

***Second Congregational Church of Attleboro
United Church of Christ
January 4, 2026
Communion***



50 Park Street Attleboro, MA 02703 (508) 222-4677
www.attleborosecondchurch.org office@attleborosecondchurch.org
Find us on Facebook

The Reverend Dr. S. William Sencabaugh — Pastor
William A. MacPherson, PhD — Director of Music
Katrina Lay — Executive Director, Jack and Jill School
Michele Anderson — Administrative Assistant
Jack Baptist — Sexton

We are an Open and Affirming Congregation
BULLETIN AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT

Prelude "We Three Kings" arr. Gwyneth Walker

Welcome & Announcements

Sacred Dance "No Obvious Angels" Words: Shirley Erena Murray
The Intergenerational Sacred Dance Group Music: Dan Damon
Diane Osborne, director

***Call to Worship** (Galatians 4:4-7) Charlie Oliver, Liturgist
Liturgist: Through Christ, we are one with God. We are flesh and Spirit, joy and sorrow.

People: We are more than what we seem.

Liturgist: Christ was God's gift to us, and we celebrate always this gift of eternal grace.

People: We are redeemers and we are the redeemed.

Liturgist: We have received the most lovely gift, and for that, we sing a great song of peace.

People: We have received it in order to go forth, to share Christ's love with all who love to listen.

***Hymn** "The First Noel" No. 229

***Prayer of Invocation**

Liturgist: Let us pray together.

All: God of kings and paupers, of the satisfied and the destitute, shine your light into this place. Be present as we worship and bring the gift of our praise, and go with us as we leave, so that your light may shine in our hearts always, illumining the way to your love. Amen.

Response "Gloria Patri" No. 734

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, Amen.**

Anthem "In the Bleak Midwinter" Gustav Holst, arr. Craig Courtney

Pastoral Prayer

Prayers of Joys and Concerns of the People

Lord's Prayer

Pastor: Let us pray as Christ our savior has taught us.

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 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. Amen.

Offertory

***Doxology** "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" No. 34

***Prayer of Dedication**

*Throughout the bulletin, when you see an * you are invited to stand if you are able.*

Scripture

Matthew 2:1-12

NT p. 7

Sermon

"A Wise Man Sermon" Rev. Dr Will Sencabaugh

Gathering Hymn "As We Gather at Your Table," (*Verse 1*)

No. 695

Sunday School Arrival

Celebration of the Sacrament of Communion

Grape juice is substituted for wine. The communion bread is gluten free.

Communion Prayer

Minister: Christ be with you,

People: And also, with you.

Minister: Let us lift up one another.

People: Let us lift up one another to God.

Minister: Let us give thanks to God who is still speaking and listening and interacting with creation.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Minister: Holy God, we praise and bless you for creation. With the faithful in every place and time, we praise with joy your holy name.

All: Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High.

Minister: We remember that on the night... "Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." Consecrate, therefore, by your Holy Spirit, these gifts of bread and wine. Bless us that, as we receive them at this table, we may offer you our faith and praise, we may be united with Christ and with one another, and we may continue faithful in all things.

All: In the fellowship Christ gives us, we offer ourselves to you, eternal God, and give thanks that you have called us to serve you. Amen.

Breaking the Bread and Pouring the Wine

Minister: Through the broken bread we participate in the body of Christ. Through the cup of blessing, we participate in the new life Christ gives.

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Minister: Let us pray together.

(Roger Robbennolt)

All: Creator of the stars and skies, Our Protector as we rise,

Caught, as we are, in the web of time,

Strengthen us through bread and wine.

Enshrouded by the fall of night, Reveal to us eternal light. Amen.

***Hymn**

"As with Gladness"

No. 236

***Benediction**

Response

"Savior, Again to Your Dear Name"

No. 711, vs. 1

Savior, again to your dear name we raise
with one accord our parting hymn of praise;
we give you thanks before our worship cease,
and now departing, wait your word of peace.

Postlude

"Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella"

French carol, arr. Keith Chapman

If you are leaving the sanctuary during the postlude, please do so quietly.

