

# THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

DECEMBER 24, 2023

4:00 P.M.

\* Indicates please stand

**Prelude** In dulci jubilo Johann Michael Bach (1648–94)  
Berceuse on “Away in a Manager” Mark A. Radice (b. 1951)  
Of the Father’s Love Begotten (*Divinum Mysterium*) Wilber Held (1914–2015)

Lo, how a rose e’er blooming arr. Raymond H. Herbek (1924–2015)  
St. John’s Balcony Bells

## \*Blessing of the Crèche:

Celebrant: The Glory of the Lord has been revealed

People: *And all flesh shall see the Salvation of our God.*

The Celebrant will offer a prayer of blessing and all the children are invited to bring the animals to the Crèche during the hymn.

\***Processional** O come all ye faithful (*Adeste fideles*) **Hymnal #83 vs. 1-3, 6**

## \*Opening Sentence

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

*And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen*

## \*Collect for Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

\***Gloria** Angels we have heard on high (*Gloria*) **Hymnal #96 vs. 1 & 3**

## \*The Collect for Christmas

The Lord be with you.

*And also with you.*

Let us pray.

O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. *Amen.*

## The Old Testament Lesson

**Isaiah 9:2–7**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on

the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

The Word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*

**Hymn** Of the Father's love begotten (*Divinum mysterium*)

**Hymnal #82**

### **The Epistle Reading**

**Titus 2:11–14**

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

The Word of the Lord.

*Thanks be to God.*

**\*Sequence** Once in David's Royal City (*Irby*)

**Hymnal #102 vs. 1–4**

### **\*The Gospel Reading**

**Luke 2:1-20**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

*Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw

this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
*Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

**\*Sequence** Once in David's Royal City (*Irby*)

**Hymnal #102 vs. 5-6**

**The Sermon**

**The Rev. Canon Dr. Tom Ferguson**

**\*The Nicene Creed**

**BCP 358**

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius  
Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.

He will come again in glory to judge the living  
and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver  
of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped  
and glorified.  
He has spoken through the Prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic  
Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the  
forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**\*The Prayers of the People**

The Word has been made flesh, the light of God's love has broken through our darkness, the Daystar from on high now shines in our hearts. Filled with the joy of Jesus' birth, let us pray together in the power of his Spirit, responding, "Lord, hear our prayer."

+ That the Prince of Peace may guide the leaders of the nations, and all people everywhere, into the ways of freedom and truth; let us pray.

***Lord, hear our prayer.***

+ For Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael, Presiding Bishop of our Church, and DeDe, our Bishop, that they may guide us in our journey to Bethlehem, uniting the whole Church as we live into our spiritual kinship with one another; let us pray.

***Lord, hear our prayer.***

+ For those for whom the darkness has suffocated hope: the lonely, the fearful, the hungry, and those who bear a private grief; that they may see the dawn of God's love, and revive the eternal hope that never fades away; let us pray.

***Lord, hear our prayer.***

+ For our families and friends, and for all our absent loved ones; for those who are sick, and for those who have died and who now feast at the heavenly banquet of God's grace; let us pray.

***Lord, hear our prayer.***

+ That we may be released from the captivity of our sins, the places of interior blindness that cause us to choose darkness over light; that we may be forgiven by the power of the Holy Spirit; let us pray.

***Lord, hear our prayer.***

+ That we who gather to share the Holy Eucharist, and those throughout the world who come to receive this sacrament of Holy Presence, may bear witness to Christ born in our hearts; let us pray.

***Lord, hear our prayer.***

In the wonder of this night, let us continue to offer our petitions.

We pray without ceasing for justice, reconciliation, peace, and an end to hatred and war. We also prayer for God to change the hearts of all the leaders and decision-makers in our countries and around the world. For we are in dire need of hearts that love, show mercy, and are willing to live in unity with others; hearts that respect human dignity and choose life rather than death.

