



**Christmas Eve at Old South Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ      Hallowell, Maine  
Wednesday, December 24, 2025      4:30 p.m.  
*Lessons, Stories, Hymns, Carols, Bells and Candlelight***

***Welcome Guests and Friends!***

*We extend a special welcome to everyone worshiping with us this evening. If you are interested in finding out more about Old South, please visit our webpage: [www.oldsouthhallowell.org](http://www.oldsouthhallowell.org).*

*If you have trouble with your hearing, listening assistance devices are available in the north entry, or please speak with a Greeter.*

***No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!***

Tonight's Offering: We are a 5 for 5 Church, participating in all of the special offerings of the United Church of Christ. Our Christmas Eve offering goes to the Christmas Fund, a UCC program that assists retired church workers and clergy, and to our Holiday Giving Fund. Please place your offerings in the offering plates near the exits before you depart. Thank you!

**Where you see \*, please stand if you are able.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organ Prelude**      "Es ist ein Ros entsprungen" (Johannes Brahms)      Bradley Krueger

**Greeting, Introduction & Invitation**      Rev.  
Reisert

**\*Hymn** "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (*Adeste Fideles*) (Verses 1, 2 & 4)      Pilgrim Hymnal #132

**\*Call to Worship and Invocation, followed by the Lord's Prayer (debts)**      Don Reutershan

One: Time to put aside our distractions, like our phones and the "to do" list items that are not yet done, and be present here,

**People: That in the gathering darkness, we will perceive the light, the light of God's love.**

One: As we worship this holy evening, may we grow in our awareness,

**People: That God has come to us as a vulnerable infant,**

One: And, that vulnerability extended throughout the life of that infant, as Jesus sought to guide God's people in challenging ways,

**People:** To love God with all that we are, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

One: As we gather in this holy time, may we be renewed and strengthened,

**People:** To allow the glory, wonder and mystery of Christmas to infuse our lives,

One: Every day and in every way. Let us pray:

**People:** Gracious and Holy God, You invite us, over and over again, into this holy story, a story that started so very long ago, and continues into today and beyond. Shower Your blessings upon us, that we may hear anew the words that encourage us to let go of our fears and to follow in faith and in trust. As we hear and sing familiar words, may we not be tempted to fall simply into routine, but instead to allow this story to enliven our imaginations and our understandings of what it means to be Your holy 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.

### **Lesson One: The Ancient Words**

<b>Bells</b>	"Sing We Now of Christmas" ( <i>Noel Nouvelet</i> )	Old South Ringers
<b>Scripture</b>	Isaiah 9:2, 6-7	Ron Bansmer

### **Lesson Two: The Angel**

<b>Anthem</b>	"Kling, Glöckchen" (Come to the Manger) arr. Walter Gresens	Chancel Choir
<b>Scripture</b>	Matthew 1:18-23	Wendy Wells

### **Lesson Three: Mary and Joseph**

<b>Carol</b>	"O Little Town of Bethlehem" (verses 1 & 4) ( <i>St. Louis</i> )	New Century #133
<b>Scripture</b>	Luke 2:1-7	Bonnie Nielson
<b>Solo</b>	"Breath of Heaven" (Chris Eaton)	Torrey Gimpel

### **Lesson Four: The Shepherds**

<b>Carol</b>	"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (verses 1 & 2) ( <i>Mendelssohn</i> )	Pilgrim Hymnal #120
<b>Scripture</b>	Luke 2:8-20	Lindsey Childs
<b>Bells</b>	"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" (arr. Barbara Constable)	Old South Ringers

### **Lesson Five: The Magi**

<b>Scripture</b>	Matthew 2:1-12 (from <i>The Message</i> )	Joseph Reisert
<b>Carol</b>	"What Child Is This" (verses 1 & 3) ( <i>Greensleeves</i> )	New Century #148
<b>Poem</b>	"Wise Women Also Came" (Jan Richardson)	Susan Reisert

### **Lesson Six: The Mystery of Incarnation**

<b>Solo</b>	"O Holy Night" (Adolphe Adam)	Cynthia McGuire
<b>Scripture</b>	John 1:1-14	Bonnie Dufty

**Anthem** "This Christmastide" (Donald Fraser)

Chancel Choir

**\*Lighting of the Christ Candle**

Jane & Rick Campbell

**Sharing the Light of Christ**

*Our candle-lighting service symbolizes the light of Christ coming into our troubled world and being shared by his followers until the whole world glows with his love and peace. The light will begin with the Christ candle and will pass to the candles of the first person in each pew, who will pass the light along. The sanctuary will be darkened as the candlelight is shared and spread.*

*As you pass the light, **please tip only the unlit candles** to avoid spilling hot wax on yourself or your neighbor! When the sanctuary is lit by the light of candles, we will stand & sing "Silent Night."*

**\*Hymn #138(Pilgrim)** "Silent Night" (first verse sung in German first and then English; all other verses in English only) (Stille Nacht) Signing by Melanie Ruark

**\*Words of Mission and Blessing/Benediction** (Once the "Amen" is pronounced, the congregation is invited to respond, "Amen." Your candle may be extinguished at this point, or at any time during the postlude.)

**Organ Postlude** "On This Day Earth Shall Ring" (Gustav Holst / arr. Douglas Wagner)  
Bradley Krueger

*Please share a word of Christ's peace with your neighbor(s).*

*A very Merry Christmas to you!*

*We hope we will see you again soon.*

**More Info/Contact Info**

Greeters: Nancy and Ted Ruark

Worship Asst:

Zoom: Joseph Reisert

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Pastor Susan's blog: [hopeinthewilderness.com](http://hopeinthewilderness.com)

**Old South Staff:**

The Rev. Susan M Reisert, Pastor and Teacher  
Ms. Cynthia McGuire, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Bradley Krueger, Music Director  
Ms. Marcy Fullmer, Sexton

## SOURCES:

Invitation— *Cloth for the Cradle: Worship Resources and Readings for Advent, Christmas & Epiphany*, Iona Community, Wild Goose Worship Group.

Call to Worship and Invocation— written by Susan Reisert.

Wise Women Also Came by Jan Richardson— [paintedprayerbook.com](http://paintedprayerbook.com)

Lighting of the Christ Candle— written by Susan Reisert.

The Blessing and Benediction— written by Howard Thurman.

## THANK YOU!

Special thanks to our **Music Director**, Bradley Krueger, for planning, rehearsing and recruiting guest musicians for this special Christmas Eve service.

More special thanks to **Old South Ringers**: Christine and Warren Bartlett, Terry Cusick, Carol Mitchell-Cusick, Bonnie Dufty, Cynthia McGuire, Bonnie Nielson, Rebecca Symes, and Wendy Wells.

Thank you and welcome to all our **guest musicians**: Sonja DeWitt, Dennis Farley, Kathy Greason, James Rojas, Erika Randall, Doris Krueger, and Jay Wiley. Also, with special thanks to Melanie Ruark for **signing** “Silent Night.”

Heartfelt gratitude to the singers of Old South’s **Chancel Choir**: Christine and Warren Bartlett, Torrey Gimpel, Joel Johnson, Cynthia McGuire, and Don Reutershan, who are here, not only for special occasions, but throughout the year.

The sanctuary looks beautiful. Many thanks to the **decorating crew** for their special touches.

## Plants on the Chancel:

In memory of Clyde Morgan, Louise Morgan Perkins, and Roy Perkins—from their family;

In memory of Rev. Terry Smith and Heidi Arsenault—from Tina and Michael Smith;

In honor and memory of all our family, living and gone—from Warren and Christine Bartlett

## Hymns for Christmas Eve

### O Come, All Ye Faithful Pilgrim #132

1 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!

2 Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest; *Refrain*

3 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesus, to thee be all glory given;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing; *Refrain*

**It Came Upon the Midnight Clear****New Century #131**

1 It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold;  
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, great news of joy we bring.”  
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

2 Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,  
And still their heavenly music floats o’er all the weary world;  
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,  
And ever o’er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

**Hark! The Herald Angels Sing Pilgrim #120**

1 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!”

2 Christ, by highest heaven 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.  
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

**What Child Is This (verses 1 & 3) NCH #148**

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this, the angels sing, is Christ, God’s holy offering;  
Haste, haste your praise to bring the babe, the child of Mary!

3 Bring gifts of incense, gold, and myrrh; come, join in jubilation;  
The Holy Child, though meek and mild, has come with God’s salvation.  
Raise, raise the song on high, the mother sings her lullaby;  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the child of Mary!

**Silent Night****Pilgrim #138*****German verse***

Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht! Alles schläft, einsam wacht  
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,  
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh, Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

1 Silent night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

2 Silent night, holy night, Shepherds quake at the sight,  
Glories stream from heaven afar, Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

3 Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.