FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER 26, 2021
10:00 AM

CHURCH LIFE UPDATE Margaret LaMotte Torrence

PRELUDE *Angels We Have Heard on High/Carol of the Bells* arr. Gordon Schuster
(Sean O'Neal, violin and Steven Phillips, piano)

***CALL TO WORSHIP** by Jane Nolen
read by Henry Mills and Alice Mills

"Hark!" sang the angels,
Welcoming all
From lowly hut
And royal hall.

"Hark! Sang the doves,
The chicks, the cows,
The wrens and larks
Upon cold boughs,

The ox, the ass,
The horse, the ram,
The humpy camel,
Newborn lamb.

"Hark! They all sang,
And once again, "Hark!"
For now the day
Outweighs the dark,

The world is turned,
And all to view
This holy child,
And *you* come, too."

***CAROL 133 (vv. 1, 3 & 4)** *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

READING *Singing Carols* by Jane Nolen
read by Abby Clissold, Caroline Clissold, and Daniel Clissold

The night is crisp and very cold
And moonshine lights our way
As we go house to house and sing
About that special day,

And Heidi's voice comes straining through
The scarf that Mama knit,
And Adam's boots are much too big
and only sort-of fit.

And Jason's lost a mitten back
By Mrs. Rankin's walk,
So with his fingers in his mouth
He finds it hard to talk.

Then Heidi's voice goes very loud,
And Adam's voice is low.
And Jason never hits a note
That any of us know.

But at each house we sing some songs,
Like "Deck the Halls" and such.
The neighbors smile and call our names,
Perhaps that isn't much—

But it was not so different when
Two thousand years ago
The angels singing brought big smiles
To shepherds in the snow.

CAROL 147 (vv. 1 & 2) *The First Noël*

READING *To Whom the Angel Spoke, A Story of the Christmas* by Terry Kay
read by Margaret LaMotte Torrence

CAROL 121 (vv. 1 & 2) *O Little Town of Bethlehem* St. Louis

** Those who are able are invited to stand.*

VIDEO *The Christmas Story*
(as told by the children of St Paul's Church, Auckland, New Zealand)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWq60oyrHVQ

CAROL 134 (vv. 1, 2 & 4) *Joy to the World*

READING *Baboushka, a Russian Folk Tale* adapted by Janet Yolen
read by Carrie Mills

CAROL 151 (vv. 1 & 5) *We Three Kings*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

As we reflect on the year that is concluding, and all the places we have seen the light of God's love—or pray yet to recognize it—you are invited to come to the communion table to light a candle. You may choose to share a spoken prayer request with the congregation by stepping up to the microphone near the table, or you may simply return to your seat after lighting a candle.

BLESSING *Where the Light Begins* Jan Richardson
read by Steven Phillips

Perhaps it does not begin.
Perhaps it is always.

Perhaps it take a lifetime
to open our eyes, to learn to see
what has forever
shimmered in front of us—

The luminous line
of the map
in the dark,

the vigil flame
in the house
of the heart,

the love
so searing
we cannot keep
from singing,
from crying out
in testimony
and praise.

Perhaps this day
will be the mountain
over which
the dawn breaks.

Perhaps we
will turn our face toward it,
toward what has been always.

Perhaps our eyes
will finally open
in ancient recognition
willingly dazzled,
illuminated at last.

Perhaps this day
the light begins in us.

CAROL 136 (ALL VERSES) *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*

* **BENEDICTION** Margaret LaMotte Torrence

POSTLUDE *Ding Dong Merrily on High/Joy to the World* Steven Phillips

The postlude will be very brief today.
You are welcome to remain standing or to exit as you may wish or need.