

# Joy to the World

George Fredrick Handel

Isaac Watts

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her King; Let  
Joy to the earth, the Sa - vior reigns! Let all our songs em - ploy; While  
No more let sins and sor - rows grow, Nor thorns in - fest the ground; He  
He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the na - tions prove The

9  
e - 'vry heart pre - pare Him room, And heav'n and na - ture sing, And  
fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Re - peat the sound-ing joy, Re -  
comes to make His bless - ings flow Far as the curse is found, Far  
glo - ries of His right - eous - ness, And won - ders of His love, And

15  
heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n, and heav'n, and na - ture sing.  
- peat the sound-ing joy, Re - peat, re - peat, the sound-ing joy.  
as the curse is found, Far as, far as, the curse is found.  
won - ders of His love, And won - ders, won - ders, of His love.



## Benediction

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Live now in the power of Christ, to the praise of his name! – *based on Titus 2:11-13, NRSV*

### \*\*Life in the body

The joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the Magi, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas. And the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.

## Randolph Heights Presbyterian Church

435 Hamline Ave. South  
Saint Paul, MN 55105

December 26, 2021

9:30am Sunday Discussion  
10:30am Sunday Worship  
[www.randolphheights.org](http://www.randolphheights.org)

---

## Reflection:

Were earth a thousand times as fair  
Beset with gold and jewels rare  
She yet were far too poor to be  
A narrow cradle,  
Lord, for Thee.

~ Martin Luther

One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas day. Don't clean it up too quickly."

~ Andy Rooney

I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.

~ Charles Dickens

"Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before!  
What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store.  
What if Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!"

~ Dr. Seuss, How the Grinch Stole Christmas!

---

## Reader 4: "Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace"

"Everlasting Father" (Isa. 9:6)—how can this be the name of the child? Only because in this child the everlasting fatherly love of God is revealed, and the child wants nothing other than to bring to earth the love of the Father. So the Son is one with the Father, and whoever sees the Son sees the Father. This child wants nothing for himself. He is no prodigy in the human sense, but an obedient child of his heavenly Father. Born in time, he brings eternity with him to earth; as Son of God he brings to us all the love of the Father in heaven. Go, seek, and find in the manger the heavenly Father who here has also become your dear Father.

"Prince of Peace" —where God comes in love to human beings and unites with them, there peace is made between God and humankind and among people. Are you afraid of God's wrath? Then go to the child in the manger and receive there the peace of God. Have you fallen into strife and hatred with your sister or brother? Come and see how God, out of pure love, has become our brother and wants to reconcile us with each other. In the world, power reigns. This child is the Prince of Peace. Where he is, peace reigns.

In our lives we don't speak readily of victory. It is too big a word for us. We have suffered too many defeats in our lives; victory has been thwarted again and again by too many weak hours, too many gross sins. But isn't it true that the spirit within us yearns for this word, for the final victory over the sin and anxious fear of death in our lives? And now God's word also says nothing to us about our victory; it doesn't promise us that *we* will be victorious over sin and death from now on; rather, it says with all its might that someone has won this victory, and that this person, if we have him as Lord, will also win the victory over us. It is not we who are victorious, but Jesus.

"Christus Victor" address, November 26, 1939

## Angels We Have Heard on High

Trad. Carol

James Chadwick



An - gels we have heard on high Sweet-ly sing-ing  
Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous  
Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the



o'er the plains And the moun-tains in re - ply  
strains pro - long? What the glad - some ti - dings be  
an - gels sing, Come, a - dore on bend-ed knee,



E - cho - ing their joy - ous strains Glo-  
Which in - spire your heaven-ly song?  
Christ the Lord, the new - born King.



- o - o - ri-a, in ex-cel-sis De - o De - o

## Lighting the Christ Candle

L Let us prepare our hearts for the lighting of the Christ Candle

A. *Ah Holy Lord,  
This season of Christmas, break into our worlds unexpectedly.  
Keep us awake, to be aware, to hope even against all hope.*

*We pray for your favor.  
Teach us how to be advocates for your peace, hope and love.  
Help us to know that what we do makes a difference.*

*Surprise us with possibilities  
How your vision of peace, hope and love might take root,  
and how we might live into this vision for you and our neighbor.  
Come, dear Emmanuel, Amen.*

L. The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

A. *All creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.  
For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope.*

L The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. Jesus Christ is our life and light. In his name and in his power, let us worship God!  
– based on Isaiah 9:2, NIV

*Puer Natus Est - A Child is Born*

Daniel Justice Snoke

♩=110

A child is born un-to us a son has been giv - en up-

6

- on whose should-er pow-er rests; of his peace will be no end. He shall be My soul will

10

called al-might-y God, E - ter-nal Fa - ther Prince of Peace He shall be mag - ni-fy the Lord, Who has done might-y things for me. My soul will

14

called al-might-y God, E - ter-nal Fa - ther Prince of Peace mag - ni-fy the Lord, Who has done might-y things for me.

