



**December 28, 2025**  
**1st Sunday of Christmas**

Leading Worship Today

**Worship Leaders:**

Barb Janski & Lisa Ellwoods

**Music Leaders:**

Ralph Johansen, Organist

*Please read along with all **Bold** text*  
*All are invited to stand when there is an \**

**Larger Print Hymns:** Please see an usher if you would like a copy of larger print hymns.

**Children's Bulletins:** Please see an usher if you are interested in a children's bulletin.

PRELUDE

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

*Paul Manz*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SILENT PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

*You can prepare, but still it will come to you by surprise,*

*crossing through your doorway, calling your name in greeting,  
turning like a child who quickens suddenly within you.*

*It will astonish you how wide your heart will open in welcome*

*for the joy that finds you so ready and still so unprepared.*

*-For Joy, by Jan Richardson*

GATHERING

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Praise the Lord.

How good it is to sing praises to our God,

**how pleasant and fitting to praise the Lord!**

The Lord builds up Jerusalem;

**God gathers the exiles of Israel.**

God heals the brokenhearted  
**and binds up their wounds.**  
God determines the number of the stars  
**and calls them each by name.**  
Great is our Lord and mighty in power;  
**God's understanding has no limit.**

\*HYMN/CAROL

**#107 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn**

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all and teaching us to renounce what is evil in this world. Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.  
**Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being, whose face is hidden from us by our sins, and whose mercy we forget in the ignorance of our hearts: Cleanse us from all our offenses, and deliver us from proud thoughts and vain desires, that with reverent and humble hearts we may draw near to you, confessing our faults, confiding in your grace, and finding in you our refuge and strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*As water is poured into the font remember your baptism and that in these waters you are named as one of God's beloved and joined to Christ forever.*

\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God has poured out the Holy Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might have the hope of eternal life.  
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!  
**Alleluia, Amen!**

\*RESPONSE

**#646 Sing Out, My Soul**

**Sing out, my soul. Sing out, my soul. Sing out and glorify the Lord who sets us free. Sing out, my soul. Sing out, my soul. Sing out and glorify the Lord God!**

WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

O come, O come Emmanuel and make yourself known to us in the reading of the scriptures. Amen.

## OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 60:1-6 p. 738

**60** Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

**2** For darkness shall cover the earth  
and thick darkness the peoples,  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and his glory will appear over you.

**3** Nations shall come to your light  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

**4** Lift up your eyes and look around;  
they all gather together; they come to you;  
your sons shall come from far away,  
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.

**5** Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,<sup>[a]</sup>  
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

**6** A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.  
They shall bring gold and frankincense  
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

**Thanks be to God.**

HYMN

**#143 Angels from the Realms of Glory**

## NEW TESTAMENT READING

Galatians 4:4-7 p. 1153

**4** But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, **5** in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. **6** And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our<sup>[a]</sup> hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" **7** So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir through God.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Silence*

**18** Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. **19** Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. **20** But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." **22** All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

**23** "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." **24** When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife **25** but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

**2** In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, **2** asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." **3** When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, **4** and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. **5** They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

**6** 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.' "

**7** Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. **8** Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." **9** When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. **10** When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. **11** On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. **12** And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The Word of God for the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*Silence*

GOSPEL READING

Luke 2:22-40 p. 1015

**22** When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord **23** (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), **24** and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

**25** Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. **26** It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. **27** Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the law, **28** Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

**29** "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
according to your word,

**30** for my eyes have seen your salvation,

**31** which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

**32** a light for revelation to the gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

**33** And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. **34** Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed **35** so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul, too."

