

January 4, 2026 Happy New Year!

Pre-Service Music Noah Davis

Welcome and Announcements

Pastor Nathaniel Asperger

Mission Point

<u>Prelude</u> Noah Davis

<u>Choir Introit</u> CTC Choir

<u>Call to Worship</u> Liturgist

Leader: Before the foundation of the world,

All: God destined us for love.

Leader: Through Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,

All: God adopted us into her own family.

Leader: From the farthest edges of the earth,

All: God shepherds their family home.

<u>Opening Prayer</u> Liturgist

Eternal Word, you loved us into being, and your love sustains us still.

Shepherd us toward your abundant life; teach us to tend to the earth until it blooms.

And, when time has reached its fullness, gather us into yourself so that, with you, we may nestle close to the heart of Parent God. **Amen.**

* **Opening Hymn** "Shall We Gather at the River" 375 GTG Congregation

<u>Call to Confession</u> Liturgist

Who is worthy to stand before God?

None but Christ alone.

The Son of God came in the flesh of a human body

to live among us.

It is Christ who redeems us, gathering our tears and our fears, redeeming each and every one.

With this confidence let us confess our sin before God and one another.



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* Prayer of Confession

Congregation

Gather us,
your children who run and hide,
ashamed, afraid, apathetic.
We trade your goodness for ashes.
We trade your peace for control.
We trade your promise for certainty.
Gather us to you
and return us to your abundant mercy;
may it flow over us,
renewing our weary souls.

* Time of Silence for Personal Prayers of Confession

*Assurance of Pardon Liturgist

The light of all life and the breath of all creation claims you, calling you "good" from the very beginning, very good. Believe the good news: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

*Responding to Grace

"Gloria Patri" #581 GTG

Rev. Nathaniel Asperger

Time With Young Disciples

Liturgist

Congregation

Prayer for Illumination

O God, through your mighty acts we receive grace upon grace. From your fullness, feed us with your life-giving Word, that our lives, like bread, may feed a hungry world. **Amen.**



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1st Scripture Reading

Jeremiah 31:7-14

Tammy Charnowski

The Lord says,

"Sing for joy because the people of Jacob are blessed.

Shout because the Lord has made them the greatest nation.

Make your praises heard.

Say, 'Lord, save your people.

Save the people who are left alive in Israel.'

I will bring them from the land of the north.

I will gather them from one end of the earth to the other.

Even those who are blind and those who can't walk will be among them.

Pregnant women and women having their babies

will be among them also.

Many of them will return.

Their eyes will be filled with tears as they come.

They will pray as I bring them back.

I will lead them beside streams of water.

I will lead them on a level path

where they will not trip or fall.

I am Israel's father.

And Ephraim is my oldest son.

"Listen to my message, you nations.

Announce it on shores far away.

Say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather them.

He will watch over his flock like a shepherd.'

I will set the people of Jacob free.

I will save them from those who are stronger than they are.

They will come and shout for joy on Mount Zion.

They will be joyful because of everything I give them.

I give them grain, olive oil and fresh wine.

I give them the young animals in their flocks and herds.

Israel will be like a garden that has plenty of water.

And they will not be sad anymore.

Then young women will dance and be glad.

And so will the men, young and old alike.



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I will turn their mourning into gladness.

I will comfort them.

And I will give them joy instead of sorrow.

I will satisfy the priests. I will give them more than enough.

And my people will be filled with the good things I give them," announces the Lord.

2nd Scripture Reading

Ephesians 1:3-14

Tammy Charnowski

Give praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Those blessings come from the heavenly world. They belong to us because we belong to Christ. God chose us to belong to Christ before the world was created. He chose us to be holy and without blame in his eyes. He loved us. So, he decided long ago to adopt us. He adopted us as his children with all the rights children have. He did it because of what Jesus Christ has done. It pleased God to do it. All those things bring praise to his glorious grace. God freely gave us his grace because of the One he loves. We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Because he bled and died our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God's grace is so rich. He poured his grace on us. By giving us great wisdom and understanding, he showed us the mystery of his plan. It was in keeping with what he wanted to do. It was what he had planned through Christ. It will all come about when history has been completed. God will then bring together all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

We were also chosen to belong to him. God decided to choose us long ago in keeping with his plan. He works out everything to fit his plan and purpose. We were the first to put our hope in Christ. We were chosen to bring praise to his glory. You also became believers in Christ. That happened when you heard the message of truth. It was the good news about how you could be saved. When you believed, he stamped you with an official mark. That official mark is the Holy Spirit that he promised. The Spirit marks us as God's own. We can now be sure that someday we will receive all that God has promised. That will happen after God sets all his people completely free. All these things will bring praise to his glory. This is The Word of the Lord. **Thanks Be To God.**

<u>Choir Anthem</u> CTC Choir

Gospel Lesson John 1:1-18

In the beginning, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were made through him. Nothing that has been made was made without him. Life was in him, and that life was the light for all people. The light shines in the darkness. But the darkness has not overcome the light.



