

# The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York

---

## VESPER SERVICE OF MUSIC

December 5th, 2021 | 4 p.m.

Wherever you are on  
your journey,  
we welcome you to  
First Church and this  
service of  
musical worship.

Childcare for infants to six years is available in the Parlor, located on the second floor of the Church House.

Restrooms may be found in the lobby of the Church House, with an additional facility in the Narthex.

Please silence or turn off all mobile devices.

Applause is an appropriate expression of gratitude for the gifts of music shared this evening. Applause may be offered following the Evening Prayer and Blessing.

George Frideric Handel  
MESSIAH

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell

Part the First

Scene 1: Isaiah's prophecy of salvation

1. Sinfony

2. Tenor: Recitative

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness; Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
-Isaiah 40:1-3

3. Tenor: Song

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low; the crooked straight and the rough places plain.  
-Isaiah 40:4

4. Chorus

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.  
-Isaiah 40:5

Scene 2: The coming judgment

5. Bass: Recitative

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts: Yet once, a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.  
-Haggai 2:6-7; Malachi 3:1

6. Alto: Song

But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth?  
For He is like a refiner's fire.  
-Malachi 3:2

7. Chorus

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

-Malachi 3:3

Scene 3: The prophecy of Christ's birth

8. Alto: Recitative

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us.

-Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

9. Alto and Chorus: Song

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain. O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

-Isaiah 40:9; Isaiah 60:1

10. Bass: Recitative

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

-Isaiah 60: 2-3

11. Bass: Song

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

-Isaiah 9:2

12. Chorus

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

-Isaiah 9:6

Scene 4: The annunciation to the shepherds

13. Pifa

14. Soprano: Recitative

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

-Luke 2:8

And lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

-Luke 2:9

15. Soprano: Recitative

And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

-Luke 2:10-11

16. Soprano: Recitative

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

-Luke 2:13

17. Chorus

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men. -Luke 2:14

Scene 5: Christ's healing and redemption

18. Soprano: Song

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is the righteous Savior, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

-Zechariah 9:9-10

19. Alto: Recitative

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. -Isaiah 35:5-6

20. Alto and Soprano: Song

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

Come unto Him, all ye that labor, that are heavy laden, and He shall give you rest. Take his yoke upon you, and learn of Him; for he is meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

-Isaiah 40:11; Matthew 11:28-29

21. Chorus

His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

-Matthew 11:30

## Part the Second

*from Scene 7: God's ultimate victory*

44. Hallelujah

Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

-Revelation 19:6; 11:15; 19:16

## Part the Third

*from Scene 4: The acclamation of the Messiah*

53. Amen

## EVENING PRAYER AND BLESSING

### ABOUT THE SERVICE

Much has been written on the monumental and beloved oratorio, *Messiah*. Thus, I offer only a few interesting details in the following sentences. George Frideric Handel's (1685-1759) *Messiah* was composed in a little over three weeks during August and September 1741. Musicologist Clifford Bartlett writes, "Such speed was not unusual...but, however hasty the composition, the wealth of ideas, the depth of inspiration, and the sheer variety of inspiration continue to astonish." The texts, drawn from the Old and New Testaments, and the Anglican Church *Book of Common Prayer*, were prepared by Handel's friend, the librettist Charles Jennens (1700-1773). For all the praise we esteem on the work – words and music – Jennens was less than enthusiastic: "[Handel] has made a very fine entertainment of it, though not so good as he might and ought to have done, I have with great difficulty made him correct some of the grossest faults in the composition." The first performances took place in Dublin on April 13 and June 2, 1742, then in London the following year on March 23. A summation of *Messiah* might be found in the words Jennens included in the preface:

*Majora canamus.* (Let us sing of great things.)

-Virgil, Eclogue IV

*And without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified by the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

-1 Timothy

*Messiah* was first presented at First Church in November 1916, in celebration of the congregation's 200th anniversary. We do not have details to indicate if the presentation was of the entire oratorio, however, it is likely that it was with organ accompaniment, with the choir singing from the rear gallery of the church where the organ was then located. The chancel and choir area you see at the front of the Church were added in 1918. Numerous presentations of portions of the work have occurred since at First Church. Orchestral accompaniment began in 1988. - Michael Shake

The First Church Choir  
Michael Shake, *Organist and Director of Music*

SOPRANO

Christina Angelopoulos  
Katherine Brown  
Ellen Hagopian  
April Martin  
Samantha Noonan\*  
Sarah Sherman-Barrera  
Elizabeth White-Pultz  
Shanelle Woods\*  
Kathie Young

ALTO

Elizabeth Hubbell-Riggs  
Juliana Galletti  
LouAnne Gilleland  
Hannah Nacheman  
Elizabeth Picker  
Maddie Schindele  
Maggie Tigue\*  
Ann Timmons

TENOR

Ryan Bauer-Walsh  
Bobby Cooper  
Sean Fallen\*  
John Hellyer  
Mark Robertson  
Arri Simon

BASS

Evan Henke  
Dominic Inferrera  
Andrew Martens  
Julian Morris\*  
George Morrow  
Richard Storm  
Joel Zeltzer

\* denotes soloist

THE ORCHESTRA

Sato Moughalian, *contractor*

VIOLIN I

Jorge Avila, *concertmaster*  
Alex Fortes  
Ragga Petursdottir  
Susan Dominguez

VIOLIN II

Andrea Schultz  
Valerie Levy  
Katherine Hannauer

VIOLA

Orlando Wells  
Alissa Smith

CELLO

Arthur Fiacco

BASS

Roger Wagner

OBOE

Melanie Feld  
Setsuko Otake

BASSOON

Charles McCracken

TRUMPET

David Krauss  
Joshua Frank

TIMPANI

Barry Centanni

CONTINUO

Walter Hilse

**Welcome to First Church!**

We are so glad you are here.

Scan to make a donation toward  
our Ministry of Music.



More about Advent and Christmas  
at First Church!