Some Notes on “No Obvious Angels”

—Bill MacPherson

[Please find some time — perhaps during the piano prelude — to read about this hymn. You’ll be able to watch the dancers and their choreography with a fuller understanding of the words the choir is singing].

First, I want to thank Diane Osborne for “discovering” this hymn for the Sacred Dance group. It’s in our Hymnal (No. 217), but I’ve glossed over it in the past, given that the rhythm of the hymnal tune is a bit complicated and not easy to sing at first sight. So, I’ve never taken the time for a close reading of the lyrics. But Diane also found, on YouTube, the version with Dan Damon’s tune, which is simpler and (Diane and I both agree) a more contemplative way to understand and appreciate Shirley Erena Murray’s poetry.

Ms. Murray, who died five years ago at age 88, was a New Zealander and the wife of a Presbyterian pastor. She began composing hymn texts in the 1970’s, in her 40’s. Her approximately 400 hymns are marked by modern language and an emphasis on contemporary issues, including social justice and the environment. Our own hymnal includes 16 by Ms. Murray. The two that we have heard or sung most frequently are “For Everyone Born, a Place at the Table,” No. 617 (which the choir has sung in anthem form) and “Community of Christ,” No. 615 (which has been sung as a congregational hymn many times and will be sung again on January 18).

Since New Zealanders — and everyone else in the southern hemisphere — celebrate Christmas at the beginning of summer, Ms. Murray’s Christmas carols avoid the northern imagery of frosty cold mornings and bleak midwinters.

In “No Obvious Angels” the point/counterpoint is not winter/summer but Bethlehem/Attleboro [or your own city]. Her lyrics begin by stating, factually, that on our Christmas Eves we don’t really hear angel choirs or witness “thunderstruck shepherds.” Rather, in our place and time (“the here and the now”), we experience the Christmas message through “star-sighted people . . . who wake us to see a new world.”

Moreover (in verse 2) Ms. Murray tells us that anyone has “angel potential,” enabled by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And (in verse 3) that angels aren’t confined to St. Luke’s narrative, but that “we are the angels” [emphasis mine] who can both “dream and deliver.”

No Obvious Angels

No obvious angels sing through the night skies,
no thunderstruck shepherds tell out their surprise,
For Christmas comes into the here and the now
through star-sighted people, the watchful and hopeful,
Who wake us to see a new world.

Our angel potential is waiting to start!
The Spirit will teach us the song of the heart,
For Christmas comes into the here and the now
through peace-maker people, the just and the gentle,
The stars who will light the new world.

Whoever will take it is given the role:
the fruitful, the faithful, the joyous of soul,
For Christmas comes into the here and the now
when we are the angels who dream and deliver,
Who rise and create this new world!

The Lead Deacon this month is Wendy Oliver assisted by Nancy Tariot.

