

Choir Members

Soprano:

Louise Adams
Spring Davidson
Sarah Degnitz
Cheryl Engler
Jacki Hunt
Kathy Jones
Fa Lane
Kris Landvater
Lisa Ann Miller
Alice Rauch
Rhonda Rumbaugh
Ashley Weaber
Elspeth Williams

Alto:

Cindy Anthony
Terri Downer
Wendy Hepler
Hannah Landvater
Gloria Moyer
Lucille Shearer
Kay Shulski
Dina Slechta
Cindy Umberger
Nancy Wagner
Kathy Williams
Nancy Wise
Susan Zerbe

Tenor:

Jim Anderson
Mark Shelly
Jim Yoder

Bass:
Michael Frazier
Mark Holm
John Kelly Poorman
Michael Slechta
Art Williams
Marty Wise
Ron Zug

Musical Director: Eric Dundore

Reader: Tony Fields

Piano for reference tracks: Sarah Myers

Technical Support and Mixing: Julie Holm

Instrumental work by: Joleen Fennell, Gloria Moyer, Alice Rauch, Scott Siciliano, Nancy Wise,

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My Lord, What A Morning



A Cantata of Spirituals, Gospel Hymns

And the Poetry of Howard Thurman

Penn Central Conference Virtual Choir

Advent 2020

Spirituals

Spirituals are the spirit-filled song of the enslaved African in the United States. Filled with drudgery and hope, cries of injustice and the dream of a heavenly future, they fulfilled a multitude of functions in the culture of the enslaved people. They helped one through the drudgery of the long and exhausting day. They taught the biblical story to people for whom actually reading the Bible would be a crime. They communicated the covert hope for freedom, and sometimes led the way to Freedom.

Howard Thurman claimed that these songs came from three sources: the Bible, the natural world, and the day to day experiences of the enslaved Africans.¹ A good subset of these songs deal with the events surrounding the birth of the child Jesus and with the hope that this child brings to the enslaved.

Howard Thurman

Howard Thurman (1899-1981) was an African American Baptist pastor, mystic and theologian. He was prominent in the Civil Rights movement as a result of his book *Jesus and the Disinherited* and as a key mentor, especially to Martin Luther King Jr. He served as dean of Rankin Chapel at Howard University and as the first African American dean of the Marsh Chapel of Boston University, before going on to cofound the Church for the Fellowship of all Peoples in San Francisco, the first major interracial church in the United States, in 1944.

Thurman wrote prolifically, as a poet, a theologian, spiritual meditations, religion and philosophy. He took up subjects from the life of African Americans. Our poetry today is from his book, *The Mood of Christmas*, © 1973, Howard Thurman.

¹ Howard Thurman, *Deep River and The Negro Spiritual Speaks of Life and Death*, ©1975 by Howard Thurman. Published by Friends United Press. P.12.

My Lord, What A Morning

My Lord, What A Morning Spiritual, Arr. Melva Costen
*Soloist: Jacki Hunt Instrumental: Amazing Grace, Nancy Wise,
Handbells*

The Growing Edge

Mary Had A Baby Spiritual, Arr. David N. Johnson
*Soloists: Fa Lane, Alice Rauch, Cindy Umberger, Ron Zug
Instrumental: Things up Yonder White as Snow, arr. Reddick. Joleen
Fennel, Clarinet*

Christmas is waiting to be Born

Messiah Now Has Come Nolan Williams Jr.
*Instrumental: Somebody Talking About Jesus. Gloria Moyer, Hammered
Dulcimer*

I Will Sing A New Song

Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow Spiritual, Arr. Joseph Joubert
*Soloists: Jim Yoder, Kay Shulski, Instrumental: Rise Up Shepherd, Alice
Rauch, Oboe*

I Will Light Candles This Christmas

Behold the Star Spiritual, Arr. Nolan Williams Jr
Soloist: Nancy Wise Instrumental: Deep River. Joleen Fennell, clarinet

The Sacrament of Christmas

Jesus, the Light of the World Elderkin, Wesley, Simpson-Currenton
*Accompanist: Scott Siciliano, piano - Instrumental: Swing Low, Sweet
Chariot. Handbells, Nancy Wise*

The Season of Remembrance

Go, Tell It on the Mountain Spiritual, Arr. Joyce Fince Johnson
*Accompaniment: name, cello - Instrumental: Go, Tell It on the Mountain.
Wendy Hepler, Mountain Dulcimer*

The Work of Christmas

Instrumental: My Lord, What A Morning. Nancy Wise, Handbells.

A Note to Pastors and Choir Directors.

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These pieces are being made available to you as a full Cantata or as individual pieces. If you are downloading, please take either the seven individual pieces, or the full Cantata, not both. You may use it as a single unit, or may use it as anthems throughout the Advent and Christmas Season.

If you use these as individual pieces, we recommend the following:

1 Advent, 11/29/2020

My Lord, What A Morning. This resonates with the apocalypse of Matthew, and especially Matt 13:24 (NRSV) But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

2 Advent, 12/6/2020

Go, Tell It On the Mountain connects with the voice crying out in the Wilderness. *Messiah Now Has Come* also connects with

the theme of the coming of the Messiah present in both the Isaiah and Mark passages.

3 Advent, 12/13/2020

Jesus, the Light of the World highlights the Johannine theme of Jesus as Light. It also picks up the joy in the Psalm and the passage from Isaiah.

Mary Had a Baby might be a better choice if using the Magnificat.

4 Advent 12/20/2020

Depending on what you have used before, either *Messiah Now Has Come* or *Jesus, the Light of the World* should work. If you have not used *Mary Had a Baby* the week before, the attention of the readings to Mary this week should make that a useful track.

Christmas, 12/24-25/2020

Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow is particularly good for a Christmas Morning Service. If you have not used them, either *Messiah Now Has Come* or *Jesus, the Light of the World* are good as well.

Sunday in the Octave of Christmas, 12/27/2020

If you are splitting the music up, this is an excellent week to use *Go, Tell It on the Mountain*.

Epiphany Sunday, 1/3/2021

Behold the Star.