

THE FEAST OF THE INCARNATION
DECEMBER 24, 2012
6:30 p.m.

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany



*To all who are weary and need rest, to all who are lonely and want friendship;
to all who mourn and need comfort; to all who pray and all who do not, but ought;
to all who sin and need a Savior; to all who rejoice and would offer praise;
to all who are blessed and would serve their neighbor;
to whomsoever will come; this Church opens wide the door
and says in the name of the Lord Jesus, welcome.*

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

Titus 2:11-14 (sit)

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.

HYMN 109 *The first Nowell the angel did say (The First Nowell, English carol, 17th cen.)* verses 1-3

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke; 2:1-20 People: 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 God 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. People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon

The Reverend Arnold A. Bush

The Nicene Creed

Please stand

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.

Prayers of the People *Remain standing*

On this most Holy night of our Lord's birth, let us pray for ourselves and for all those in need of our prayers, saying; Lord hear our prayer. For the Church, that it may faithfully proclaim the good news of salvation and may care for the needs of God's people in all the corners of the world, we pray to you O Lord.

Lord hear our prayer.

For the church gathered in this place, that our worship of the Word made flesh might take on flesh in our living the gospel message, we pray to you O Lord,

Lord hear our prayer.

For our troubled world; for the leaders of this nation; for those lost in the darkness of prejudice, hostility and fear; for those burdened by the yoke of injustice, hunger and war, that the light and life that is the Lord might touch their hearts this night, we pray to you O Lord,

Lord hear our prayer.

For the earth, which you honored in the incarnation of your Son, and for us your children, that a spirit of joy in its goodness and care for its future may be poured out upon us all, we pray to you O Lord,

Lord hear our prayer.

For all those in need of our prayers: the homeless, the hungry; those who are in hospitals; those who are imprisoned in body or soul; and all those for whom this season is one not of joy but of trial and sadness, we pray to you O Lord,

Lord hear our prayer.

For the sick and dying among us, and for those who care for them, that the love of God might bless them this night with the gift of peace, we pray to you O Lord,

Lord hear our prayer.

For those who labor this night on the behalf of others: doctors and nurses, police officers and firefighters, and all those whose work prevents them from sharing this evening with those they love, we pray to you O Lord,

Lord hear our prayer.

In thanksgiving we remember the lives of those who have gone before us in the faith. [silence] That we, like them, may remain faithful to the end and live forever in the light of your eternal glory, we pray to you O Lord,

Lord hear our prayer.

Your petitions and thanksgivings are invited, either silently or aloud.

The Celebrant will conclude with a collect.

Celebrant We pray to you also for the forgiveness of our sins. *Kneel*

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;

in your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone;

and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you in newness of life,

to the honor and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The Priest says

+ Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

The Exchange of the Peace stand
Welcome to all guests, Join us for Christmas Refreshments in the Parish Hall

THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Offertory Anthem The Harts

The Presentation (Hymnal 380) *"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."*

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING Form B, p.367 *The people remain standing*

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 him thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you gave Jesus Christ, your only Son, to be born for us; who, by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, was made perfect Man of the flesh of the Virgin Mary his mother; so that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin, and receive power to become your children. 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-129

"Holy, Holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Holy, Holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full, full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest."

The people stand or kneel. Then the Celebrant continues

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life. On the night before he died for us, our Lord 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 he 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, according to his command, O Father,

We remember his death,

We proclaim his resurrection,

We await his coming in glory;

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine. We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with Stephen and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord,

the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. AMEN.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BoCP 364

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: People; *Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia*

Fraction Anthem: S-164

"Jesus, Lamb of God: have mercy on us. Jesus, bearer of our sins: have mercy on us. Jesus, redeemer, redeemer of the world: give us our peace, give us your peace."

THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

Communion Hymn 79 *O little town of Bethlehem (St Louis)*

verses 1,3 and 5

(Note when The Rev. Phillips Brooks, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Boston, wrote these words in verse 3 "where meek souls will receive him the dear Christ enters in". Could he be thinking of one receiving Christmas Communion?)

(Whether or not Episcopalian, you are welcome to participate in the Sacrament of Communion. If you hunger to know God, if you seek nourishment and strength in your Christian life, we urge you to join us at the Altar. All baptized persons of all ages are included in this invitation. The ushers will point the way for you. Please receive the bread in open and outstretched hands. Take hold of the chalice firmly and guide it to your lips, or slightly dip the wafer into the wine. If you do not wish to receive the wine, cross your arms over your chest. For those who do not wish to partake of Communion, still join us at the altar for a blessing by the priest. Simply cross your arms across your chest as the priest approaches.)

During Communion the people are encouraged to sing the following hymns::

The 1982 Hymnal: 101, 115, 101, 112

After communion is finished the celebrant says

Let us pray.

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.

Remaining kneeling, the congregation will sing the following hymn. Lights will be dimmed. Candles will be lit during this hymn

HYMN 111 *Silent Night*

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.

The Christmas Blessing *kneeling*

May Almighty God, who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season,

scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of holiness. Amen.

May God, who sent the angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel. Amen.

May God, who in the Word made flesh, joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you peace and favor. Amen.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

DISMISSAL HYMN 100 *Joy to the World (Antioch by George Frideric Handel)* all verses

The Dismissal *The congregation turns to face the doors as we are sent forth into the world*

Celebrant: Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit. Alleluia. Alleluia.

People *Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.*

All members and guests are invited to the Parish Hall for Christmas Refreshments. Be ye kind to one another by wearing a name tag tonight.

WELCOME! It is with pleasure that Church of the Epiphany welcomes you! Please know that we would like to know you and serve you beyond the events of this night. You can begin our relationship by signing the guest book in the narthex or filling out a pew card. You may hand the card to an usher, or place it in the collection plate. Whether you are a visitor or a newcomer, you are welcome to participate fully in our worship.

WORSHIP MINISTERS

We are grateful to the Harts who have blessed us with their gifts in music tonight, Caleb, Miriam and Lavonne . We express our thanks for all the folks who assisted AL Cantrell and Betty Weldon in decorating the Church.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

END OF YEAR DONATIONS If you are planning to give stock to Church of the Epiphany, please note that it needs to be transferred to our brokerage account on or before Monday, December 31. After that date it will be a 20123contribution. Please call Betty Weldon (256.825.4661) if you want to make the transfer. Thank you.

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