

Saint John's Episcopal Church

Nine Lessons and Carols

The Prelude Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

Dallas Blair

The Processional Hymn: *Once in Royal David's City*

The Hymnal 1982, 102

The Welcome

Rector Beloved in Christ, be it this season of the Our Lord, the Ever-Living Son of God, let remember and ponder upon this season of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Let summon into mind the Blessed Virgin Mary, Joseph and their determined faithfulness to God. Let us remember the message of the angels to the lowly shepherds as they seek this thing that has come to pass in Bethlehem. Let us recall the wisdom and splendor of the outsiders, the Wise ones, the Magi as they adore the Child lying in his mother Mary's arms.

And let us at this time remember in God's name the poor and the helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed; the sick in body and in mind and those that mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all who know not the loving kindness of God.

Lastly let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, as a people of hope is in the grounded in the Word made flesh, and with whom we for evermore are one.

The Almighty God bless us with God's grace: Christ give us the joys of everlasting life: and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all. **Amen.**

The First Reading; *All I Really Want* by Quinn G. Caldwell

What Are You Here For?

If you came to this place expecting a tame story,
you came to the wrong place.

If you came for a story that does not
threaten you,
you came for a different story than the one
we tell.

If you came to hear of the coming of a God
who only showed up so that you could have a
nice day
with your loved ones,
then you came for a God whom we do not
worship here.

For even a regular baby is not a tame thing.
And goodness that cannot threaten complacency
and evil
is not much good at all,
And a God who would choose to give up power
and invincibility
to become an infant for you,
certainly, didn't do it just so you could have dinner.

But.

If you came because you think unwed teenage mothers
are some of the strongest people in the world.

If you came because you think that the kind of people who work third shift doing stuff you'd rather not do might attract an angel's attention before you, snoring comfortably in your bed, would.

If you came because you think there are wise men and women to be found among undocumented travelers from far lands and that they might be able to show you God.

If you came to hear a story of tyrants trembling while heaven comes to peasants.

If you came because you believe that God loves the animals as much as the people and so made them the first witnesses to the saving of the world.

If you came for a story of reversals that might end up reversing you.

If you came for a tale of adventure and bravery, where strong and gentle people win, and the powerful and violent go down to dust, where the rich lose their money but find their lives and the poor are raised up like kings.

If you came to be reminded that God loves you too much to leave you unchanged.

If you came to follow the light even if it blinds you.

If you came for salvation and not safety, then, ah, my friends, you are precisely in the right place.

So what are you here for?

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

The Hymnal 1982, 56, stanzas 1, and 2

The Second Reading; Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

The prophet announces the birth of a king to a people in darkness.

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.
For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, 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 onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

The Hymnal 1982, 81, stanzas 1 and 2

The Third Reading; Micah 5:2-5a

The Ruler is coming from Bethlehem and will usher in a reign of justice for the poor and peace for all God's creation.

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.
Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.
And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;
and he shall be the one of peace.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

The Hymnal 1982, 79, stanzas 1 and 5

The Fourth Reading; Luke 1:26-35, 38

The angel Gabriel announces to the virgin Mary that she will give birth to God's promised Son, whose kingdom will never end.

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 for ever, 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.'

Tell Out, My Soul

The Hymnal 1982, 437, stanzas 1 and 4

The Fifth Reading Luke 2:1-7

Against a backdrop of emperors and taxes, Jesus is born.

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.

'Twas in the moon of wintertime (Une jeune pucelle)

The Hymnal 1982, 114

The Sixth Reading; Luke 2:8-16

The shepherds go to see the Savior of the world and find him lying in a manger.

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.

The First Noel

The Hymnal 1982, 109, stanzas 1 and 2

The Seventh Reading; *How far is it to Bethlehem* by Frances Chesterton

How far is it to Bethlehem? Not very far.
Shall we find the stable room lit by a star?
Can we see the little child, is he within?
If we lift the wooden latch may we go in?

May we stroke the creatures there, Ox, ass, or sheep?
May we peep like them and see Jesus asleep?
If we touch his tiny hand will he awake?
Will he know we’ve come so far just for his sake?

Great kings have precious gifts, and we have naught,
Little smiles and little tears are all we have brought,
For all weary children Mary must weep.
Here on his bed of straw, sleep, children, sleep.

God in his mother’s arms, babes in the byre,
Sleep, as they sleep who find their heart’s desire.