Meetings and Activities

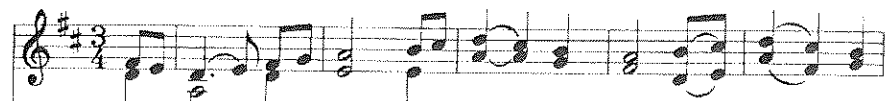
Sunday, 4 th	10:00 am 11:15 am 6:00 pm	Worship/Communion/ Sunday School Women Fellowship Meeting Confirmation Class
Monday, 5 th	6:30 pm	Cub Scout Leader Meeting
Wednesday, 7 th	6:30 pm	Cub Scout Meeting
Thursday, 8 th	4:00 pm 6:00 pm	Altera Board Meeting Troop 34 Meeting
Friday, 9 th	2:30 pm 6:00 pm	Crafternoon/ Color Our World NEW- Young Adult Open Mic
Saturday, 10 th	6:00 pm	Coffee House & Open Mic
Sunday, 11 th	8:30 am 10:00 am 11:00 am 11:15 am 11:15 am	O & M Committee Meeting Worship/ Sunday School Stewardship Thank You Luncheon Uke Group CE Committee Meeting
Tuesday, 13 th	6:00 pm	Book Study – Looking Backward
Wednesday, 14 th	10:00 am 6:30 pm 6:30 pm	Communion Visitation Meeting The Chosen Discussion Group Cub Scout Meeting
Thursday, 15 th	5:00 pm 6:00 pm 7:00 pm	Board of Deacons Meeting Troop 34 Meeting Scouts Committee Meeting
Sunday, 18 th	10:00 am 6:00 pm	Worship / Sunday School Confirmation Class
Monday, 19 th	2:00 pm 7:00 pm	Prayer Shawl Ministry Facilities Committee Meeting
Tuesday, 20 th	6:00 pm 7:00 pm	Book Study – Looking Backward Administration Committee Zoom Meeting
Wednesday, 21 st	6:30 pm 6:30 pm	“The Chosen” Discussion Group Cub Scout Pack 33 Meeting
Thursday, 22 nd	6:00 pm 6:30 pm 7:30 pm	Troop 34 Meeting Bell Choir Rehearsal Adult Choir Rehearsal
Saturday, 24 th	9:00 am 4:30 pm or 6:15 pm	Sacred Dance Practice J&J Spaghetti Supper & Candy Bingo

Women’s Fellowship Meeting Today at 11:15 am in the Ladies Parlor
This is a very important meeting regarding the future of Women’s fellowship fundraisers.

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The First Noel

229



1 The first No - el, 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 -
5 Then en - tered in those wise men three, full rev - erent.
6 Then let us all with one ac - cord sing prais - es

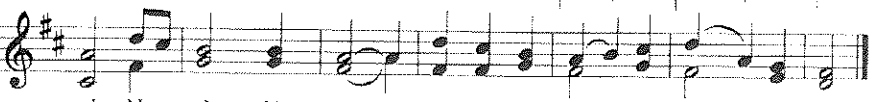


shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay keep - ing their
east, be - yond them far, and to the earth it gave great
came from coun - try far, to seek for a king was their in -
hem it took its rest, and there it did both stop and
ly up - on their knee, and of - fered there in his pres -
to our heav - en - ly Lord, who hath made heaven and earth of



Refrain

sheep, on a cold win - ter's night that was so deep,
light, and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.
tent, and to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went. No - el. No -
stay, right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.
sence their gold, and myrrh, and frank - in - cense.
naught, and with his blood our life hath bought.

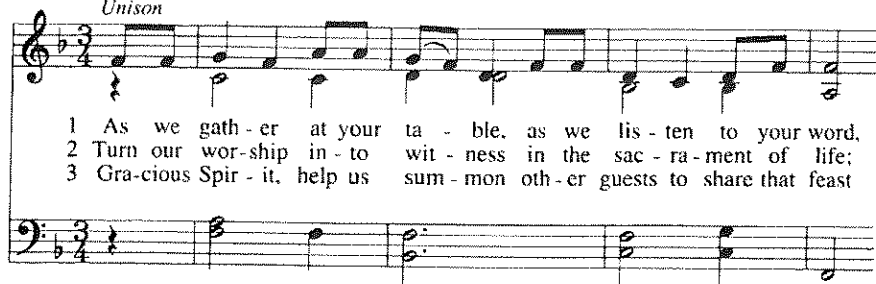


el. No - el, No - el, born is the King of Is - ra - el.

