



St. Francis' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

CHRISTMAS EVE  
DECEMBER 24, 2024, 5:00PM



*A Light Shines in the Darkness*

cover art by parishioner Ann Widner

## WELCOME!

Merry Christmas! On behalf of the staff, members and community of St. Francis' Episcopal Church, I welcome you to this Christmas Service.

While the world around us has belted out, "Merry Christmas!" for weeks now, we in the Episcopal Church begin this greeting today, on the eve of the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In the weeks prior to Christmas, the Episcopal Church celebrated Advent—a season of waiting. Now, we inaugurate the celebration of Christmas; the season of receiving.

And what have we received? God With Us! Jesus! The Incarnate One. The nativity scene of Jesus' birth dominates our liturgical space reminding us in image that God breaks into the world. God brings light to our darkness. White is the color of Christmas as it signifies the highest and holiest celebration along with evergreen boughs and trees. As they are evergreen, so too, is God's love for us everlasting.

With prayers for every blessing of peace in this season of God With Us,

The Rev. Laurie Anzilotti, Vicar

## FLOWERS GRACIOUSLY GIVEN:

In memory of our beloved husband, Dad and Papa  
Joe Niemann, *by the Anzilotti Family*

In memory of Nancy Lambert, mother of Gina  
Nessel, and Lea Nessel, mother of Al Nessel,  
*by Al and Gina Nessel*

In memory of Joe and Louise Bernert and in memory  
of Joe Thum *by Joe and Donna Bernert and family*

In memory of Carl Rapp  
*by Cynthia Rapp and Family*

So grateful you made me feel welcome this year  
*by Katie Collins*

In memory of Nick Sacco  
*by Barb Sacco*

In memory of Judy Rowe Gibbs from Darrell and  
family. I know that love does not cease  
with the event of death.  
*by Darrell Gibbs*

In loving memory of Granny, Chris and John  
*by Sue Schmidt*

*By Jim and Doris Schneider*

In thanks for the people of St. Francis  
*by Janet Houseman*

In memory of Virginia Thompson  
*by Bill and Della Thompson*

In memory of Mrs. and Mrs. Joseph J. Graham  
and Mr. and Mrs. Louis N. Karr  
*by Jenny and Jerry Karr*

In memory of Mike Dewey  
*by Bill and Della Thompson*

In memory of Floyd and Virginia Kinder  
and Jim and Saundie Hogan  
*by Chris and Mary Ann Kinder*

## PRELUDE

## VARIATIONS ON SILENT NIGHT

### THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE *Stand.*

*The lighting of the wreath begins with the congregation singing.*



Leader Light of Light, shine in our hearts and renew our hope.

People **Joy to the world, Emmanuel has come.**

Leader Light of Light, shine in our hearts and grant us peace.

People **Joy to the world, Emmanuel has come.**

Leader Light of Light, shine in our hearts and bring us true joy.

People **Joy to the world, Emmanuel has come.**

Leader Light of Light, shine in our hearts and fill us with love.

People **Joy to the world, Emmanuel has come.**

*The congregation listens as a prayer is offered and the candles are lit.*

Presider Tonight we light all five candles—the candles of hope, peace, joy, love, and finally, the Christ Candle, celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior. The candle of hope reminds us that in sending Christ, God sent hope to the earth. The candle of peace reminds us that peace will one day reign. The candle of joy is a reminder that we have been given eternal life and have no reason to be fearful. And the candle of love represents God’s redeeming love for us, brought to earth in the form of a tiny child.

All join in singing the music on the previous page. Then, the Presider offers a closing prayer.

Presider God of light, tonight we celebrate the birth of Jesus. We thank you for this, the most precious of Christmas gifts, and we ask that you keep the hope, peace, joy and love of this season in our hearts, now and throughout the coming year. Emmanuel — God is with us, now and forevermore.

People Amen.