- L. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.
- A. *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*
- L. Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."
- A. *When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."*

---

*All Sing: I saw Three Ships*

I saw three ships come sailing in on Christmas Day, on Christmas Day  
I saw three ships come sailing in on Christmas Day in the morning

*(Interlude)*

And what was in those ships all three on Christmas Day, on Christmas Day  
And what was in those ships all three on Christmas Day in the morning

Our Savior Christ and His Lady on Christmas Day, on Christmas Day  
Our Savior Christ and His Lady on Christmas Day in the morning

*(Interlude)*

Pray wither sailed those ships all three on Christmas Day, on Christmas Day  
Pray wither sailed those ships all three on Christmas Day in the morning

Oh, they sailed into Bethlehem on Christmas day, on Christmas day,  
Oh, they sailed into Bethlehem on Christmas day in the morning

*(Interlude)*

And all the bells on earth shall ring on Christmas Day, on Christmas Day  
And all the bells on earth shall ring on Christmas Day in the morning

And all the souls on earth shall sing on Christmas Day, on Christmas Day  
And all the souls on earth shall sing on Christmas Day in the morning

*(Interlude)*

Then let us all rejoice again on Christmas Day, on Christmas Day  
Then let us all rejoice again on Christmas Day in the morning *(repeat)*

- 
- L. Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."
- A. *My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for all his loving kindness to me day by day.*
- L. The Mighty One has done great things for me; holy is his name.  
A. *Let it be to me according to your word.*
- L. God's mercy reaches to all those who fear him, in every generation.  
A. *Great is our God and worthy to be praised*
- L. The Lord has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has humbled those who are haughty and proud  
A. *Let it be to me according to your word.*
- L. God has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the poor and lowly  
A. *Great is our God and worthy to be praised*
- L. The Lord has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.  
A. *Let it be to me according to your word.*
- L. God has kept his promises: He has helped his servant Israel, and shown mercy to Abraham and his descendants forever  
A. *Great is our God and worthy to be praised. Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.*

My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,  
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the one who waits.  
You fixed your sight on the servant's plight,  
and my weakness you did not spurn,  
So from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me.  
And your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.  
Your very name puts the proud to shame,  
and to those who would for you yearn,  
You will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.  
Let the fires of your justice burn.  
Wipe away all tears,  
For the dawn draws near,  
And the world is about to turn.

From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone.  
Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne.  
The hungry poor shall weep no more,  
for the food they can never earn;  
There are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn.  
*(refrain)*

Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:  
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.  
This saving word that our forbears heard  
is the promise that holds us bound,  
'Til the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around.  
*(refrain)*

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;

Refrain: O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; *[Refrain]*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;  
glory to God, all glory in the highest; *[Refrain]*

**Reader 3:**

CHRISTMAS hath darkness  
Brighter than the blazing noon,  
Christmas hath a chillness  
Warmer than the heat of June,  
Christmas hath a beauty  
Lovelier than the world can show:  
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,  
Brought for us so low.

Earth, strike up your music,  
Birds that sing and bells that ring;  
Heaven hath answering music  
For all Angels soon to sing:  
Earth, put on your whitest  
Bridal robe of spotless snow:  
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,  
Brought for us so low. ~ Christina Rossetti

---

**Reader 2:**

This is the good news to all people: to *you* is born. Christmas is a birthing place. That birthing place is not just some event that happened long ago in a land far away. We gather in our churches week after week, year after year, to proclaim that the birthing of God happens all the time. The good news of Christmas is that God is born into our places. Gerard Manly Hopkins reminds us that we are the manger, the field, Bethlehem in this poem:

Of her flesh he took flesh:  
He does take fresh and fresh,  
Though much the mystery how,  
Not flesh but spirit now.  
And makes, O marvelous!  
New Nazareths within us,  
Where she shall yet conceive  
Him morning, noon, and eve;  
New Bethlehems, and he, born  
There, evening, noon, and morn.

Each of us is a 'new Nazareth' where Christ is conceived, and each of us is a new Bethlehem where Christ is born. This is the miracle of Christmas: that God has come to us, Word in flesh appearing *and* that we are invited to 'flesh out,' to 'give birth' to God in our lives.

---

**Reader 1:**

On the basis of God's beginning with us, which has already happened, our life with God is a path that is traveled in the law of God. Is this human enslavement under the law? No, it is liberation from the murderous law of incessant beginnings. Waiting day after day for the new beginning, thinking countless times that we have found it, only in the evening to give up on it again as lost – that is the perfect destruction of faith in the God who set the beginning once and for all time. God has set the beginning: this is the joyous certainty of faith. Therefore, beside the "one" beginning of God, I am not supposed to try to set countless other beginnings of my own. This is precisely what I am now liberated from. The beginning – God's beginning – lies behind me, once and for all time.... Together we are on the path whose beginning consists in the fact that God has found his own people, a path whose end can consist only in the fact that God is seeking us again. The path between this beginning and this end is our walk in the law of God. It is life under the word of God in all its many facets. In truth there is only one danger on this path, namely, wanting to go behind the beginning. In that moment the path stops being a way of grace and faith. It stops being God's own way.