**36** There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, **37** then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. **38** At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

**39** When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. **40** The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Silence*

## EPISTLE READING

Philippians 2:5-11 p. 1162

**5** Let the same mind be in you that was<sup>[a]</sup> in Christ Jesus,

**6** who, though he existed in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be grasped,

**7** but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,

**8** he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.

**9** Therefore God exalted him even more highly  
and gave him the name  
that is above every other name,

**10** so that at the name given to Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

**11** and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

The Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

HYMN/CAROL

**#121 Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne (See Insert)**

*(We will receive the morning offering while singing this song.)*

*"Let us present ourselves to God as  
those who have been delivered from  
death to life".*

*To contribute to our mission and ministry  
online, please scan the QR code.*



## **\*DOXOLOGY**

**#113 Angels We Have Heard On High, Refrain**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

## **\*OFFERING PRAYER**

For all you have given us, O God, we give you thanks, especially for the gift of your Son, Jesus. We ask your blessing on these our gifts, that they might help to further the mission and ministry of your Church, and proclaim your glory. In Christ's Name we pray, Amen.

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

We pray for the church...

With Mary, help us to treasure and ponder the gift that has been given to us, a gift of good news and great joy for all. O Christ, our life, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the world...

With the prophets, help us to proclaim the promise of your peace for all nations and your justice for all people. O Christ, our life, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this community...

With the shepherds, help us to keep watch over those entrusted to our care and all who need protection this day. Especially, we pray for...

O Christ, our life, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for loved ones...

With the angels, help us to offer signs of hope, comfort, and joy for all who live in fear, sorrow, or stress. O Christ, our life, **hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus Christ, hope of the world, help us to bear witness to your life so that all may believe and have life in you; in your holy name we pray now as you taught us...

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**People: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation,**

but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

\*HYMN/CAROL

**#136 Go, Tell It on the Mountain**

\*BENEDICTION

Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through him.

And may the Lord bless and keep you in your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore. Amen.

POSTLUDE

*Loving all People, Living our Faith, and Following Jesus*

## WORSHIP NOTES

All liturgy comes/is adapted from the Book of Common Worship (2018) or is written in house.

**#107 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn** | TEXT: Marty Haugen, 1983, alt. | MUSIC: Marty Haugen, 1983 | Text © 1983 GIA Publications, Inc. Music © 1983 GIA Publications, Inc.

**#646 Sing Out, My Soul (Magnificat)** | TEXT: Taizé Community, 1978 | MUSIC: Jacques Berthier, 1978 | Text © 1979 Les Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.) Music © 1979 Les Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

**#143 Angels, from the Realms of Glory** | TEXT: Stanzas 1–3, James Montgomery, 1816, 1825; stanza 4, Salisbury Hymn Book, 1857 | MUSIC: Henry Thomas Smart, 1867 | Public domain

**#120 Where Shepherds Lately Knelt** | TEXT: Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1986 | MUSIC: Carl F. Schalk, 1986 | Text © 1987 Concordia Publishing House Music © 1986 GIA Publications, Inc.

**#113 Angels We Have Heard on High** | TEXT: French carol; trans. James Chadwick, 1860, alt. | MUSIC: French carol; arr. Edward Shippen Barnes, 1937 | Music © 1937, ren. 1965 H.

Augustine Smith Jr. (admin. Fleming H. Revell Company, a div. of Baker Publishing Group)

**#136 Go, Tell It on the Mountain** | TEXT: African American spiritual; stanzas, John W. Work II, 1940 | MUSIC: African American spiritual; arr. John W. Work III, 1940; harm. Melva Wilson Costen, 1987 | Music Harm. © 1989 Melva Wilson Costen



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Session Members ANNUAL REPORT Reminder:** Christy needs your ANNUAL REPORT information this year a week ahead of what I have usually asked in the past. Please send me your reports and pictures (with necessary notes) that we can use in this report for 2025. **It would be appreciated if this information was submitted to me *BEFORE SUNDAY, JANUARY 4th*!** Thank you for helping me get this put together in time for the Annual Meeting.

**Community Chili & Cornbread Supper:** Another spaghetti supper is approaching on ***January 31st from 5:00pm to 6:30pm***. Please sign up in the narthex if you are interested in helping with this event.