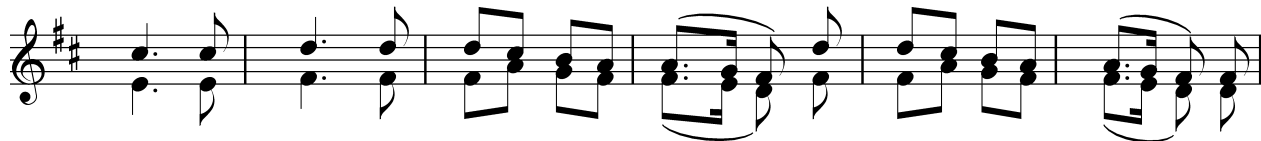
## HYMN

## JOY TO THE WORLD

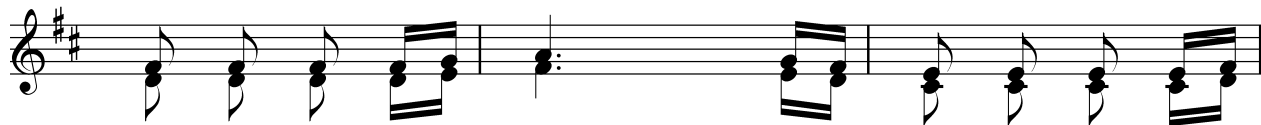
H 100



1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth re -  
 2 Joy to the world! the Sa - vior reigns; let us our  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the



ceive her King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room, and  
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, re -  
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - eous - ness, and



heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture  
 peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

## THE GREETING

Presider Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

People And blessed be God's kingdom now and forever. Amen.



*American Sign Language by Sophie Schaeffer.*

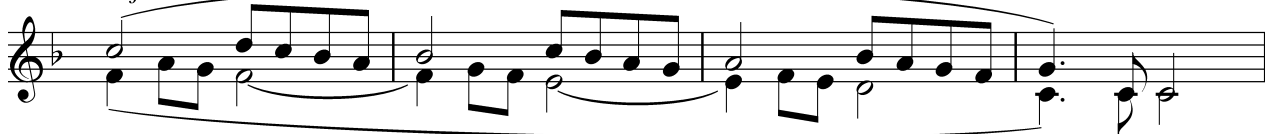


1 An - gels we have heard on high, sing - ing sweet - ly through the night,  
 2 Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why these songs of hap - py cheer?  
 3 Come to Beth - le - hem and see him whose birth the an - gels sing;  
 4 See him in a man - ger laid whom the an - gels praise a - bove;



and the moun-tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their brave de - light.  
 What great bright-ness did you see? What glad tid - ings did you hear?  
 come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.  
 Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love.

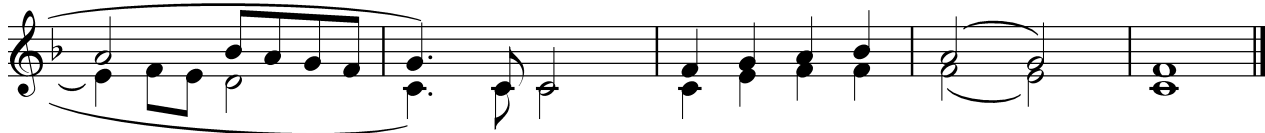
*Refrain*



Glo - - - - - ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - - - - -



- - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

## THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider 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.

People **Amen.**

## WE HEAR THE SACRED STORIES *Seated*


### THE FIRST LESSON

Reader	A reading from the Book of Isaiah.	9:2-7
	<p>The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;</p> <p>those who lived in a land of deep darkness-- on them light has shined.</p> <p>You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy;</p> <p>they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.</p> <p>For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;</p> <p>authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named</p> <p>Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.</p> <p>The Word of the Lord.</p>	
People	<b>Thanks be to God.</b>	

## THE PSALM OF THE DAY

## PSALM 96

*Verses are read by cantor. Antiphon is sung by all.*

ANTIPHON: 

Sing to the Lord a new song;

sing to the Lord, all you lands.

Sing to the Lord; bless his name. **ANTIPHON**

Announce his salvation, day after day.

Tell his glory among the nations;

Among all peoples, his wondrous deeds. **ANTIPHON**

Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice;

let the sea and what fills it resound;

let the plains be joyful and all that is in them!

Then shall all the trees of the forest exult. **ANTIPHON**

They shall exult before the Lord, for he comes;

for he comes to rule the earth.

He shall rule the world with justice

and the peoples with his constancy. **ANTIPHON**

## THE SECOND LESSON

Reader

A reading from the letter to 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.

People

**Thanks be to God.**

Stand.

## MOTHERING GOD

MHSO 142

1 Moth - er - ing God, you gave me birth  
in the bright morn - ing of this world. Cre -  
a - - tor, source of ev - - 'ry breath,  
you are my rain, my wind, my sun.