We Three Kings of Orient Are

The Hymnal 1982, 128, stanzas 1 & 2

The Eighth Reading; Matthew 2:1-11

The Magi follow a star to find the child Jesus, the newborn King.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men¹⁴ from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, ‘Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising,¹⁴ and have come to pay him homage.’ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah¹⁴ was to be born. They told him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

“And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men¹⁴ and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, ‘Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.’ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

We Three Kings of Orient Are

The Hymnal 1982, 128, stanzas 3 & 5

The Ninth Reading; John 1:1-14

John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People

**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 [_____ 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 forever. **AMEN.**

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

***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 Fraction Anthem / The Breaking of the Bread

Said at 5pm,

O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.

O Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.

Sung at 9:30am, verses 1 and 3

Refrain
Bread of life, hope of the world,
Je-sus Christ, our broth - er: ___ feed us now, give us life,
lead us ___ to one an - oth - er one an - oth - er. ___

1 A child is born for us,
a son is given to us,
in our midst, Christ,
our Lord and God
comes as one who serves. **Refrain**

3 You are the hope of all,
Our promise and our call,
Radiant light in our darkness,
Truth to set us free. **Refrain**

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Celebrant These are the gifts of God, for you the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on Christ in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

All who seek God and are drawn to Christ, are welcome at the Lord's Table.

You may ask for the chalice or receive the wine in the small cups offered to you in a tray.

If you prefer not to receive the wine, please cross your arms and wait for the minister to say "The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation."

As you return to your seats, deposit your cup in the place provided in a white pedestal table.

If you prefer to receive a blessing you may cross your arms across your chest.

If you would like to remain in your seat and receive communion, please let an usher know.

The Postcommunion Prayer

**Almighty and everliving God,
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
of the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.
And now, Father, send us out
to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you
as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.**

The Closing Reading; *Making Room* by Lisa Ann Moss Degrenia, © 2014, updated 2021

She gave birth to her firstborn, a son.
She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger,
because there was no room for them in the inn. – Luke 2:7

Prayer: Making Room

No room in the inn
I can understand this
There's only so much space
And it's already taken
It's simple
Factual

But your blessed Word says more
No room *for them* in the inn

Them
Joseph and Mary are *them*
Unlike me and mine

Suspicious strangers
With complicated needs

I can't bring *them* in
No time
No room

I won't bring *them* in
Give *them* access to all I have
All I've worked for
All I love

It isn't wise
It isn't safe

The stable is for *them*
Stay there
Over there
that hidden place
that place in the back
that place for animals
away from where I live
not here with me and mine

But
I want Jesus
and
Jesus is *them*

*There's no room for him
if there's no room for them*

That's who Jesus is
That's what Jesus does
He makes room

Born in a stable
making room
for the humble and the homeless

King of kings
making room
for the rich and the royal

An outsider
making room
for those who've been
turned away

The Recessional Hym: *Hark! the herald angels sing*

left out
rejected

An insider
making room
for the distinguished and established

A laborer
making room

A wise teacher
making room

A refugee
making room

making room
making room
always making room

That's who you are Jesus
That's what you do
You make room

You've even made room for me

Now make room in me
Open me

Awaken me

Release me

To do what you do

To make room

The Hymnal 1982, 87

The Dismissal

Leader Go in peace to love and serve the New Born King.

People **Thanks be to God.**

The Postlude *Christmas Angels*

setting by Jack Schrader

We remember those in the **Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:** The Parishes of the Alewife Deanery: Church of Our Redeemer (Lexington), St. James' Church (Somerville), Christ Church (Waltham), Congregation of St. Peter at Christ Episcopal Church (Waltham), Church of the Good Shepherd (Watertown).

We remember those on our **Prayer List:** Mary, Leo, Sunny, Kim, Alannah, MaryAnn, Geraldine, Herb, David, Leah, Fr. Paul, Luke and Bruce, April and Andrea.

5pm – Readers: Jan Greene, Mary Carlson, Nancy Silva, Lillian Woo, Jan Czarnetzki, Gerry Czarnetzki, Mary Ames, and Susan Sharpe

9:30am – Readers: Susan Carliss, Phyllis Helfrich, Celia Ochoa, Helen Miller, Alan Miller, Sylvia Connor, and Elleen Donaruma

Eucharistic Ministers: Lillian Woo (5p

m) and Jared Cohen (9:30am)

Altar Guild: Jann Czarnetzki, Melissa Abbott, and Judy Cohen

Usher: Mary Howe

Saint John's Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church of Sandwich Est. 1854

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