

THE
MUSIC MINISTRY
of FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
presents

Come, Savior of the Nations



December 7, 2025 | 6:00 PM

PROGRAM NOTES

“Come, Savior of the Nations”

The two central musical works in tonight’s Advent service are written by two composers who share several things in common. Both lived during a similar period of time—J. S. Bach, 1685–1750, and Antonio Vivaldi, 1678–1741. Both composers also experienced musical revivals that helped secure their position in the canon of Western sacred choral music. The Bach Revival has historically been associated with the performance of his monumental *St. Matthew Passion* in 1829, within a century of Bach’s death, conducted by Felix Mendelssohn, a composer also represented in tonight’s program. The revival of Vivaldi’s music didn’t occur (remarkably) until two centuries after his death, usually marked by the first recording of *The Four Seasons* in 1942. Including Handel and perhaps Telemann, Bach and Vivaldi are the preeminent musical figures of the Baroque era. Yet their compositional styles are as distant as north from south, or perhaps more appropriately, as Weimar from Venice. Simply put, Bach wrote for the church, Vivaldi wrote (primarily) for the theater. As a result, the emotional effects and drama of Bach’s music are inseparable from the theology he was conveying through the craft of musical harmony and figure, resulting in music whose expression can often be subtle, perhaps clearer on the page only after some study, discovery, and explanation. Vivaldi’s music has a more immediate impact, as would be expected from a composer of theatrical music.

The opening movement of Bach’s Advent cantata, *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*, consists of a Lutheran chorale accompanied by a French overture, a musical form that signals the entrance of nobility and, therefore, appropriate to convey the advent of Christ into this world. Following an expressive recitative, we are presented with an orthodox homily on the centrality of sound doctrine, in the form of a tenor aria. Bach displays this need for “sound teaching” with the external voices (cello, and unison violin and viola) playing the main motif at irregular moments, as if to convey the continual challenge of keeping the Church in line with Biblical doctrine. This aria is followed by a brief but effective setting of Revelation 3:30 for bass voice (Bach’s preferred voice part to sing the words of Christ) with the organ and strings playing dry plucks (*senza l’arco*) to evoke the sound of knocking. One can only imagine how captivating this effect was in the three-story Schlosskirche in Weimar. Pastor Erdmann Neumeister’s cantata libretto shifts focus at this point from the corporate Church, to the individual believer, who responds to Christ’s invitation (ascending eighth notes in the cellos) as Christ comes to enter (simultaneous eighth descending notes in the same cello line). The B section of this sweet soprano aria displays a descending sequence of 16th notes, often a representation of the presence of the Holy Spirit, by which the believer is indwelt with Christ’s presence. The movement concludes, again with a chorale in the soprano choral voice, accompanied by exuberant counterpoint in the orchestra and remaining voices.

Vivaldi’s *Magnificat*, while not as well-known as his *Gloria* (a piece often paired with Bach’s *Magnificat*), is no less stirring and moving, filled with expressive, atmospheric chromatic harmonies (movements 1 and 3), riveting and fiery string writing (movements 4 and 5), and picturesque charm (movements 2 and 8), concluding with a driving and dramatic movement that resolves with a brilliant “Amen.”

ORDER OF WORSHIP

*I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star
shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.*

NUMBERS 24:17, ESV

(+ Congregation, please stand if able.)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. David Henderson

+ CALL TO WORSHIP

+ HYMN *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

VENI EMMANUEL
Arranged by John Rutter



1. O come, O come, Em - ma - nu - el, And ran-som cap-tive
2. O come, Thou Rod of Jes - se, free Thine own from Sa - tan's
- 3. O come, thou Day-spring, come_____ and cheer Our spir - its by thine
4. O come, O come thou Lord_____ of might, Who to thy tribes on
5. O come, thou Key of Da - vid, come, And o - pen wide our



- Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile
- ty - ran - ny; From depths of hell thy peo - ple
- ad - vent here; Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds_____ of
- Si - nai's height, In an - cient times didst give_____ the
- heav'n - ly home; Make safe the way that leads_____ on



- here Un - til the Son of God_____ ap - pear.
- save, And give them vic - t'ry o'er_____ the grave. Re - joice! Re -
- night, And death's dark shad-ow put_____ to flight.
- law in cloud and maj - es - ty_____ and awe.
- high, And close the path to mis - er - y.



joice! Em - ma - nu - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Nun komm der Heiden Heiland, BWV 61

Composed by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

I. Chorus

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland
Der jungfrauen Kind erkannt,
Des sich wundert alle Welt,
Gott solch Geburt ihm bestellt

Now come, Savior of the heathen,
Known as the Virgin's Child.
All the world marvels that
God has ordained for him such a birth.