I believe that God can and will bring good out of evil, even out of the greatest evil. For that purpose he needs men who make the best use of everything. I believe that God will give us all the strength we need to help us to resist in all times of distress. But he never gives it in advance, lest we should rely on ourselves and not on him alone. A faith such as this should allay all our fears for the future. I believe that even our mistakes and shortcomings are turned to good account, and that it is no harder for God to deal with them than with our supposedly good deeds. I believe that God is no timeless fate, but that he waits for and answers sincere prayers and responsible actions.

"After Ten Years: A Reckoning Made at New Year 1943"

L Let us confess before God.  
A *O God, we need Christ to renew our commitment. We confess that our lack of faith has made us fearful. May your angels sing again to us of peace for body and soul. We acknowledge that we have foolishly let our desires lead us astray. May your star once more set our course firmly in your direction. We have turned our faith into a lifeless ritual. May your manger call us again to expressions of love and devotion. We have carefully kept our gifts and have not freely given our goods and our hearts to you. May the Magi show us the spirit of giving. Lord, may your Spirit linger in our hearts and bring renewal in our lives. Amen.*

L We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.  
*Romans 8:28-30*

### **Personal Reflection**

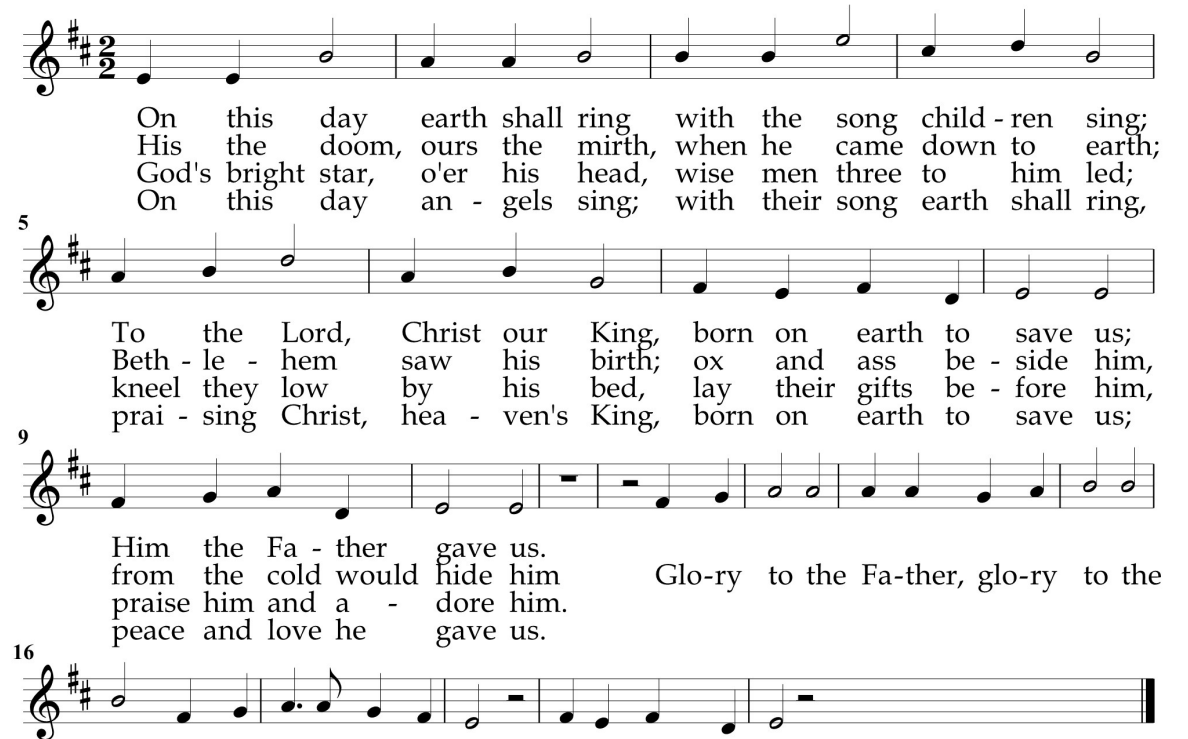
*(There will be an offering taken during this time)*

A *God of wonder, we offer you these humble gifts, signs of your goodness and mercy. Receive them with our gratitude, that through us all people may know the riches of your love in the Word-made-flesh. Amen.*

### *On This Day*

Personent Hodie

Piae Cantiones, 1582



On this day earth shall ring with the song child - ren sing;  
His the doom, ours the mirth, when he came down to earth;  
God's bright star, o'er his head, wise men three to him led;  
On this day an - gels sing; with their song earth shall ring,  
5 To the Lord, Christ our King, born on earth to save us;  
Beth - le - hem saw his birth; ox and ass be - side him,  
kneel they low by his bed, lay their gifts be - fore him,  
9 prai - sing Christ, hea - ven's King, born on earth to save us;  
Him the Fa - ther gave us.  
from the cold would hide him Glo-ry to the Fa-ther, glo-ry to the  
praise him and a - dore him.  
16 peace and love he gave us.

Son, Glo-ry to the Ho-ly Ghost, to the three in one.