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There was a man sent from God. His name was John. He came to be a witness about that light. He was a witness so that all people might believe. John himself was not the light. He came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. The Word was in the world. And the world was made through him. But the world did not recognize him. He came to what was his own. But his own people did not accept him. Some people did accept him and did believe in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God. To be a child of God has nothing to do with human parents. Children of God are not born because of human choice or because a husband wants them to be born. They are born because of what God does.

The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father. And the Word was full of grace and truth.

John was a witness about the Word. John cried out and said, "This was the one I was talking about. I said, 'He who comes after me is more important than I am. He is more important because he existed before I was born.' "God is full of grace. From him we have all received grace in place of the grace already given. In the past, God gave us grace through the law of Moses. Now, grace and truth come to us through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. But the One and Only is God and is at the Father's side. The one at the Father's side has shown us what God is like. This is The Word of the Lord. **Thanks Be To God.**

Sermon Joy and Destiny" Rev. Nathaniel Asperger

<u>Music Meditation</u> Noah Davis

* <u>Sermon Hymn</u> "Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom" 174 GTG Congregation

Sung to Tune #143 GTG

Affirmation of Faith

The one sufficient revelation of God is Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, to whom the Holy Spirit bears unique and authoritative witness through the Holy Scriptures, which are received and obeyed as the word of God written.

Adapted from the Confession of 1967, 9.27



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Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Rev. Nathaniel Asperger

Invitation to the Table Prayer of Great Thanksgiving The Words of Blessing for the Bread and the Cup The Lord's Prayer

Call to Offering

* Doxology

* Closing Hymn

"Joy to the World" 134 GTG

* Charge, Benediction

Postlude

"Refrain – Go Tell It On The Mountain"

Rev. Nathaniel Asperger

Congregation

Congregation

Rev. Nathaniel Asperger

Noah Davis



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A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

375 Shall We Gather at the River



A Baptist pastor wrote this hymn while seated at his parlor organ. Created as an alternative to gloomy "river of death" hymns, it is a celebration of the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Revelation 22:1 KJV).

TEXT and MUSIC: Robert Lowry, 1864

HANSON PLACE 8.7.8.7 with refrain All rights reserved. Reprinted under One License #736146-A



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GLORIA



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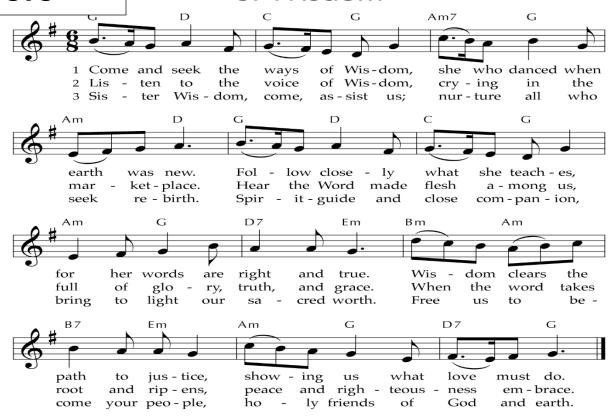


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Sung to the Tune-#143 GTG

Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom

jesus christ: life 174



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Drawing on numerous scriptural images of Wisdom (Greek: *Sophia*), especially in Proverbs, this text offers an alternative perspective on Trinitarian theology. The Wisdom tradition has played a role in Christian mysticism for centuries, as witnessed by the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul.

TEXT: Ruth Duck, 1993 MUSIC: Donna Kasbohm, 1995 Text © 1996 The Pilgrim Press Music © 1997 The Pilgrim Press MADELEINE 8.7.8.7.8.7



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While Isaac Watts did not write this text strictly for Christmas use, he did purposely cast his paraphrase of Psalm 98:4–9 in Christian terms, titling it "The Messiah's coming and kingdom." So "the Lord" here is Jesus Christ, rather than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

TEXT: Isaac Watts, 1719, alt. MUSIC: Attr. George Frederick Handel, 1742; arr. Lowell Mason, 1836

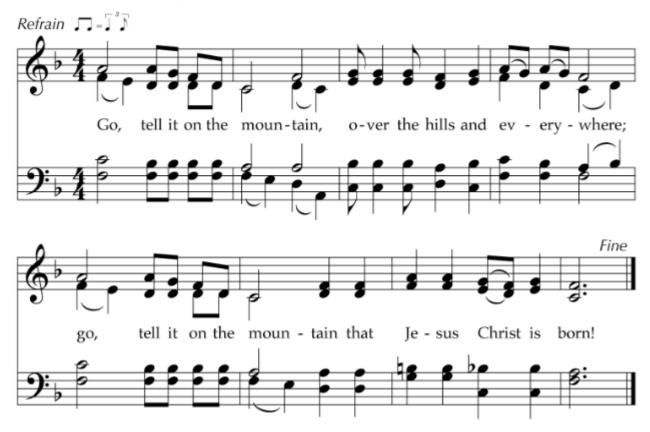
ANTIOCH CM with repeat (alternate tune: RICHMOND, 266)



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JESUS CHRIST: BIRTH

136 Go, Tell It on the Mountain



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