II. Recitative

Der Heiland ist gekommen,
Hat unser armes Fleisch und Blut
An sich genommen
Und nimmet uns zu Blutsverwandten an.
O allehöchstes Gut!
Was hast du nicht an uns getan?
Was tust du nicht
Noch täglich an den Deinen?
Du kömst und lässt dein Licht
Mit vollem Segen scheinen

The Savior has come;
Our poor flesh and blood
He has taken upon himself
And accepts us as blood relations.
O supreme Good!
What have You not done for us?
What do You not do
Still daily for Your people?
You come and let Your Light
Shine with full Blessing.

James Thomas, tenor

III. Aria

Komm, Jesu, komm zu deiner Kirche
Und gib ein selig neues Jahr!
Befördre deines Names Ehre,
Erhalte die gesunde Lehre
Und segne Kanzel und altar!

Come, Jesus, come to Your Church
And grant us a blessed New Year!
Promote the honor of Your name,
Maintain sound doctrine
And bless pulpit and altar!

IV. Recitative

‘Siehe, ich stehe vor der Tür und klopfe an.
So jemand meine Stimme hören wird
und die Tür auftun, zu dem werde ich
eingehen und das Abendmahl mit ihm
halten und er mit mir.’

‘See, I stand before the door and knock.
If anyone hears my voice
and opens the door, I will go into him
and have supper with him
and he with me.’

Jacob Will, bass-baritone

V. Aria

Öffne dich, mein ganzes Herze,
Jesus kömmt und ziehet ein.
Bin ich Gleich nur Staub und Erde.
Will er mich doch nicht verschmähn,
Seine Lust an mir zu sehn,
Daß ich seine Wohnung werde.
O wie selig werd ich sein!

Open, my whole heart,
Jesus comes and moves in.
Though I am but dust and earth.
Yet he would not disdain
To find pleasure in me,
So that I become his dwelling.
Oh, how blessed I shall be!

Fran Sullivan, soprano

VI. Chorale

Amen, amen!
Komm, du schöne Freudenkrone
bleib nicht lange!
Deiner wart ich mit Verlangen.

Amen, amen!
Come, you fair crown of joy,
do not delay for long!
I await you with longing.

Magnificat, RV 610

Composed by Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

I. Chorus

Magnificat anima mea Domino.

My soul magnifies the Lord.

II. Trio and Chorus

Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem
ancillae suae:
ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent
omnes generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est
et sanctum nomen ejus.

And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
For he has regarded the lowliness
of his handmaiden:
for behold, from henceforth
all generations shall call me blessed.
Because he has done for me great things
and holy is his name.

Lilly Ammons, soprano; Gregory Ammons, tenor; Bonnie Lynch, soprano

III. Chorus

Et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.	And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.
---	--

IV. Chorus

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.	He has shown strength with his arm: he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
---	--

V. Chorus

Deposuit potentes de sede et exultavit humiles.	He has deposed the mighty from their seats and exalted the humble.
--	---

VI. Duet

Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes.	The hungry he has filled with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.
--	---

Holly Cole, soprano; Victoria Boyce, soprano

VII. Chorus

Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae.	He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy.
--	---

VIII. Trio and Chorus

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini ejus in saecula	As it was spoken to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed forever.
---	--

Margaret Riddle, soprano; Ellen Weaver, alto; Taylor Nelson, baritone

IX. Chorus

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.	Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum, Amen.	As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.

OFFERTORY *Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen*

German Traditional Carol

Arranged by John Rutter (born 1945)

Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen
Aus einer Wurzel zart.
Wie uns die Alten sunen;
Von Jesse kam die Art
Und hat ein Blümlein bracht
Mitten im kalten Winter
Wohl zu dem halben Nacht.

Lo, how a Rose is blooming
From a tender root,
As to us the men of old sang;
From Jesse came the lineage.
And has brought us a flower
In the cold midwinter
Right at the midnight hour.

