



# first community

January 4, 2026  
10 am SOUTH

GREETING – Seth

PRELUDE – Robert, organ

*Liturgical Improvisation No. 3 “Verbum supernum prodiens”*

George Oldroyd (1886-1951)

CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>(1)</sup> – Seth

One: Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

**Many: The brightness of God’s light  
shines upon all the nations. All are  
welcomed to the brightness of God’s dawn.**

One: God gathers us from far away and carries us. With radiant eyes, with rejoicing hearts, we receive the abundance God gives.

**ALL: We respond in praise.  
With our gifts, with our very selves,**

**We worship God.**

## **OPENING HYMN**

*The First Nowell*

**The first Nowell the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as  
they lay;  
In fields where they lay keeping their  
sheep,  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.**

**Refrain:**

**Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,  
born in a manger, Emmanuel.**

**They looked above and saw a star  
shining in the east, beyond them far;  
And to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night.  
[Refrain]**

**Then entered in those magi three,  
and bending low upon their knee,  
They offered there, in great reverence,  
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.  
[Refrain]**

**WELCOME – Seth**

## CHILDREN'S MOMENT – Seth

### ANTHEM- Nick Denino, baritone

*Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)/arr.

Theodore Baker

## PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER – Seth

### OFFERTORY

#### **Invitation to Dream – Seth**

#### **Receiving the People's Gifts**

#### **Anthem – Cambridge Choir**

*Go, Tell It on the Mountain*

Traditional Spiritual/arr. Howard Helvey (b. 1968)

#### **Presentation of Gifts and Prayer of Dedication<sup>(2)</sup>– Seth**

ONE: As the gifts are presented, will all rise in body or spirit?

**ALL: God we are grateful you have given us the gift of your grace that we might share with others the boundless riches of Christ,**

**and also the resources we hold in trust.  
Receive now, we ask, what we have given  
today. Use these offerings and use us  
for your plans and purposes.  
We pray in Christ's name. Amen.**

Doxology LASST UNS ERFREUEN - verse 1  
**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
praise God, all creatures here below;  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!  
Praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts!  
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

## **GOSPEL LESSON–Deacon**

**Matthew 2:1-12**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem,<sup>2</sup> 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.”<sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him,<sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah<sup>5</sup> was to be born. 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.

## SERMON – John

*Messy Lives and Extravagant Gifts*

## HYMN OF PREPARATION

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

**O holy child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in,  
be born in us today.**

**We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell:  
O come to us, abide with us,  
our God, Emmanuel.**

## COMMUNION

Invitation to Communion – Seth

Receiving Communion

Prayer of Thanksgiving – Seth

## CLOSING HYMN

*Go Tell It on the Mountain*

**Refrain:**

**Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hill and everywhere.  
Go tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born!**

**While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
Behold throughout the heavens**

**there shone a holy light. [Refrain]**

**Down in a lowly manger  
the humble Christ was born,  
And God sent us salvation  
that blessed Christmas morn. [Refrain]**

**BENEDICTION – Seth**

**POSTLUDE – Robert, organ**

*Caprice sur les grands Jeux*

Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749)