

**Hymn Notes:**  
**“God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen”**

This very old and well-known carol is not in our current *Glory to God* hymnal—that’s why we’ve printed the words. It was first published in 18<sup>th</sup> century England, probably around 1770. Even then it was introduced as “an ancient carol, sung in the streets of London.” In fact, old London had municipal watchmen who were licensed to perform certain tasks, including the singing of Christmas carols. This was one of their songs.

In *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, Ebenezer Scrooge hears this song sung joyously in the street and tells the singer he’ll hit him with a ruler unless he stops singing. Of course that was not the intended response to this carol.

Commas are very important in hymns including the opening line of this one. It is not, as so often thought, addressed to merry gentlemen but rather to those who may be anxious. Indeed, its message of God’s reassuring love is specifically directed at the shepherds who are frightened by the sudden appearance of an angel in their midst. That also explains the gender specific language. The comma is often misplaced in the singing, if not in the printing. The meaning is “God keep you merry, gentlemen.”

**BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS TO...**

**Sunday, December 27:** Barbara Stone, Sally Uhler, Shannon O’Leary  
**Monday, December 28:** Charlotte McQuown  
**Tuesday, December 29:** Joyce Worley, Sarah Worley, Georgia Gordon  
**Wednesday, December 30:** Doug Winder, Kaleb Adkisson  
**Thursday, December 31:** Mark Johnston, Nancy Turner  
**Friday, January 1:** Jacob Mattheus  
**Saturday, January 2:** Sheena Watkins, Cambia Woodford, Robert Wood



*If you see someone whose birthday is listed and you haven’t seen them in church recently, give them a call!*

*The flowers in the sanctuary today are given to the glory of God by*



Flower orders & donation costs for flowers ordered for worship are made using the “2020-2021 Flower Reservation Chart” on the bulletin board across from the kitchen. Thank you to those providing flowers each week In Honor/In Memory of someone or an anniversary/birthday!

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”*

John 3:16

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**Wednesday Bible Study**, led by Cindy Huffman

A study of the Book of Matthew meets every Wednesday at 7:00pm through Zoom. The study guide being used is *The Immersion Bible Study: Matthew* by J. Ellsworth Kalas. If you’d like to join the Wednesday Bible Study or need a study book, please email Cindy Huffman at [lucindyl@aol.com](mailto:lucindyl@aol.com) and she will forward you the Zoom link. All are welcome!

**Experiencing God Class**, led by Vicki Krueger

If you’d like to join the Experiencing God class virtually via Zoom at 10:30am on Sunday mornings, please contact Vicki Krueger via email at [vickilee33@aol.com](mailto:vickilee33@aol.com) and she will send you the meeting details each week.

**Fresh Brewed**

Fresh Brewed will meet on the first Friday of every month at 10:30am via Zoom. The next meeting is February 5th. The book we are studying is “Deeply Rooted; Knowing Self, Growing in God” by Christopher Marcie. Please contact Louise Mylin for a Zoom code and if you have any questions (727) 787-9868

**MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**Citylight Schedule  
12/27 - 1/3**

- ★ **SUNDAY 12/27**  
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM - LIVE STREAM CHURCH  
10:15 AM - SUNDAY SCHOOL VIA TEAMS  
8:30 PM - COLLEGE GROUP VIA ZOOM
- ★ **TUESDAY 12/29**  
8:00 PM - YOUNG WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY VIA ZOOM
- ★ **WEDNESDAY 12/30**  
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM - OUTDOOR CITYNIGHT
- ★ **SUNDAY 12/3**  
9:00 AM & 11:00 AM - LIVE STREAM CHURCH  
10:15 AM - SUNDAY SCHOOL VIA TEAMS  
3:00 PM - NEW YEARS PARTY AT PHILLIPPE PARK

**Follow the link to view our weekly email:**

<https://mailchi.mp/7d8abcb2822a/citylightupdate-12222020>

**Welcome To  
Northwood Presbyterian  
Church**

*A Stephen Ministry Church*

**December 27, 2020**



**Ministers: All Members of the Church**

E. Chris Curvin, Pastor  
Paul Means, Associate Pastor for Congregational Care & Mission

**Northwood Presbyterian Church**

2875 State Road 580, Clearwater, FL 33761  
(727) 796-8090 Fax (727) 797-8276  
[www.northwoodpc.org](http://www.northwoodpc.org)



Like us on Facebook!  
[facebook.com/npc.clearwater](https://facebook.com/npc.clearwater)

**Order for the Public Worship of God  
December 27, 2020  
1st Sunday of Christmas  
9:00AM & 11:00AM Worship Services**

WE COME TO WORSHIP

OPENING VOLUNTARY arr. Kevin McChesney  
 “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen”  
 Celestial Handbells

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP                      “Star Child”                      Carlton R. Young  
Stephanie Carson, Soloist  
*Star-Child, earth-Child, go-between of God,  
Love Child, Christ Child, heaven's lightning rod,*  
  
*This year, this year let the day arrive  
When Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive!*

*Hope-for-peace Child, God's stupendous sign,  
Down-to-earth Child, Star of stars that shine,*

*Text: Shirley Elena Murray (Matt. 2:1-12)*

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

CAROL #147	“The First Nowell”	THE FIRST NOWELL
<i>(stanzas 1,2,5)</i>		
<b>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.</b>		

*Refrain: Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.*

**They looked up 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 wise men three,  
full reverently upon their knee,  
and offered there in his presence  
their gold and myrrh, and frankincense.**

*Refrain*

## CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(Together)*

**God of love, as we reflect back on this past year and look to live out our faith in the year upcoming, we confess our weaknesses, our broken promises, and our lack of faith in your goodness and grace. O Dear Lord, for our sins of commission and omission, may you show us mercy, grant us forgiveness and by your grace empower us to live faithful lives that make a difference for Jesus' sake for it is in his name that we pray. Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE REGENT SQUARE

**Sages, leave your contemplations; brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great desire of nations; you have seen his natal star:  
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ the newborn king!**

PRAISE SONG                      “It’s Christmas”  
Voices in Praise & Horns in Praise  
*(Recorded December 16, 2018)*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

## CALL TO OFFERING

QUARTET                      “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen”                      Molly Ijames  
Heather Wood, Lindsey Peterson, Robert Wood, David Hamilton  
(Recorded December 24, 2019)

**God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,  
for Jesus Christ our Savior was born upon this day,  
to save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray.  
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.**

**From God our heavenly Father a blessed angel came,  
and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same,  
how that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name.  
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.**

**“Fear not” then said the angel “let nothing you a fright”,  
this day is born a savior of a pure virgin bright,  
to free all those who trust in him from satan’s pow’r and might  
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.**

**Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,  
and with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;  
this holy tide of Christmas all others doth deface.  
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy.**

## WE GROW IN THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 2:22-40 NRSV

MESSAGE      “The Staggering Declaration of Christmas”  
Paul Means, Associate Pastor

## WE GO OUT TO SERVE

HYMN #136                      “Go Tell It on the Mountain”                      GO TELL IT  
(stanzas 1,3)  
Refrain    **Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills 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 shown a holy light. Refrain**

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

## BENEDICTION

CLOSING VOLUNTARY  
 “God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen” Noel Goemanne

Stephanie Carson, Music Director  
Tom Huffman, Organist and Associate Music Director