**Service for Healing & Wholeness:** Having a difficult winter or holiday season? Come seek the healing and wholeness that God can offer. Join us for our Service for Healing & Wholeness on ***January 11th at 9:30am***.

**How can we pray for you?** Along with the blue prayer request cards found in the pews you can also submit prayer requests on the BPC website. Scan this QR Code with your smartphone to be taken directly to the prayer request form. All prayer requests go directly to Pastor Brian.



**BPC Prayer List:**

- Christy Wood
- Family of Larry Pattee
- Milla Spike, Kevin's granddaughter
- Rich Dahl
- Mary Gillis, fighting cancer
- George, Elaine, and the Thole family following George's brother's death
- Dennis Stanley, fighting cancer
- Arthur James, Tanya's niece's baby
- Diane Ellis
- Family of Don Olsen
- Anne Marie Wille, Bonnie Morek's daughter
- Daniel & Gloria Elliot, Bonnie Morek's brother & sister-in-law
- Dennis Sletten, friend of Diane
- Sherry Sletten, friend of Diane
- Lois Lindstrom
- Theresa
- Madree
- Jim, Elaine Thole's brother, following a diagnosis
- Donna, a friend of Lana Kopplin, who has cancer
- Jill, the niece of Al DeBellis, who has a terminal illness
- Jonathon, a friend of Barb & Larry Janski
- Shannon, Virginia's former daughter-in-law
- Erva Hance
- Barb and Tom Stone
- Jan Brown, early morning Women of Faith
- Rochelle Tandrian, Angela's daughter
- Jim and Jodi Underwood, Lanny & Shirley's son-in-law and daughter
- Brittany Daniels
- John and Charlotte Collins

For peace in Ukraine and Russia, Israel/Palestine, Congo, and around the world.  
For our neighbor congregations in Buffalo and for the congregations of our presbytery.

## **Upcoming This Week**

### ***Today***

9:30a Worship  
10:30a Classes, Coffee & Conversations-  
Who Am I? Holiday Edition

### ***Tuesday***

9:00am Crafty Ladies  
9:00a Men's Breakfast at Forget Me Not Cafe

### ***Wednesday***

*Happy New Year's Eve!*

### ***Thursday***

*Happy New Year's Day!*  
*Office is Closed*

### ***Sunday***

9:30a Worship  
10:30a Classes, Coffee & Conversations-  
BPC Historical Artifacts

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## **Buffalo Presbyterian Church**

507 Calder Ave. NE, Buffalo, Minnesota 55313

[www.BuffaloPresbyterian.org](http://www.BuffaloPresbyterian.org)

(763) 682-2773

Brian Entz, Pastor

Mike Agre, Choir Director

Ralph Johansen, Organist

Mike Quady, Clerk of Session

Christy Wood, Administrative Assistant

# 107 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for an - gels  
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em - man - u -  
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when all the  
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night. Though dark the



her - ald its dawn-ing. Sing out your joy, for soon he is  
el comes a - sing - ing; his hum - ble song is qui - et and  
world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so qui - et and  
win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall crown you with



born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing. Come as a ba - by  
near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing; mu - sic to heal the  
free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing. Then shall the mute break  
light; be strong and lov - ing and fear - less. Love be our song and



weak and poor, to bring all hearts to - geth - er, he o - pens  
bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing - kind - ness. The thun - der  
forth in song, the lame shall leap in won - der, the weak be  
love our prayer and love our end - less sto - ry; may God fill



wide the heaven - ly door and lives now in - side us for - ev - er.  
of his an - thems rolls to shat - ter all ha - tred and vio - lence.  
raised a - bove the strong, and weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.  
ev - ery day we share and bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

After attending a carol concert, the author and composer of this hymn was moved to create a contemporary, accessible carol that drew on the familiar images in a new way. There are echoes here of passages such as Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 7:14/ Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 35:5-6, Isaiah 2:4.