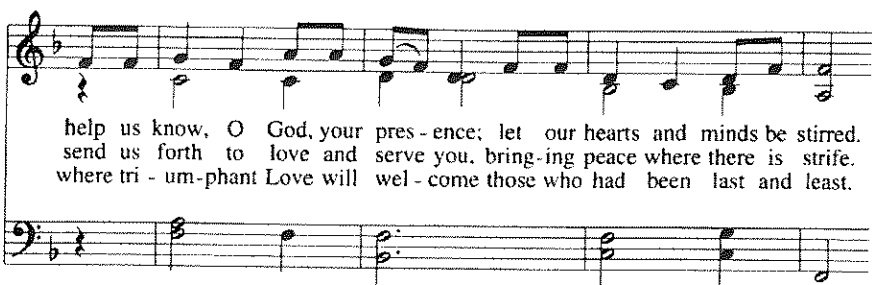


As We Gather at Your Table 695

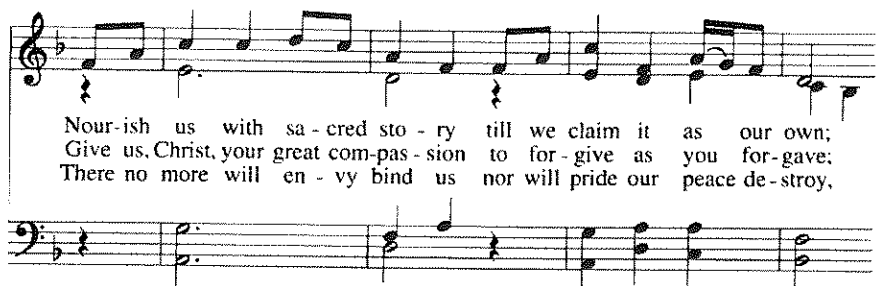
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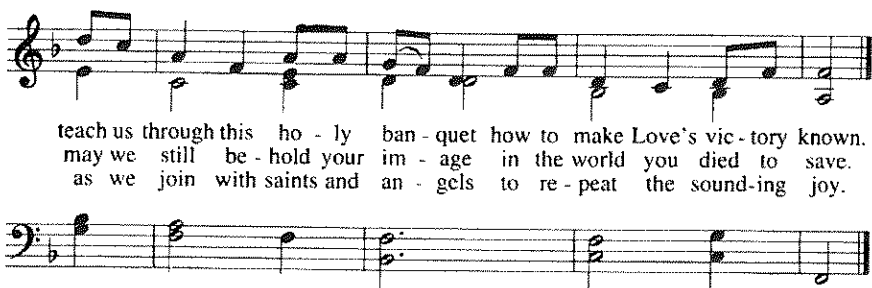
1 As we gath - er at your ta - ble, as we lis - ten to your word,
2 Turn our wor - ship in - to wit - ness in the sac - ra - ment of life;
3 Gra - cious Spir - it, help us sum - mon oth - er guests to share that feast



help us know, O God, your pres - ence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
send us forth to love and serve you, bring - ing peace where there is strife.
where tri - um - phant Love will wel - come those who had been last and least.



Nour - ish us with sa - cred sto - ry till we claim it as our own;
Give us, Christ, your great com - pas - sion to for - give as you for - gave;
There no more will en - vy bind us nor will pride our peace de - stroy,



teach us through this ho - ly ban - quet how to make Love's vic - tory known.
may we still be - hold your im - age in the world you died to save.
as we join with saints and an - gels to re - peat the sound - ing joy.

WORDS: Carl F. Daw, Jr. (1944.)

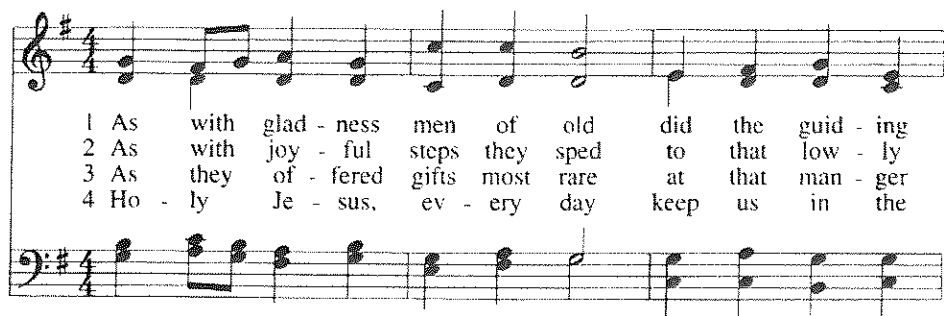
MUSIC: Arr. B. F. White (1800-1879), *The Sacred Harp*, 1844; arr. Jack Schrader (1942-)

