

For unto you is born this day in the city of  
David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:11

Episcopal Church of the Epiphany  
Christmas Eve  
Festival of Lessons and Music  
December 24, 2018, 5:00 pm

We worship this evening according to the appointed order for Christmas Festival  
of Lessons and Music, beginning on page 38 of the Book of Occasional Services 2003.  
Unless otherwise noted, scriptures are from the New Revised Standard Version.

*We begin the service in silence and darkness.*

## The Service of Light

*The Officiant invites us to stand.*

Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

### First Reading – Genesis 3

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,  
cursed are you among all animals  
and among all wild creatures;

upon your belly you shall go,  
and dust you shall eat  
all the days of your life.

I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;

he will strike your head,  
and you will strike his heel."

The word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God.**

### Prayer for Light

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we give you thanks for surrounding us, as daylight fades, with the brightness of the vesper light; and we implore you of your great mercy that, as you enfold us with the radiance of this light, so you would shine into our hearts the brightness of your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Processional Hymn: *O Come, All Ye Faithful (we stand)*.....83:1

*While we sing the officiants light the four weekly candles of the Advent Wreath. The music pauses after the first verse of the hymn. One of the officiants lights the Christ Candle in the center while another states:*

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.

Processional Hymn: *O Come, All Ye Faithful*.....83:2-6

## The Festival

### A Bidding Prayer (*we stand or kneel*)

Dear People of God: In this Christmas Season, let it be our duty and delight to hear once more the message of the Angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger.

Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose from the time of our rebellion against him until the glorious redemption brought to us by his holy Child Jesus, and let us make this place glad with our carols of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world, for peace and justice on earth, for the unity and mission of the

Church for which he died, and especially for his Church in our country and in this city.

And because he particularly loves them, let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and unloved, the aged and little children, as well as all those who do not know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and that whole multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in Jesus, we are one for evermore.

And now, to sum up all these petitions, let us pray in the words which Christ himself has taught us, saying:

**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 Almighty God bless us with his grace; Christ give us the joys of everlasting life; and may the King of Angels bring us all to the fellowship of the citizens above. **Amen.**

Hymn: *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (we stand)*.....89

Second Reading - Isaiah 40:1-11 (*we are seated for this reading*)

Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out!"  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"  
All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;

lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah,  
"Here is your God!"

See, the Lord GOD comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

*The First Nowell (we stand)*.....109

The Peace

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

Gathering Hymn: *Away In a Manger (we are seated)*

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the 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 cradle 'til morning is nigh.**

Joys and Concerns of the Congregation

The Offering

Offertory Hymn: *What Child Is This?*.....115

*During the offering we are welcome to come to the chancel for prayer  
while kneeling or standing at the communion rail. We will take all the  
time we need.*

Presentation Hymn:  
*God Rest Ye Mary Gentlemen (we stand)*.....105

**Third Reading – Luke 1:26-56 (*we are seated*)**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,

**My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;  
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.**

**From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is  
his Name.**

**He has mercy on those who fear him  
in every generation.**

**He has shown the strength of his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.**

**He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,  
and has lifted up the lowly.**

**He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.**

**He has come to the help of his servant Israel,  
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,**

**The promise he made to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children for ever.**

And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Hymn: *Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming (we stand)*.....81

**Fourth Reading - Luke 2:1-20 (from the King James Version) (*we are seated*)**

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

*We stand and read the following together:*

**And there were in the same country shepherds abiding  
in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.  
And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the  
glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they  
were sore afraid.**

**And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I  
bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all  
people. For unto you is born this day in the city of  
David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall  
be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in  
swaddling clothes, 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, and on earth peace, good will  
toward men.**

Hymn: *Joy To the World*.....100

**Fifth Reading – Luke 2:15-20 (*we are seated*)**

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they

made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Hymn – *Go Tell It On the Mountain (we stand)*.....99

Sixth Reading – John 1:1-18 (*we are seated*)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has

ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Final Hymn: *Silent Night (we stand)*.....111

*As we sing we come to the front of the nave and get a candle. We light it from the Christ Candle and return to our place to continue singing*

A Collect for Christmas

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.**

A Blessing for Christmas

Loving Father, Help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and the worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be your children, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. **Amen.**

Alleluia. Alleluia. Let us bless the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

*We place our candles in the basket at the rear of the nave as we exit.*

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Confirmation Classes resume next Sunday, December 30, in the Little House. Join us at 9:30 when Kathy Haynie teaches about Spirituality in The Episcopal Church.

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Join us Sunday, December 30 in the nave at 10:30 for a Christmas Carol Singing! We will revel in the season with an informal gathering full of music and Christmas cheer. And then we'll continue the party in the Little House with refreshments.

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**Serving at Epiphany this evening:**

Ushers: Jimmy and Betty Weldon  
Altar Guild: Lavonne Hart  
Officiants: Dana Barlow, Amanda Borden, and Lee Borden  
Lighting: Jimmy Weldon  
Refreshments: Betty Weldon and Cathy Jones

**And on Sunday, December 30:**

Ushers: Lavonne Hart and Jimmy Weldon  
Altar Guild: Dana Barlow  
Lay Reader: Kathy Haynie  
Officiant: Betty Weldon  
Refreshments: Lee and Amanda Borden