

Worship Preparation

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH of DURHAM

What's Special About This Sunday?

- It's **Christmas Day!!**
- Dr. Nathan Finn will be preaching a sermon entitled **"God Sent His Son to Make Us His Sons"** based on **Galatians 4:1-7**.
- Deborah and Elise Harford will be **baptized**.
- The **Men's Quartet** will be singing a song called, "Peace on Earth."
- Through our **worship in song**, we will celebrate the birth of **Jesus, our Savior:**



- "O Come, All Ye Faithful" 89
- "The First Nowell" 85
- "There Is a Redeemer"
- "Peace on Earth" (men's quartet)
- "Wonderful, Merciful Savior"

The First Nowell?

The origin of the word "noel," and even its exact original meaning, like so many other words that have grown up with the English language, seem lost in the mists of antiquity. Like many other words that achieve popularity, it came to be claimed by several tongues, and to be ascribed numerous derivations.

More than likely, the correct English spelling of the word is "nowell" rather than the French "noël," with the umlaut over the "ë." That being true, it would not take an historian very long to figure out that this is another example of the English talent for abbreviation...

[They] took the delightful parting phrase with which our ancestors bade one another "**Farewell**," the phrase "**God be with you**," and, tiring of its length, or mouthing it too quickly or half-swallowing it, corrupted and contracted the four words into one, the word "**Goodbye**," just as they had taken "**Fare thee well**" and made it into one word also.

Undoubtedly the word "**nowell**" was at first a phrase instead of a word, and of all the phrases that it could be expanded into, none is more appropriate than the four words "**Now all is well!**" Therefore it seems both reasonable and possible that our forefathers greeted each other every Christmas morning with the cry "Now all is well" since Christ had come and since God had regarded those who had walked in darkness by giving them a great light. When pessimistic unbelievers ranted and raved about "what the world had come to," Christians replied with the optimistic observation about Him "who had come into the world." "**Now all is well**" soon became merely "**Now well**," and it was a short step from those two words to the one word "**Nowell**."

So, when the unknown poet who wrote "The First Nowell" sat down to compose his narrative poem about the birth of Jesus sometime during the seventeenth century, he decided that the message of the angels to the shepherds, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10), was a message to remind them that "now all is well" for Christ is born in Bethlehem, that being the "first" of the "nowells" Christians have said to one another each succeeding Christmas. For us of this century, the same message to others of our own generation would be "the two-thousandth nowell," since the age-old song of the angels has lost none of its grandeur or its glory with the passing of twenty centuries.

-*Stories of Christmas Carols*
By Ernest K. Emurian



Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."

Hebrews 12:28-29



“God sent his Son at the right moment in human history, when God’s providential oversight of the events of the world had directed and prepared peoples, and nations for the incarnation and ministry of Christ, and for the proclamation of the gospel.”

*-on Galatians 4:4
(ESV Study Bible)*

Pray for our Leaders:

- ✓ **Preaching:** Nathan Finn
- ✓ **Leading in Prayer:** Nathan Finn, Eric Campbell, Eric Moore, Ryan Hutchinson
- ✓ **Leading in Praise:** Worship Ministry Team, Men’s Quartet (Chris McKeel, Eric Campbell, Bill Austin, Herb Bullard)
- ✓ **Reading Scripture:** Brad Estes
- ✓ **Church Life:** Ryan Hutchinson
- ✓ **Translating:** Herbert Rivera

SUNDAY’S SERMON

“God Sent His Son to Make Us His Sons”

The following passage is the Sermon Scripture for Sunday. Read and *meditate on God’s Word, and memorize the verse printed in **bold**, this week’s suggested memory verse.*

Galatians 4:1-7 (ESV)

Sons and Heirs

¹ I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything,

² but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father.

³ In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world.

⁴ **But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,**

⁵ **to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.**

⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.