The musical score is written on four staves in 3/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: '1 Moth - er - ing God, you gave me birth'. The second staff continues: 'in the bright morn - ing of this world. Cre -'. The third staff continues: 'a - - tor, source of ev - - 'ry breath,'. The fourth staff concludes: 'you are my rain, my wind, my sun.' with a double bar line and repeat dots.

### THE STORY OF CHRIST'S BIRTH: GODLY PLAY

*A merging of the story of Christ's birth from Luke and Matthew. Seated.*

- Reader 1      This night is like no other night. It is a time to dream and sing our way to Bethlehem. The children will show us how to go.
- Reader 2      The little town we seek sits in the hill country some ten miles south of Jerusalem. For thousands of years the houses have gathered there on the hilltop like a family breaking bread. "Bethlehem" means "House of Bread."
- Reader 1      In the center of the village is a small inn. On this night it is overflowing with people seeking sleep and a place to eat. Behind the inn is a dark stable. A gray donkey chews his barley and broken straw while a weary cow leans and rests after the day's plowing in the valley. A sheep nearby is nearly asleep.
- Reader 2      All is still and quiet in the little town.

## O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!  
2 For Christ is born of Ma - ry; and gath - ered all a - bove,

1 A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;  
2 while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.

1 yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing Light;  
2 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!

1 the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.  
2 and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

- Reader 1 As night gathers, the last two travelers come slowly up the road. Look, there is a young woman about to be a mother. She is walking with her husband. They are Joseph and Mary from Nazareth! They have walked for six days to come to this city where King David was born, so long ago.
- Reader 2 They have come, like so many others, because the Roman emperor wants to count each one, so he can take their money as a tax.
- Reader 1 But it is late, and Mary is so weary. Where will they sleep? There is no room in the inn. They decide to sleep with the animals.



# ONCE IN ROYAL DAVID'S CITY

H 102



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's ci - ty stood a  
2 He came down to earth from hea - ven, who is

1 low - ly cat - tle of shed, where a mo - ther laid her  
2 God and Lord of all, and his shel - ter was a

1 ba - by in a man - ger for his bed: Ma - ry  
2 sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall; with the

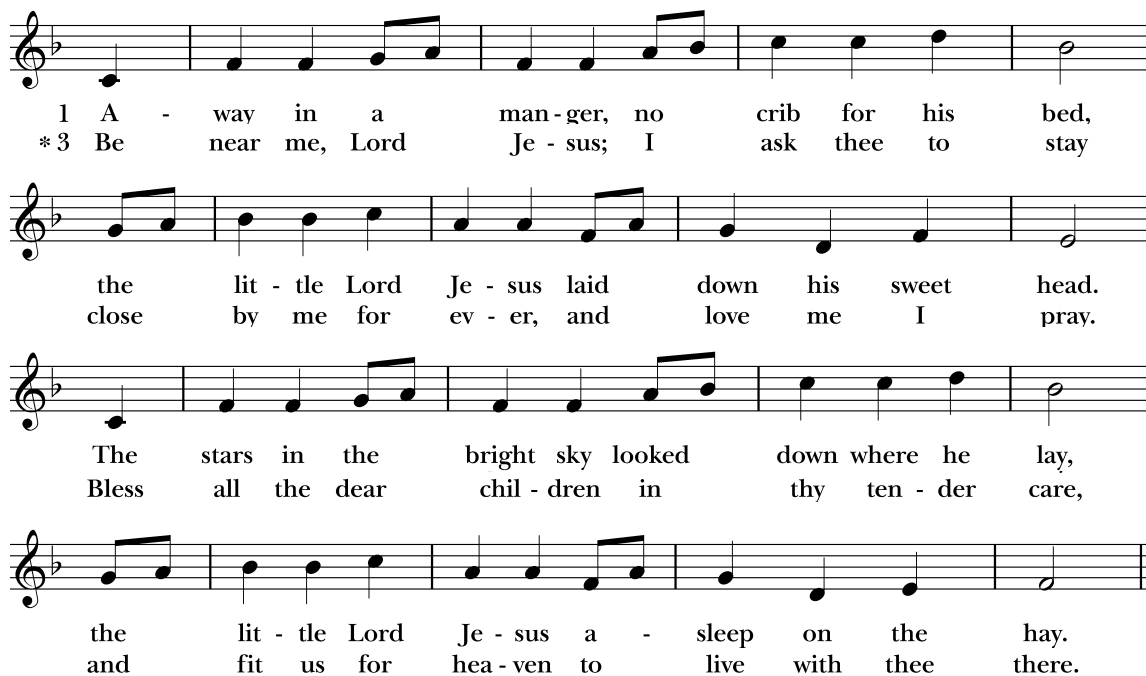
1 was that mo - ther mild, — Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child. —  
2 poor, the scorned, the low - ly, lived on earth our Sa - vior ho - ly.

