endless years the same

Verse 4

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun

Verse 5

Time like an ever rolling stream
Bears all its sons away
They fly forgotten as a dream
Dies at the op'ning day

Verse 6

Our God our help in ages past
Our hope for years to come
Be Thou our guard while troubles last
And our eternal home

CCLI Song # 43152, Isaac Watts, Public Domain

BENEDICTION AND AMEN

**As the old year drains away,
the new one holds much hope.
May we travel from here to there
in one step of faith
for all we are yet to become.
Go safely and come back renewed.**

And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ...