

St. John's Episcopal Church Chester, VA  
Christmas Eve: The Nativity of our Lord  
December 24, 2020

## The Holy Eucharist

Prelude: The Carols of Christmas

Choir and Organ

Hymn: *Good Christian friends, rejoice*

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;  
ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.  
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all to gain his everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save! Christ is born today!

Hymn: *Angels from the realms of glory*

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
ye, who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:  
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

Sages, leave your contemplations; brighter visions beam afar:  
seek the great Desire of nations; ye have seen his natal star:  
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

Saints before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear,  
suddenly the Lord, descending, in his temple shall appear:  
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.

Hymn: *Hark! the herald angels sing*

Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
with the angelic host proclaim Christ is born in Bethlehem!  
Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!

Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,  
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.  
Risen with healing in his wings, light and life to all he brings,  
hail, the Sun of Righteousness! hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hark! the herald angels sing glory to the newborn King!

Hymn: *O Come all ye faithful* verses 1, 2, 3, and 6

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come, and behold him, born the King of angels;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;  
glory to God, glory in the highest;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory given;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

## The Word of God

Introit: *'Twas in the moon of wintertime*

'Twas in the moon of wintertime, when all the birds had fled,  
that God the Lord of all the earth sent angel-choirs instead;  
before their light the stars grew dim, and wondering hunters heard the hymn:  
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.

Within a lodge of broken bark the tender babe was found,  
a ragged robe of rabbit skin enwrapped his beauty round;  
but as the hunter braves drew nigh, the angel-song rang loud and high:  
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.

The earliest moon of winter-time is not so round and fair  
as was the ring of glory on the helpless infant there.  
The chiefs from far before him knelt with gifts of fox and beaver-pelt.  
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.

O children of the forest free, the angel song is true;  
the holy child of earth and heaven is born today for you.  
Come kneel before the radiant boy, who brings you beauty, peace, and joy.  
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born, in excelsis gloria.

*The people standing, the Celebrant says*

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

*People* And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

*The Celebrant continues*

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.*

*Celebrant and People*

Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

**The Collect of the Day**

*The Celebrant says to the people*

The Lord be with you.

*People* And also with you.

*Celebrant* 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.*

*Please be seated.*

**The Lessons**

A Reading from 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.

*People* Thanks be to God.

Hymn: *What child is this*

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*

So bring him incense, gold and myrrh, Come, peasant, king, to own him:  
The King of kings salvation brings, Let loving hearts enthrone him.

*Refrain*

A Reading from 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.

Gospel Hymn: *Angels we have heard on high*

Angels we have heard on high, singing sweetly through the night,  
and the mountains in reply echoing their brave delight.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why these songs of happy cheer?  
What great brightness did you see? What glad tidings did you hear?  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;  
come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

See him in a manger laid whom the angels praise above;  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

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 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.

*People*            The Gospel of the Lord.  
                      Praise to you, Lord Christ.

## **The Sermon**

*All Standing.*

## **The Nicene Creed**

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

*All kneel.*

Be strong, do not fear! Our God is coming. Confident that our waiting is not in vain, let us offer our prayers as we respond,



O come Emmanuel, free us from the bondage of our sins, our pride and hypocrisy, our greed and self-serving interests, that we may know your redeeming love and reveal its liberating joy; let us pray.

*O Come, O come...*

O Wisdom from on high, show us the path of the Holy Way, and set our feet upon its joy; let us pray.

*O Come, O come...*

O Lord of Might, who gives sight to the blind and opens the ears of those who cannot hear, who heals the sick, raises the dead, and brings good news to the poor, give us a share of your power that we may do the works you do; let us pray.

*O Come, O come...*

O Branch of Jesse's tree, we give thanks for our spiritual ancestors, by whose faith the light of truth illumines the disciples of every age; let us pray.

*O Come, O come...*

O Key of David, unlock the doors of oppression and violence that imprison humankind, and set free those living in the bondage of slavery, the victims of abusive relationships, and those chained by poverty; let us pray.

*O Come, O come...*

O Dayspring from on high, may the dawn overcome every darkness, as your messengers plant the barren land with the seeds of hope; let us pray.

*O Come, O come...*

O Desire of Nations, free us from the division that separates nations and peoples, and fill the leaders of the world with a passion for peace; let us pray.

*O Come, O come...*

O Come, Emmanuel, lift up those who are lowly, and raise from the dead those who have fallen asleep; let us pray.

*O Come, O come...*

May we continue to proclaim our trust in the Lord's constant watch, as we add to these prayers and petitions.

*The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.*

Almighty God, by your Holy Spirit you have made us one with your saints in heaven and on earth: Grant that in our earthly pilgrimage we may always be supported by this fellowship of love and prayer, and know ourselves to be surrounded by their witness to your power and mercy. We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whom all our intercessions are acceptable through the Spirit, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

## Confession of Sin

*The Deacon or Celebrant says*

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*Minister and People*

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

*The Priest, stands and 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.*

*Please be seated.*

The Parish Announcements.

## The Holy Communion

Offertory Hymn: *The Father's Love* arr. William Proise

### The Great Thanksgiving

*The people stand.*

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:

*Celebrant and People.*

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

*The people 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,

*Celebrant and People*

We remember his death,  
We proclaim his resurrection,  
We await his coming in glory;

*The Celebrant continues*

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 John 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.*

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

*People and Celebrant*

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**

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

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

### **The Peace**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*And also with you.*

*If a person desires to receive the Sacrament, but is unable to eat and drink the Bread and Wine, the Church assures that person that all the benefits of Communion are received. Those unable to make their Communion at this time are asked to pray the following.*

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer to you praise and thanksgiving. I remember your death, Lord Christ; I proclaim your resurrection; I await your coming in glory. Since I cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, I beseech you to come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and in the life to come. Amen.

*After Communion, the Celebrant says*

Let us pray.

*Celebrant and People*

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 Blessing for the Season of Christmas**

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 his holiness. *Amen.*

May God, who sent his 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 his 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.*

## A Reading from St. John's Gospel 1:1-14.

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.

*The Deacon, or the Celebrant, the people*

*Deacon*      Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

*People*        Thanks be to God.

*Please be seated.*

Hymn: *Silent Night* – soloist: Trinity Horner

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.