



December 31, 2023  
First Sunday of Christmas

# The Service for the Lord's Day

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December 31, 2023

9:30 am

Christmas Carol Sing — Let us know your favorite Christmas carol from hymns 82 to 156 in the Glory to God hymnal or check the index in the rear of the hymnal.

## Call to Worship

One: Every year we celebrate Christmas.

**All: Every month we break bread.**

One: Every week we gather for worship.

**All: Every day we count our blessings.**

One: Every minute God is near.

**All: Yes, every minute God is near.**

One: These are the rituals of our faith.

**All: Let us worship Holy God.**

\*Hymn

*Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

No. 143

## Prayer of Confession (in unison)

**God of rhythms, we confess: our faith would not be what it is without rituals. Unlike you, we depend on bread and water. We have to return to this space again and again to hear old, familiar stories. For if we stopped, we know it would not take long before we lost our way. Forgive us for our fragility, and thank you for giving us ordinary rituals and rhythms to hold onto. With grateful and humble hearts we pray, Amen.**

## Assurance of Forgiveness

One: Friends, it is not enough to hear once a month or once a year that you are forgiven. We need to hear it every single week. Every single week we need to be reminded that we are held in God's loving embrace. So hear this good news: no matter where you are on your journey of life, love, or faith, and no matter what you have done or left undone, you belong to God. You are claimed. You are known. You are forgiven.

**All: This is the good news of the gospel! Thanks be to God! Amen!**

\*Gloria Patri

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

Welcome and Announcements

Children's Message                      *The Most Important Gift*                      Jennifer Miller  
*Children's offering will be collected as they come forward for the message.*  
*There is no Sunday School today. Children shall return to their pew after the message.*

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Reading              Isaiah 61:10 –62:3 (page 604)

Hymn (remain seated)                      *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*                      No. 129

Gospel Reading                      Luke 2:22-40 (page 833)

Sermon                                      *Traditions*                                      Jennifer Miller

\*Affirmation of Faith (in unison)

**We believe that faith is a journey marked by rituals and rhythms. We come to worship. We confess our sins. We pass the peace. We offer grace. We hear the Word. We baptize children. We break the bread. And we tell the story of a loving God. And through these sacred rituals, we are reminded: we are not alone. God is near, and we have work to do. May this belief shape the rhythm of our lives. Amen.**

Offering

*We invite you to consider giving out of gratitude to God after worship today either by placing your offering in the wooden box hanging on the wall at each exit, scanning the QR code in your pew and/or giving online through the church website at [www.flemingtonpres.org](http://www.flemingtonpres.org), or mailing a check to the church office at 10 East Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822. We give thanks for your generosity, allowing our mission and ministry together to continue.*

Prayer of Dedication (in unison)

**On my own what I have to give doesn't amount to much in the light of all you have given to me and in the face of so much need. Put together as a congregation, what we offer you here in love becomes more, not simply added together, but somehow multiplied in its usefulness. We ask you to bless our gifts and with the addition of your blessing, just as it was with the loaves and fishes, there is enough for all. Amen.**

\*Doxology

No. 145

**So bring him incense, gold and myrrh; come one and all to own him. The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him. Raise, raise the song on high. The virgin sings her lullaby. Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!**

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer (in unison)

**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 *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* No. 119

\*Charge and Benediction

Congregational Response *Jesus, Remember Me* No. 227  
**Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. (repeat)**

Postlude *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* Robert W. Thygeron

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Rev. Amy E. S. Lincoln, Pastor  
Cindy Hall, Office Manager  
Jennifer Miller, Youth Coordinator

J. Jay Smith, Director of Music/Organist  
Margaret Sheneman, Director of Handbells  
Marion Barry, Sexton  
Steve Lederach, audio/video engineer

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