Reader 2

Stars brighten slowly in the sky. All creation holds its breath. Suddenly, from the stable, comes the cry of a newborn child! Mary gently wraps the baby in a blanket and lays him in the feed box that his father has filled with straw.

# AWAY IN A MANGER

H 101



1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed,  
\*3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask thee to stay

the lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head.  
close by me for ev - er, and love me I pray.

The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
Bless all the dear chil - dren in thy ten - der care,

the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.  
and fit us for hea - ven to live with thee there.

- Reader 1 In the hills outside Bethlehem, shepherds watch their shadowy sheep. All at once, the dark is lost in light, and in the midst of the light is something even brighter: the faces of angels.
- Reader 2 The fearful shepherds then hear music in the sky, and a voice says clearly, "Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by all people. Today in the City of David a Savior is born! He is Christ, the Lord."
- Reader 1 Then more angels appear, a whole heavenly host of them, praising God and singing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to all people, everywhere."
- Reader 2 The shepherds run with joy across the fields to Bethlehem to the barn behind the inn. There they find the Holy Family and creep forward, overwhelmed with mystery, to find Nativity itself in the center of all that love.

### GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

*Refrain*

Go tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hills and

ev - ery - where; go tell it on the moun - tain, that

Je - sus Christ is born! 1 While shep - herds kept their  
2 The shep - herds feared and

watch - ing o'er si - lent flocks by the night, be -  
trem - bled when lo! a - bove the earth rang

*Repeat Refrain*

hold, through-out the hea - vens there shone a ho - ly light.  
out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sa - vior's birth.

- Reader 1 Three camels plod up the road to Bethlehem. They have come from the East, far beyond the Arabian Desert, perhaps from as far as the Caspian Sea. The camels carry three kings, the wise ones, the Magi. They are following the wild star, the destiny they had never seen before, and they are following it, wherever it goes, to find the King its shining shows them.

## WE THREE KINGS

1 We three kings of O - ri - ent are, bear - ing  
 2 Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I

1 gifts we tra - verse a - far, field and foun - tain,  
 2 bring to crown him a - gain, King for ev - er,

1 moor and moun - tain, fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
 2 ceas - ing nev - er o - ver us all to reign.

*Refrain*  
 O \_\_\_\_\_ star of won - der, star of night,  
 star with roy - al beau - ty bright; west - ward lead - ing,  
 still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light!

- Reader 2      The kings' journey ends in a new kind of king. Their restlessness rests at last. They fall to their knees and give him bright gold, sweet-smelling frankincense and bitter myrrh, brought so far with so much long.
- Reader 1      So now we all come, following the star, to find God-with-us. We come, as people have come all through the ages, to bring our own gifts to this Child, God's gift to us.
- Presider      Come forward now. Bring your gifts of stars and of yourselves to place around the manger. Show us the way into the Mystery of Christmas, as we sing, for this night is holy and filled with overflowing silence.

*All with stars are invited to walk forward and place their star around the nativity scene.*

Stand.

## WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

H 115

*Unison or harmony*

1 What child is this, who laid to rest, on  
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh, come,

Ma - ry's lap is sleep - ing? Whom an - gels greet with  
peas - ant, king, to own him; the King of kings sal -

an - thems sweet, while shep - herds watch are keep - ing?  
va - tion brings, let lov - ing hearts en - throne him.

*Refrain*

This, this is Christ the King, whom shep - herds  
guard and an - gels sing; haste, haste to  
bring him laud, the babe, the son of Ma - ry.

**HOMILY** *Seated.*

**THE REV. LAURIE ANZILOTTI**

*After the homily, silence is kept for a time.*

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *Stand*

Intercessor Faithful One, you have promised to hear when we pray in the name of your Son. Therefore in confidence and trust we pray for the Church:

Fount of Life, enliven the Church for its mission

People **that we may be salt of the earth and light to the world.**

Intercessor Breathe fresh life into your people.