# Sing Out, My Soul

## Magnificat

646

G \* C D7 G (chords continue) \*

Sing out, my soul. Ma - gni - fi - cat. Sing out, my soul. Ma - gni - fi - cat. Sing out and Ma - gni - fi -

glo - ri - fy the Lord who sets us free. Sing out, my soul. cat a - ni - ma me - a Do - mi - num. Ma - gni - fi - cat.

Sing out, my soul. Sing out and glo - ri - fy the Lord God! Ma - gni - fi - cat. Ma - gni - fi - cat a - ni - ma me - a!

*\*May be sung as a canon.*

This canonic chant from the Taizé Community is based on the opening phrase of Mary's song when she visited her relative Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist (Luke 1:39-56). Both Eastern and Western churches have used the full text for many centuries as part of daily prayers.

TEXT: Taizé Community, 1978  
MUSIC: Jacques Berthier, 1978  
Text and Music © 1979 Les Presses de Taizé (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

MAGNIFICAT (Taizé)  
Irregular

## 143 Angels, from the Realms of Glory

1 An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry, wing your flight o'er  
 2 Shep - herds, in the fields a - bid - ing, watch - ing o'er your  
 3 Sag - es, leave your con - tem - pla - tions; bright - er vi - sions  
 4 All cre - a - tion, join in prais - ing God the Fa - ther,

all the earth; you, who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry,  
 flocks by night, God with us is now re - sid - ing;  
 beam a - far; seek the great de - sire of na - tions;  
 Spir - it, Son, ev - er - more your voic - es rais - ing

now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:  
 yon - der shines the in - fant light:  
 you have seen his na - tal star: come and wor - ship,  
 to the e - ter - nal Three in One:

come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born king!

This familiar carol was first published as a poem in the Christmas Eve 1816 issue of a newspaper the author edited in Sheffield, England. The tune name celebrates the location of a prominent Presbyterian Church in London, sometimes called the "Presbyterian cathedral."

# Where Shepherds Lately Kneled 120

Capo 4: (G7) (C) (F) (Dm)  
B7 E A F#m



1 Where shep-herds late - ly knelt and kept the an - gel's  
2 In that un - like - ly place I find him as they  
3 How should I not have known I - sa - iah would be  
4 Can I, will I for - get how Love was born and

(G) (G7) (Em) (Am) (Dm)  
B B7 G#m C#m F#m



word, I come in half - be - lief, a pil - grim strange-ly  
said: sweet, new-born Babe, how frail, and in a man - ger  
there, his proph - e - cies ful - filled? With pound-ing heart, I  
burned its way in - to my heart: un - asked, un - forced, un -

(G7) (C) (C7) (F) (Dm) (G7)  
B7 E E7 A F#m B7



stirred. But there is room and wel - come there for  
bed: a still, small voice to cry one day for  
stare: a child, a son, the Prince of Peace for  
earned: to die, to live, and not a - lone for

(C) (Dm) (C) (Am) (Dm) (F/A) (C)  
E F#m E C#m F#m A/C# E



me; but there is room and wel-come there for me.  
me; a still, small voice to cry one day for me.  
me; a child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.  
me; to die, to live, and not a - lone for me.

*Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.*

Witnessing the beginning or the end of life evokes very personal responses (emphasized by the "for me" at the end of each stanza), especially when the scale is intimate, as in this imagined visit to Christ's manger. The prophecies recalled in stanza three come from Isaiah 9:6.

## Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne

1. Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy king - ly crown,  
 2. Heav - en's arch - es rang when the an - gels sang,  
 3. The fox - es found rest, and the birds their nest  
 4. Thou cam - est, O Lord, with the liv - ing word  
 5. When the heav - ens shall ring, and the an - gels sing,

When Thou cam - est to earth for me; But in  
 Pro - claim - ing Thy roy - al de - gree; But of  
 In the shade of the for - est tree; But Thy  
 That should set Thy peo - ple free; But with  
 At Thy com - ing to vic - to - ry, Let Thy