SCRIPTURE READING

Numbers 24:1–25

(Pew Bible page 132; Children's Bible page 184)

HOMILY “A Star Out of Jacob”

Dr. Mark Ross

ANTHEM “There Shall a Star from Jacob” from *Christus*

Felix Mendelssohn

(1809–1847)

There shall a star from Jacob come forth,
And a sceptre from Israel rise up,
And dash in pieces princes and nations.

As bright the star of morning gleams,
So Jesus sheddeth glorious beams
Of light and consolation:
Thy Word, O Lord,
Radiance darting, Truth imparting,
Gives salvation;
Thine be praise and adoration!

Numbers 24:17–18
Chorale text by Philipp Nicolai

PRAYER

+ **HYMN 203** *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

MENDELSSOHN

Arranged by Sir David Willcocks

BENEDICTION

CHORAL RESPONSE *A Christmas Blessing*

Philip Stopford

May the joy of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds,
The worship of the wise men,
And the peace of the Christ Child be yours this Christmas.

May Christ, who by his incarnation
Gathered into one all things earthly, all things heavenly,
And fill you with joy and peace.

And the blessing of God, the Father, and the Son,
And the Holy Spirit be with you
And remain with you always. Amen.

THE CHANCEL CHOIR

Soprano

Hannah Ammons
Lilly Ammons
Ann Forrest Bowers
Victoria Boyce
Terri Chiles
Holly Cole
Caroline Cropsey
Beth Greer
Robin Gryder
Wendy Knox
Lisa Lanpher
Ann Lloyd
Bonnie Lynch
Rosanne McDowell
Margaret Riddle
Susanna Rudy
Neely Spate
Marchar Stagg
Fran Sullivan

Alto

Theresa Beach
Katie Bono
Blakely Dunbar
Angela Hancock
Diane Holzmänn
Susan Jennings
Arden Korn
Robin Price
Marybeth Shelley
Ellen Weaver
Debbie Wiser

Tenor

Gregory Ammons
Robbie Anderson
Daniel Davidson
Ryan Drinkwalter
James Thomas
BJ Unthank
William Unthank

Bass

Jeff Beach
Ezra Blackwell
Robert Cathcart
Philip Cockrell
Brian Cope
Wayne Davis
Gene Fulton
John Hammond
Ted Holzmänn
Cole Jackson
Joseph Kearse
Taylor Nelson
Jim Newman
Jim Sanderlin
Joe Wheeler
Jacob Will
Leslie Wiser, Jr.
Josiah Worch

Dr. Daniel Cole, director
Mr. Thomas Russell, organist

STRINGS

Erika Cutler, Sally Cathcart, violin I; Julie Anne Russell, Lena Allen-Grunspan, Patrick Li, violin II;
Emma Brown, Carson Coomes, viola; Campbell Cathcart, Soren Allen-Grunspan, cello;
Geordan Raisler, bass

WOODWINDS

Emily Creedle, Elizabeth Runion, flute; Javier Perez, Jean McKay, oboe;
Joseph Eller, Eric Bromberg, clarinet

BRASS AND PERCUSSION

Tyler Hutto, Jill Rogerson, French horn; Jason Ortiz, James Rochester, trumpets;
Zach Kusztos, timpani/percussion