People **Give us power to reveal Christ in word and action.**

Intercessor We pray for the world:

Creator of all, lead us and every people into ways of justice and peace.

People **That we may respect one another in freedom and truth.**

Intercessor Awaken in us a sense of wonder for the earth and all that is in it.

People **Teach us to care creatively for its resources.**

Intercessor We pray for the community:

God of Truth, inspire with your wisdom those whose decisions affect the lives of others

People **that all may act with integrity and courage.**

Intercessor Give grace to all whose lives are linked with ours.

People **May we serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.**

Intercessor We pray for those in need:

God of hope, comfort and restore all who suffer in body, mind or spirit.

People **May they know the power of your healing love.**

Intercessor Make us willing agents of your compassion.

People **Strengthen us as we share in making people whole.**

Intercessor We remember those who have died and those who mourn:

We remember with thanksgiving those who have died in the faith of Christ, and those whose faith is known to you alone.

People **Ageless God, into your hands we commend them.**

Intercessor Give comfort to those who mourn.

People **Bring them peace in their time of loss.**

Intercessor We praise you for St. Francis and St. Clare, Mary—the godbearer—St. Joseph and all your saints who have entered your eternal glory.

People **May their example inspire and encourage us.**



Intercessor Lord, you have called us to serve you.

People **Grant that we may walk in your presence: your love in our hearts, your truth in our minds, your strength in our wills; until, at the end of our journey, we know the joy of our homecoming and the welcome of your embrace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## THE PEACE

Presider Unto us a child is born, unto us a child is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us share with one another a sign of Christ's peace.

*We invite you to extend the peace of God to those in the congregation.*

## CHRISTMAS WELCOME FROM THE VICAR *Seated*

## GATHERING AT CHRIST'S TABLE

*We return with thanksgiving the gifts God has given us. This includes bread and wine of the earth, financial offerings from our labor, and the time and talent of the people who make St. Francis the Body of Christ.*

## OFFERTORY

CAITLIN SELLE, SOLOIST

## DOXOLOGY *Stand*

*The following is sung as the offerings are presented.*

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God above, ye heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

# THE OFFERING OF THE BREAD AND WINE *Stand*

S 120

*Celebrant*                      *People*

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

*Celebrant*                      *People*

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

*Celebrant*

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People*

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Setting: Copyright © Church Publishing Inc.

*The Presider continues.*

Presider                      ...Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name.

# SANCTUS

S 125

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,

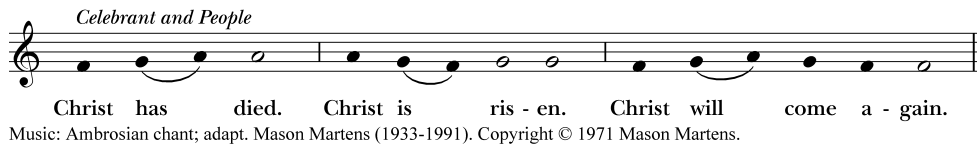
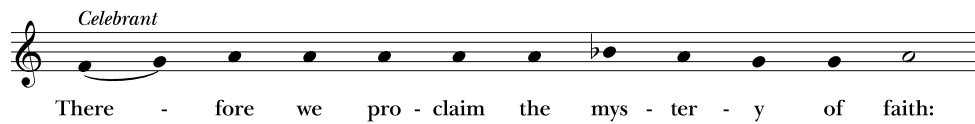
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Blessed the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

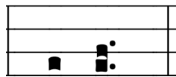
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*The Presider continues.*