***God of peace and justice, hear our prayers. Amen***

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation, and especially for:

Joan	Richard	Theodore	Sarah	Chris
Charles	Linda	Lorraine	Avery	
Wes	Jim	Edith	Nathan	
Virginia	Gerald	Kathryn	Michael	
Shirley	Cece	Brenda	Jane	

**\*The Peace**

*Please remain in your pews. Wave!*

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
***And also with you.***

**Announcements & Welcome**

**Offertory Sentence**

**Offertory Music:** Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen, Op. 122, No. 8

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

**Presentation** Hark! The herald angels sing (*Mendelssohn*)

**Hymnal #87**

**\*The Great Thanksgiving** Expanded Language Prayer A

**Celebrant:** The Lord be with you.

**People:** And also with you

**Celebrant:** Lift up your hearts

**People:** We lift them to the Lord  
**Celebrant:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**People:** It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**Celebrant:** *continuing:* Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

**Holy, holy, holy** (Sanctus)

**Hymnal # S-130**

Holy and gracious God: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and when we had fallen into sin and became subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, Sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and maker of all.

Jesus stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Savior Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper, Jesus took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, He gave it to them, and said "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died**

**Christ is risen**

**Christ will come again.**

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, Almighty God, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in Christ.

Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day, bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Savior. By Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Fraction Anthem Lamb of God** (*Agnus Dei*)

**Hymnal #S-161**

**The Communion of the People**

*All people are invited to the Lord's Table.*

*Eucharist will be distributed in the center aisle. Please come forward in a single line to receive.*

*You may either intinct your wafer in the small chalice, or you may drink from the larger common chalice after consuming the wafer. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request.*

*t*

**Communion Hymn**

O little town of Bethlehem (*St. Louis*)

**Hymnal #79**

**Post Communion Hymn** Silent night (*Stille Nacht*)

**Hymnal #111**

**Post Communion Prayer**

*Eternal God, heavenly Father,  
you have graciously accepted us as living members  
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,  
and you have fed us with spiritual food  
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.  
Send us now into the world in peace,  
and grant us strength and courage  
to love and serve you  
with gladness and singleness of heart;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**\*A Christmas Blessing**

**Recessional** Joy to the World (*Antioch*)

**Hymnal #100**

**\*Dismissal**

*Response: Thanks be to God!*

**Postlude** Voluntary: *In dulci jubilo* BWV 729

J. S. Bach (1665–1750)

**Greeters:** Muriel Everhart, Sara VanLooy

**Acolyte:**

**Liturgical Ministers:** Jennifer Dodwell, Gwen Freeman, Stephanie Nevels

**Virtual Vergers:** Michael Roman, Sara VanLooy

*This afternoon we welcome The Rev. Canon Dr. Tom Ferguson as our celebrant and guest preacher.*

*This afternoon we welcome guest organist Jerome Fung.*

**St. John's extends a warm welcome to our visitors!**

**We are happy to have you joining our parish family around the Lord's table.**

**Please fill out a visitor card and place it in the offering plate.**

**LARGE PRINT EDITIONS OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER ARE AVAILABLE IN  
THE NARTHEX**

**The Christmas Flowers 2023 are given to the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of**

Rev. W. Aubrey Arlin  
Edith N. Arlin  
Ron Clayton  
Margaret Godlove  
Peter J. Hedrick

Betty Kelts  
Judy Lutes  
Eleanore Mikus  
Mary N. Nungesser  
Pam Quirk

Sarah C. Richtmyer  
Jesse Siemon  
Ruth O. Sipos  
Franklyn Sipos  
Audrey A. Vault

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"Like" us on facebook @ Saint John's Episcopal Church

**Office Hours** Monday thru Thursday 10–3

**Rector**

Gwen Freeman, Sr. Warden  
Cathy Wagner, Parish Administrator  
Director of Music/Organist

Beverly Way, Jr. Warden  
Chuck Merrill, Weekday Sexton

**St. John's extends a warm welcome to our visitors! We are happy to have you joining our parish family around the Lord's table. Please fill out a visitor card and place it in the offering plate.**

The clergy and staff would like to thank the parish for the many cards and greetings given them this season. Also, a big thank you for all of you who helped decorate the church and make St. John's celebration of this Holy Season so meaningful.

Your Christmas gifts are important. We thank all the acolytes, greeters, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, altar guild, musicians, and you for your many expressions of generosity.

**2024 PLEDGE ENVELOPES**, for those who use them, are on the table in the back of the nave. They are sorted alphabetically by last name. Please pick up your envelopes and take them home with you at your earliest convenience. If you do not find your envelopes, or have never had envelopes and wish to begin using them, please contact the parish office: (607) 273-6532 or [office@stjohnsithaca.org](mailto:office@stjohnsithaca.org).