5

Beth - le - hem's home was there found no room For Thy  
 low - ly birth didst Thou come to earth, And in  
 couch was the sod, O Thou Son of God, In the  
 mock - ing scorn, and with crown of thorn, They  
 voice call me home, say - ing "Yet there is room, There is



7



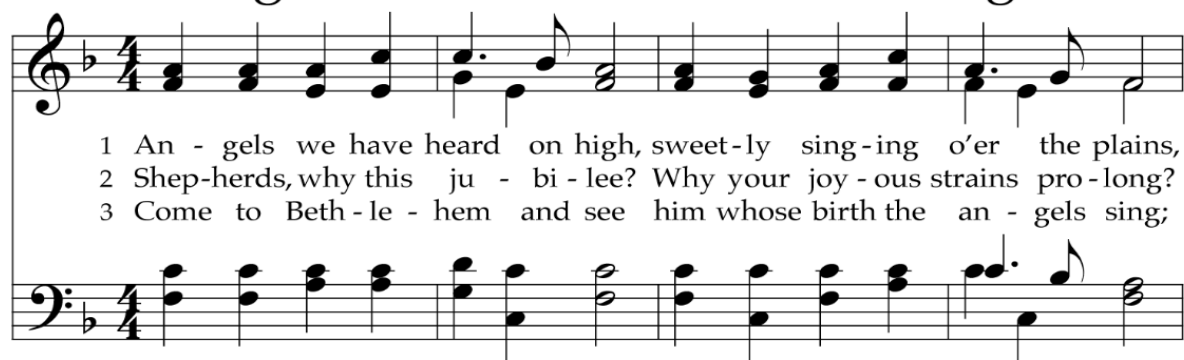
ho - ly na - tiv - i - ty. O come to my heart, Lord  
great hu - mil - i - ty. O come to my heart, Lord  
des - erts of Gal - i - lee. O come to my heart, Lord  
bore Thee to Cal - va - ry. O come to my heart, Lord  
room at My side for thee." My heart shall re - joice, Lord

10



Je - sus, There is room in my heart for Thee.  
Je - sus, There is room in my heart for Thee.  
Je - sus, There is room in my heart for Thee.  
Je - sus, There is room in my heart for Thee.  
Je - sus, When Thou com - est and call - est for me.

## 113 Angels We Have Heard on High



1 An - gels we have heard on high, sweet-ly sing-ing o'er the plains,  
2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro-long?  
3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;



and the moun-tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.  
What the glad-some ti - dings be which in-spire your heaven-ly song?  
come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.

## Refrain



Glo - ri - a  
in ex - cel - sis De - o! Glo -

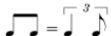
This French carol probably dates from the 1700s, though it was not printed until the following century. Because it uses a vernacular language for the narrative stanzas and Latin for the refrain, it belongs to a special category called "macaronic" or mixed-language texts.

JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

The musical score is written for a vocal part and piano accompaniment. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line begins with a rest for two measures, followed by the lyrics "ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o!". The piano accompaniment provides a harmonic foundation with chords and moving lines in both hands.

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

## 136 Go, Tell It on the Mountain

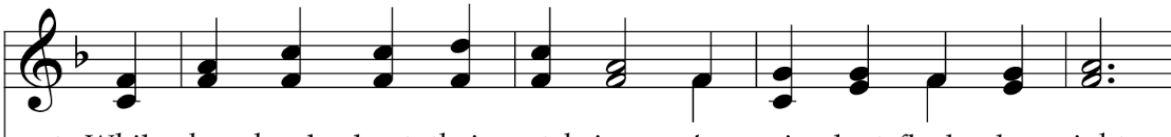
Refrain 


Go, tell it on the moun-tain, o-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;




go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!

*Fine*



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,  
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth  
3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,



*to Refrain*

be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

Like other material from oral traditions, 19th-century African American spirituals flourished without being written down. Their refrains were their most stable parts, and narrative stanzas were often improvised to fit. These Nativity stanzas attempt to recall that tradition.