TO BE NOTED

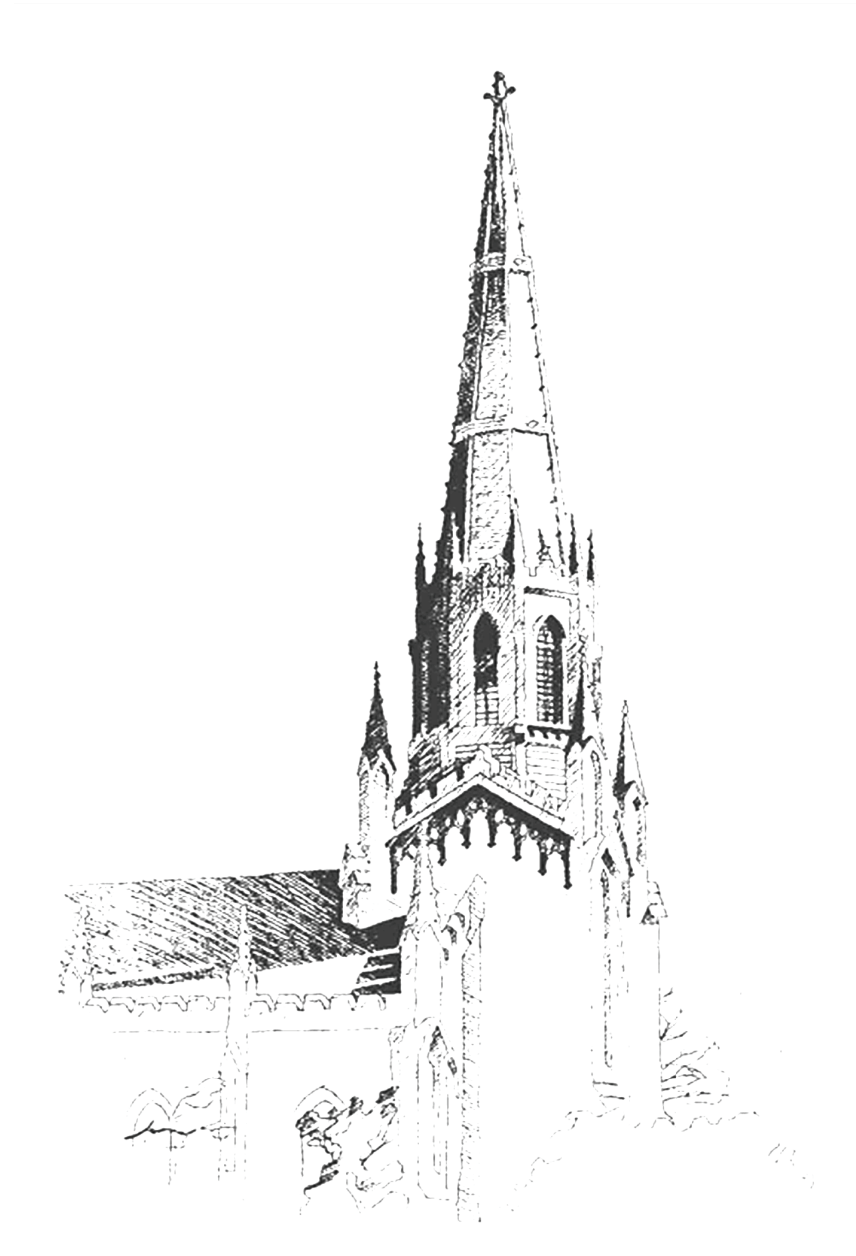
Thank you for turning off cell phones during the worship service.

The Sanctuary is equipped with a hearing assistance system. Please ask a deacon for a receiver.

Nurseries for children to the age of four are provided in the Education Building. A quiet room with a live video feed of the service is available in the Education Building, Room 113. There, mothers may attend to the needs of their children.

ESTABLISHED 1795

First Presbyterian Church



Come, Savior of the Nations

LORD'S DAY, DECEMBER 7, 2025

6:00 P.M.

1324 Marion Street, Columbia, SC

PROGRAM NOTES

“Come, Savior of the Nations”

The two central musical works in tonight’s Advent service are written by two composers who share several things in common. Both lived during a similar period of time—J. S. Bach, 1685–1750, and Antonio Vivaldi, 1678–1741. Both composers also experienced musical revivals that helped secure their position in the canon of Western sacred choral music. The Bach Revival has historically been associated with the performance of his monumental *St. Matthew Passion* in 1829, within a century of Bach’s death, conducted by Felix Mendelssohn, a composer also represented in tonight’s program. The revival of Vivaldi’s music didn’t occur (remarkably) until two centuries after his death, usually marked by the first recording of *The Four Seasons* in 1942. Including Handel and perhaps Telemann, Bach and Vivaldi are the preeminent musical figures of the Baroque era. Yet their compositional styles are as distant as north from south, or perhaps more appropriately, as Weimar from Venice. Simply put, Bach wrote for the church, Vivaldi wrote (primarily) for the theater. As a result, the emotional effects and drama of Bach’s music are inseparable from the theology he was conveying through the craft of musical harmony and figure, resulting in music whose expression can often be subtle, perhaps clearer on the page only after some study, discovery, and explanation. Vivaldi’s music has a more immediate impact, as would be expected from a composer of theatrical music.