Presider ...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**



*A - men.*

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

Presider And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

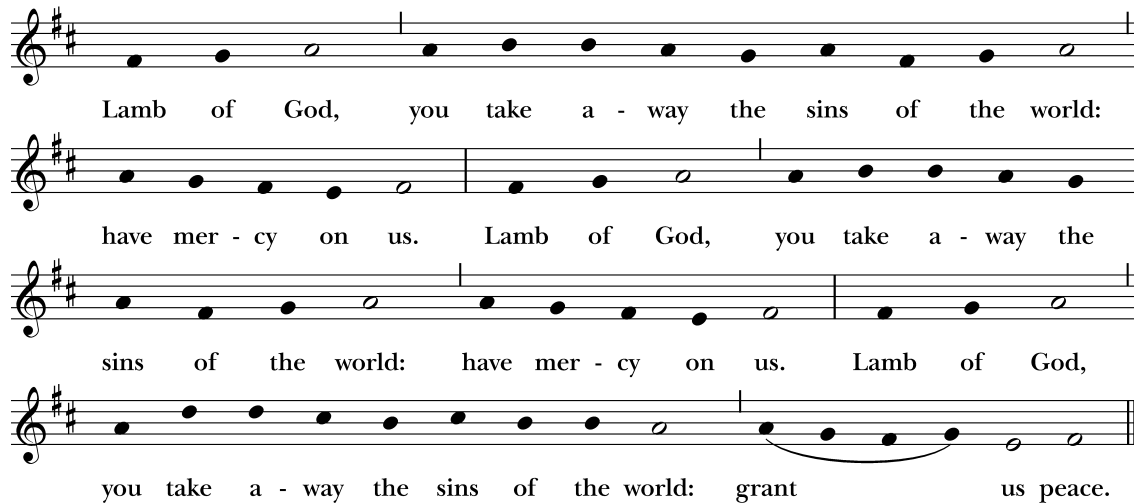
People **Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

## THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

*The Presider breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.*

Presider We break the bread of life, and that life is the light of the world.

People **God here among us, light in the midst of us, bring us to light and life.**



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sins of the world:  
 have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the  
 sins of the world: have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,  
 you take a - way the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Presider The Gifts of God for the People of God.

*This is Christ's table and all are welcome and all are fed. For gluten free wafer, please indicate as you walk forward to receive. This Eucharistic table does not belong to the Episcopal Church or to St. Francis'. This is God's table, and all are welcome. In the Episcopal Church, we receive both the bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Jesus. If you choose not to receive communion, please come forward and cross your arms over your heart to receive a blessing.*


## COMMUNION MUSIC

JUDE McCART, SOLOIST

## COMMUNION HYMN

## O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

H 83



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O  
 2 God from God, Light from Light e - ter - nal,  
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,  
 \*5 Child, for us sin - ners poor and in the man - ger,

1 come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
 2 lo! he ab - hors not the Vir - gin's womb;  
 3 sing, all ye ci - ti - zens of heaven a - bove;  
 5 we would em - brace thee, with love and awe;

1 come, and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;  
 2 on - ly - be - got - ten Son of the Fa - ther;  
 3 glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est;  
 5 who would not love thee, lov - ing us so dear - ly?

*Refrain*  
 O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a -  
 dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord.

## **POST COMMUNION PRAYER** *Stand*

*After all have received communion the Presider says*

Presider            God is with you.

People             **And also with you.**

Presider            Let us pray.

People             **God of Grace,**  
**in this night you have made known to us again**  
**the coming of our Jesus Christ:**  
**confirm our faith and fix our eyes on him**  
**until the day dawns**  
**and Christ the Morning Star rises in our hearts.**  
**To him be glory both now and for ever.**

## **THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES**

*Please tip your candle into the flame to receive the light; after receiving the light, please hold your candle upright.*

## **HYMN AFTER COMMUNION**

## **SILENT NIGHT**

**H 111**

*Seated. American Sign Language by Sophie Schaeffer*

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.

Silent night, holy night,  
shepherds quake at the sight,  
glories stream from heaven afar,  
heavenly hosts sing alleluia;  
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.



## BLESSING

Presider Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one  
things earthly and heavenly,  
fill you with peace and goodwill  
and make you partakers of the divine nature;  
and the blessing ...

People Amen.

## SENDING HYMN

## THE FIRST NOEL

H 109

1 The first No - well the an - gel did say  
2 They look - ed up and saw a star

1 was to cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay;  
2 shin - ing in the east be - yond them far,

1 in fields to as they lay, keep - ing their sheep,  
2 and to the earth it gave great light,

1 on a cold win - ter's night that was so deep.  
2 and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.

*Refrain*  
No - well, No - well, No - well, No - well,  
born is the King of Is - ra - el.

## DISMISSAL

Presider A child has been born for us, a child given to us.  
Go in peace, praising God for all we have seen and heard. Alleluia, alleluia!

People Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Alleluia!

## POSTLUDE