

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

DECEMBER 24, 2024

4:00 P.M.

* Indicates please stand

(The red book is the Book of Common Prayer (BCP), and the blue book is the Hymnal.)

Prelude From Heaven on High to Earth I Come Johann Pachelbel (1653–1706)
The Christmas Pipes of County Clare Harvey Gaul (1881–1945)
Noël for Full Organ Louis-Claude Daquin (1694–1772)

*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 It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (*Carol*)

Hymnal #89 vs. 1–2

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.

***Gradual** O Little Town of Bethlehem (*St. Louis*)

Hymnal #79 vs. 1–2

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.*

*O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.*

***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 *** O Little Town of Bethlehem (*St. Louis*)

Hymnal #79 v. 5

*O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!*

The Sermon

The Rev. Kit Tobin

***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.
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.

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.
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 Sean, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal 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.

***The Peace**

Please remain in your pen. Wave!

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Welcome

Offertory Sentence

Offertory Music: Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

Presentation Angels, from the Realms of Glory (*Regent Square*)

Hymnal #93 vs. 1–2

***The Great Thanksgiving**

Expanded Language Prayer B

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-125

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

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 trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Fraction Anthem Christ Our Passover

Hymnal #S-152

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 or you may drink from the common chalice after consuming the wafer.
Gluten-free wafers are available upon request.*

Communion Hymn What child is this (Greensleeves)

Hymnal #115

*What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?
Refrain: This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.
Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. [Refrain]
Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, and stay by my side until morning is nigh.*

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.*

The torchbearers will provide a light along the center aisle.
Please pass the light to your neighbor.
Please dip only an unlit candle into a lit one.

Hymn Silent night (Stille Nacht)

Hymnal #111

*Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright, round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace. Sleep in heavenly peace.
Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight, glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing alleluia; Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!
Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord at thy birth. Jesus, Lord at thy birth.*

***A Christmas Blessing**

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

Hymnal #100

***Dismissal**

Response: Thanks be to God!

Postlude *In dulci jubilo* BWV 729

J. S. Bach (1685–1750)

Liturgical Ministers: Jennifer Dodwell, Michael Roman, Stephanie Nevels

Virtual Vergers: John Jackson, Michael Roman

This evening we welcome The Rev. Kit Tobin as our celebrant and guest preacher.

**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.**

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from
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The Christmas Flowers 2024 are given to the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of:

Rev. W. Aubrey Arlin

LaRose Meyer

Betty Kelts

Edith N. Arlin

Genevieve Linderman

Jeffrey Bowen

Audrey Vault

Mr. and Mrs. F. R. Sipos

Grif and Emma Bowen

Penny Ciccone

Margaret Godlove

John and Marion James

Jesse Siemon

Sarah Richtmeyer

Peter Hedrick

Ron Clayton

Mary Noss

Donald W. and June B. Miller

William and Edward Barry

Pamela Quirk

Lou and Charlotte Ettinger



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“Like” us on facebook @ Saint John's Episcopal Church

Office Hours Monday thru Thursday 10–3

Rector

Beverly Way, Sr. Warden
Ilze Lemesis, Parish Administrator
Timothy E. Smith, Director of Music/Organist

Pamela Talbott, Jr. Warden
Chuck Merrill, Weekday Sexton

If you need pastoral assistance, please call or text the Senior Warden at 607-232-4465.

If you would like to contribute to our ministries, you may make a secure donation at <https://stjohnsithaca.org/donate/>. Thank you!

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.

Sign up for our weekly newsletter [The Fledgling](#) by contacting the church office.

Forward Day by Day for **November, December, and January** is available on the table in the rear of the church.

Candles and Flowers: If you wish to give candles or Sunday flowers in memory of a loved one, or to celebrate a special occasion, please call the church office (607-273-6532).