The opening movement of Bach’s Advent cantata, *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*, consists of a Lutheran chorale accompanied by a French overture, a musical form that signals the entrance of nobility and, therefore, appropriate to convey the advent of Christ into this world. Following an expressive recitative, we are presented with an orthodox homily on the centrality of sound doctrine, in the form of a tenor aria. Bach displays this need for “sound teaching” with the external voices (cello, and unison violin and viola) playing the main motif at irregular moments,

as if to convey the continual challenge of keeping the Church in line with Biblical doctrine. This aria is followed by a brief but effective setting of Revelation 3:30 for bass voice (Bach's preferred voice part to sing the words of Christ) with the organ and strings playing dry plucks (*senza l'arco*) to evoke the sound of knocking. One can only imagine how captivating this effect was in the three-story Schlosskirche in Weimar. Pastor Erdmann Neumeister's cantata libretto shifts focus at this point from the corporate Church, to the individual believer, who responds to Christ's invitation (ascending eighth notes in the cellos) as Christ comes to enter (simultaneous eighth descending notes in the same cello line). The B section of this sweet soprano aria displays a descending sequence of 16th notes, often a representation of the presence of the Holy Spirit, by which the believer is indwelt with Christ's presence. The movement concludes, again with a chorale in the soprano choral voice, accompanied by exuberant counterpoint in the orchestra and remaining voices.

Vivaldi's *Magnificat*, while not as well-known as his *Gloria* (a piece often paired with Bach's *Magnificat*), is no less stirring and moving, filled with expressive, atmospheric chromatic harmonies (movements 1 and 3), riveting and fiery string writing (movements 4 and 5), and picturesque charm (movements 2 and 8), concluding with a driving and dramatic movement that resolves with a brilliant "Amen."

ORDER OF WORSHIP

I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel.

NUMBERS 24:17, ESV

(+ Congregation, please stand if able.)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. David Henderson

+ CALL TO WORSHIP

+ HYMN *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

VENI EMMANUEL
Arranged by John Rutter

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.

O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.

O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe.

O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.

Nun komm der Heiden Heiland, BWV 61

Composed by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

I. Chorus

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland	Now come, Savior of the heathen,
Der jungfrauen Kind erkannt,	Known as the Virgin's Child.
Des sich wundert alle Welt,	All the world marvels that
Gott solch Geburt ihm bestellt	God has ordained for him such a birth.

II. Recitative

Der Heiland ist gekommen,	The Savior has come;
Hat unser armes Fleisch und Blut	Our poor flesh and blood
An sich genommen	He has taken upon himself
Und nimmet uns zu	And accepts us as blood relations.
Blutsverwandten an.	O supreme Good!
O allehöchstes Gut!	What have You not done for us?
Was hast du nicht an uns getan?	What do You not do
Was tust du nicht	Still daily for Your people?
Noch täglich an den Deinen?	You come and let Your Light
Du kömmt und lässt dein Licht	Shine with full Blessing.
Mit vollem Segen scheinen	

James Thomas, tenor

III. Aria

Komm, Jesu, komm zu deiner Kirche
Und gib ein selig neues Jahr!
Befördre deines Names Ehre,
Erhalte die gesunde Lehre
Und segne Kanzel und altar!

Come, Jesus, come to Your Church
And grant us a blessed New Year!
Promote the honor of Your name,
Maintain sound doctrine
And bless pulpit and altar!

IV. Recitative

‘Siehe, ich stehe vor der Tür und klopfe an.
So jemand meine Stimme hören wird
und die Tür auftun, zu dem werde ich
eingehen und das Abendmahl mit ihm
halten und er mit mir.’

‘See, I stand before the door and knock.
If anyone hears my voice
and opens the door, I will go into him
and have supper with him
and he with me.’

Jacob Will, bass-baritone

V. Aria

Öffne dich, mein ganzes Herze,
Jesus kömmt und ziehet ein.
Bin ich Gleich nur Staub und Erde.
Will er mich doch nicht verschmähn,
Seine Lust an mir zu sehn,
Daß ich seine Wohnung werde.
O wie selig werd ich sein!

Open, my whole heart,
Jesus comes and moves in.
Though I am but dust and earth.
Yet he would not disdain
To find pleasure in me,
So that I become his dwelling.
Oh, how blessed I shall be!

Fran Sullivan, soprano

VI. Chorale

Amen, amen!
Komm, du schöne Freudenkrone
bleib nicht lange!
Deiner wart ich mit Verlangen.