BEACH SPRING

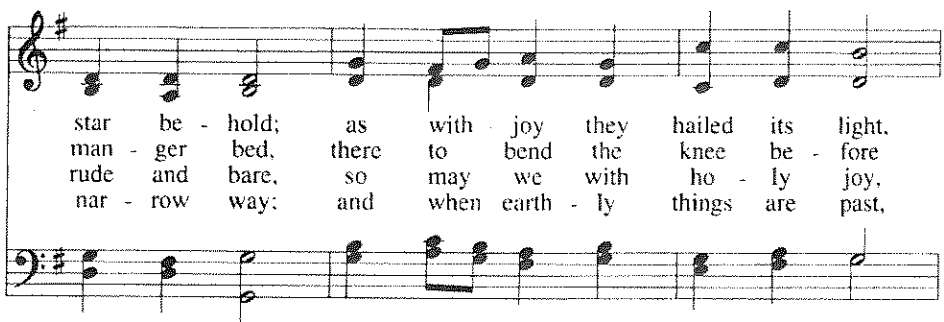
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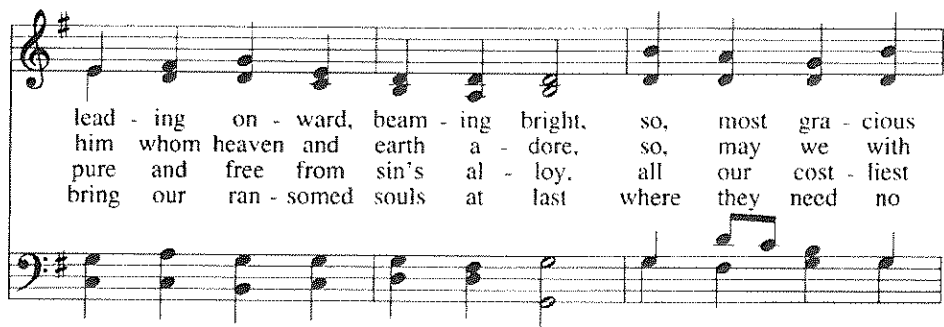
As with Gladness



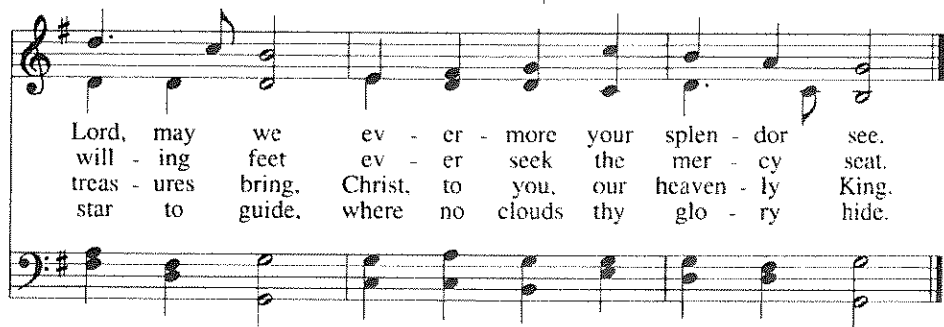
1 As with glad - ness men of old did the guid - ing
 2 As with joy - ful steps they sped to that low - ly
 3 As they of - fered gifts most rare at that man - ger
 4 Ho - ly Je - sus, ev - ery day keep us in the



star be - hold; as with joy they hailed its light,
 man - ger bed, there to bend the knee be - fore
 rude and bare, so may we with ho - ly joy,
 nar - row way; and when earth - ly things are past,



lead - ing on - ward, beam - ing bright, so, most gra - cious
 him whom heaven and earth a - dore, so, may we with
 pure and free from sin's al - loy, all our cost - liest
 bring our ran - somed souls at last where they need no



Lord, may we ev - er - more your splen - dor see.
 will - ing feet ev - er seek the mer - cy seat.
 treas - ures bring, Christ, to you, our heaven - ly King.
 star to guide, where no clouds thy glo - ry hide.