Amen, amen!
Come, you fair crown of joy,
do not delay for long!
I await you with longing.

Magnificat, RV 610

Composed by Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

I. Chorus

Magnificat anima mea Domino.

My soul magnifies the Lord.

II. Trio and Chorus

Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo
salutari meo.

And my spirit has rejoiced in God
my Savior.

Quia respexit humilitatem
ancillae suae:
ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent
omnes generationes.

For he has regarded the lowliness
of his handmaiden:
for behold, from henceforth
all generations shall call me blessed.

Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est
et sanctum nomen ejus.

Because he has done for me great things
and holy is his name.

Lilly Ammons, soprano; Gregory Ammons, tenor; Bonnie Lynch, soprano

III. Chorus

Et misericordia ejus a progenie
in progenies
timentibus eum.

And his mercy is on them that fear him
from generation to generation.

IV. Chorus

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:
dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.

He has shown strength with his arm:
he has scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts.

V. Chorus

Deposuit potentes de sede
et exultavit humiles.

He has deposed the mighty from their
seats and exalted the humble.

VI. Duet

Esurientes implevit bonis:
et divites dimisit inanes.

The hungry he has filled with good things:
and the rich he hath sent empty away.

Holly Cole, soprano; Victoria Boyce, soprano

VII. Chorus

Suscepit Israel puerum suum,
recordatus misericordiae suae.

He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy.

VIII. Trio and Chorus

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini ejus in saecula

As it was spoken to our fathers,
to Abraham and his seed forever.

Margaret Riddle, soprano; Ellen Weaver, alto; Taylor Nelson, baritone

IX. Chorus

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc,
et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum, Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now and
ever shall be,
world without end, Amen.

OFFERTORY

Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen

German Traditional Carol
Arranged by John Rutter (born 1945)

Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen
Aus einer Wurzel zart.
Wie uns die Alten sungen;
Von Jesse kam die Art
Und hat ein Blümlein bracht
Mitem im kalten Winter
Wohl zu dem halben Nacht.

Lo, how a Rose is blooming
From a tender root,
As to us the men of old sang;
From Jesse came the lineage.
And has brought us a flower
In the cold midwinter
Right at the midnight hour.

SCRIPTURE READING

Numbers 24:1–25

(Pew Bible page 132, Children's Bible page 184)

¹ When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not go, as at other times, to look for omens, but set his face toward the wilderness. ² And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe. And the Spirit of God came upon him, ³ and he took up his discourse and said,

“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,[a]
⁴ the oracle of him who hears the words of God,
who sees the vision of the Almighty,
falling down with his eyes uncovered:

⁵ How lovely are your tents, O Jacob,
your encampments, O Israel!

⁶ Like palm groves[b] that stretch afar,
like gardens beside a river,
like aloes that the Lord has planted,
like cedar trees beside the waters.

⁷ Water shall flow from his buckets,
and his seed shall be in many waters;
his king shall be higher than Agag,
and his kingdom shall be exalted.

⁸ God brings him out of Egypt

and is for him like the horns of the wild ox;
he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries,
and shall break their bones in pieces
and pierce them through with his arrows.

⁹ He crouched, he lay down like a lion
and like a lioness; who will rouse him up?

Blessed are those who bless you,
and cursed are those who curse you.”

¹⁰ And Balak’s anger was kindled against Balaam, and he struck his hands together. And Balak said to Balaam, “I called you to curse my enemies, and behold, you have blessed them these three times. ¹¹ Therefore now flee to your own place. I said, ‘I will certainly honor you,’ but the Lord has held you back from honor.” ¹² And Balaam said to Balak, “Did I not tell your messengers whom you sent to me, ¹³ ‘If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I would not be able to go beyond the word of the Lord, to do either good or bad of my own will. What the Lord speaks, that will I speak’? ¹⁴ And now, behold, I am going to my people. Come, I will let you know what this people will do to your people in the latter days.”

¹⁵ And he took up his discourse and said,

“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,
¹⁶ the oracle of him who hears the words of God,
and knows the knowledge of the Most High,
who sees the vision of the Almighty,
falling down with his eyes uncovered:

¹⁷ I see him, but not now;

I behold him, but not near:

a star shall come out of Jacob,

and a scepter shall rise out of Israel;

it shall crush the forehead of Moab

and break down all the sons of Sheth.

¹⁸ Edom shall be dispossessed;

Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed.

Israel is doing valiantly.

¹⁹ And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion
and destroy the survivors of cities!”

²⁰ Then he looked on Amalek and took up his discourse and said,

“Amalek was the first among the nations,
but its end is utter destruction.”

²¹ And he looked on the Kenite, and took up his discourse and said,

“Enduring is your dwelling place,
and your nest is set in the rock.

²² Nevertheless, Kain shall be burned
when Asshur takes you away captive.”

²³ And he took up his discourse and said,

“Alas, who shall live when God does this?

²⁴ But ships shall come from Kittim
and shall afflict Asshur and Eber;
and he too shall come to utter destruction.”

²⁵ Then Balaam rose and went back to his place. And Balak also
went his way.

HOMILY

“A Star Out of Jacob”

Dr. Mark Ross

ANTHEM

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809–1847)

“There Shall a Star from Jacob” from *Christus*

There shall a star from Jacob come forth,
And a sceptre from Israel rise up,
And dash in pieces princes and nations.

As bright the star of morning gleams,
So Jesus sheddeth glorious beams
Of light and consolation:

Thy Word, O Lord,
Radiance darting, Truth imparting,
Gives salvation;
Thine be praise and adoration!

Numbers 24:17–18
Chorale text by Philipp Nicolai

PRAYER

+ HYMN 203 *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

MENDELSSOHN
Arr. Sir David Willcocks

Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’angelic host proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King.”*

Christ, by highest heav’n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of the Virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th’incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

BENEDICTION

CHORAL RESPONSE

A Christmas Blessing

Philip Stopford

May the joy of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds,
The worship of the wise men,
And the peace of the Christ Child be yours this Christmas.

May Christ, who by his incarnation
Gathered into one all things earthly, all things heavenly,
And fill you with joy and peace.

And the blessing of God, the Father, and the Son,
And the Holy Spirit be with you
And remain with you always. Amen.

THE CHANCEL CHOIR

Soprano

Hannah Ammons
Lilly Ammons
Ann Forrest Bowers
Victoria Boyce
Terri Chiles
Holly Cole
Caroline Cropsey
Beth Greer
Robin Gryder
Wendy Knox
Lisa Lanpher
Ann Lloyd
Bonnie Lynch
Rosanne McDowell
Margaret Riddle
Susanna Rudy
Neely Spate
Marchar Stagg
Fran Sullivan

Alto

Theresa Beach
Katie Bono
Blakely Dunbar
Angela Hancock
Diane Holzmänn
Susan Jennings
Arden Korn
Robin Price
Marybeth Shelley
Ellen Weaver
Debbie Wiser

Tenor

Gregory Ammons
Robbie Anderson
Daniel Davidson
Ryan Drinkwalter
James Thomas
BJ Unthank
William Unthank

Bass

Jeff Beach
Ezra Blackwell
Robert Cathcart
Philip Cockrell
Brian Cope
Wayne Davis
Gene Fulton
John Hammond
Ted Holzmänn
Cole Jackson
Joseph Kearse
Taylor Nelson
Jim Newman
Jim Sanderlin
Joe Wheeler
Jacob Will
Leslie Wiser, Jr.
Josiah Worch

Dr. Daniel Cole, director
Mr. Thomas Russell, organist

STRINGS

Erika Cutler, Sally Cathcart, violin I; Julie Anne Russell, Lena Allen-Grunspan, Patrick Li, violin II; Emma Brown, Carson Coomes, viola; Campbell Cathcart, Soren Allen-Grunspan, cello; Geordan Raisler, bass

WOODWINDS

Emily Creedle, Elizabeth Runion, flute; Javier Perez, Jean McKay, oboe;
Joseph Eller, Eric Bromberg, clarinet

BRASS AND PERCUSSION

Tyler Hutto, Jill Rogerson, French horn; Jason Ortiz, James Rochester, trumpets;
Zach Kuszto, timpani/percussion

TO BE NOTED

Thank you for turning off cell phones during the worship service.

The Sanctuary is equipped with a hearing assistance system. Please ask a deacon for a receiver.

Nurseries for children to the age of four are provided in the Education Building. A quiet room with a live video feed of the service is available in the Education Building, Room 113. There, mothers may attend to the needs of their children.