

“WELCOME TO THE MOTHER CHURCH”

“Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Give thanks unto Him and bless His name”

Psalm 100:4

Grace and Peace to you from God on this **the Celebration of the Birth of Christ:
The Christ - Mass.**

On behalf of the Clergy, Wardens, Vestry and People of God, welcome to the historic African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, founded in 1792 as the first black Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. The first rector of this historic parish, The Rev. Fr. Absalom Jones was also the first black Episcopal priest in the nation.

Our parish boldly proclaims the reconciling Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are an active, mission-minded and growing church family. Whoever you are and wherever you may find yourself on your spiritual journey of faith, you are always welcomed at St. Thomas' Church, where we are joyfully and enthusiastically committed to Jesus' message of love, hope, prayer, acceptance and faith. Today, as you worship in this place, may you experience and feel the presence of the Lord, and may you leave feeling renewed, refreshed and revived.

Faithfully,

Martini Shaw⁺

(The Very Rev. Canon) Martini Shaw,

17th Rector and

Dean of the Schuylkill Deanery

**In Celebration of the Birth of Christ:
The Christ - Mass
Saturday, December 24, 2022
7:00 pm**

Celebrant and Homilist: The Very Rev. Canon Martini Shaw
Gospeler: The Rev. Fr. Gerald Collins
Seminarians in Residence: Kathryn Brossa & David King
Oblation Bearers: The Gordon & The Quetant Families
Soloists: Alexandra McFadden & Thomas G. Lynch, V
Music Ministry: St. Thomas Chancel Choir, St. Thomas Gospel Choir &
St. Thomas Jazz Ensemble
Dance Ministry: St. Thomas Angels in Motion

ORDER OF SERVICE

Prelude of Music / Dance

Christmas Carol - "The First Noel"

1982 Hymnal #109

1.) The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

2.) They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. **[Refrain]**

Refrain:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

3.) And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. **[Refrain]**

4.) This star drew nigh to the northwest;
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay,
right over the place where Jesus lay. **[Refrain]**

5.) Then entered in those wise men three,
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. **[Refrain]**

6.) Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,
and with his blood our life hath bought. **[Refrain]**

A Musical Selection -

St. Thomas Jazz Ensemble

Christmas Carol - "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

1982 Hymnal # 89

1.) It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
from heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
to hear the angels sing.

2.) Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heavenly music floats
o'er all the weary world;
above its sad and lowly plains,
they bend on hovering wing,
and ever o'er its Babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.

3.) Yet with the woes of sin and strife,
the world has suffered long;
beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;

4.) For lo! the days are hastening on,
by prophet seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold

and warring humankind hears
not the tidings which they bring.
O hush the noise and cease the strife,
and hear the angels sing!

when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world send back the song
which now the angels sing.

A Musical Selection - Solo - "O Holy Night"

Alexandra McFadden

Christmas Carol - "What Child Is This?"

1982 Hymnal #115

1.) 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?

2.) 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]**

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!

3.) 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 Dance Selection -

St. Thomas Angels in Motion

A Musical Selection - Solo - "Mary Did You Know"

Thomas G. Lynch, V

The Procession and Blessing of the Creche

Christmas Carol - "Away in a Manger"

1982 Hymnal # 101

1.) Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2.) The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

3.) Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
and fit us to heaven to live with you there.

The Opening Hymn - "O Come All Ye Faithful"

1982 Hymnal #83

1.) 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.

2.) God from God,
Light from Light eternal,
lo he abhors not the virgins womb;
only-begotten Son of God the Father: **[Refrain]**

Refrain:

O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!

3.) Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest: **[Refrain]**

4.) See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;
we too will thither, bend our joyful footsteps.
[Refrain]

A Word of Welcome

The Rector

The Opening Acclamation

BCP Pg. 355

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

People: And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. **AMEN.**

The Collect for Purity

Celebrant: 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.**

The Gloria in excelsis

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 Proclamation of the Word

The Collect of the Day

Celebrant: 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.

First Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

Caryn Rivers

A Reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 96

Seminarian David King

Sing to the Lord a new song; *

sing to the Lord, all the whole earth.

Sing to the Lord and bless his Name; *

proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations *

and his wonders among all peoples.

For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; *

he is more to be feared than all gods.

As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; *

but it is the Lord who made the heavens.

Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence! *

Oh, the power and the splendor of his sanctuary!

Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples; *

ascribe to the Lord honor and power.

Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his Name; *

bring offerings and come into his courts.

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; *

let the whole earth tremble before him.

Tell it out among the nations: "The Lord is King! *

he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;

he will judge the peoples with equity."

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;

let the sea thunder and all that is in it; *

let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy

before the Lord when he comes, *

when he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness *

and the peoples with his truth.

The Second Reading: Titus 2:11-14

Avery Jones

A Reading from the letter of Paul to Titus

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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Gradual Hymn - "Go Tell It On The Mountain"

LEVAS #21 (Vss. 1-2)

Refrain:

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

1.) While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. **[Refrain]**

2.) The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. **[Refrain]**

The Holy Gospel: Luke 2:1-14(15-20)

Fr. Jay

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

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.]

Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Homily Hymn - "Go Tell It On The Mountain"

LEVAS #21 (Vs. 3)

Refrain:

3.) Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. **[Refrain]**

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills, and ev'rywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

The Homily

The Rector

The Call to Christian Discipleship

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

Seminarian Kathryn Brossa

In celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, the light and Joy of the World, we pray to you Lord God.

Let us pray for the Church and for the world, Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Daniel, our Bishop; Martini, our Rector; Gerald, our Associate Priest; Kathryn and David our Seminarians; Paul and Thomas, our Associate Ministers; and for all Bishops and other Ministers; Lord, in your mercy. **Guide and bless them, O Lord.**

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority. Lord, in your mercy. **Come Lord and save us.**

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Give us the grace to do your will Lord, everything in your name and for your honor and glory; Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Have compassion on those who suffer from any illness, anxiety, depression or unemployment; Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those who have entered into the joy of the heavenly Jerusalem, especially those who have died; Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those incarcerated: Guide them Lord in all they do with your Grace and Love and grant them your continual help. In all their problems, your guidance; in all their dangers, your protection and in all their sorrows, your peace. And we remember and pray for those who may have been affected by their actions.
Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those who may be experiencing loneliness or sadness during this Season following the death of a loved one, grant them your presence and comfort. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For those seeking a deeper spiritual meaning and purpose for their life, grant them your guidance and protection. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Prince of Peace help us.
God of Grace save us.

In the communion of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Thomas, Absalom, and all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life to Christ our God; **To thee, Lord our God.**
(Silence is observed)

The Concluding Collect

The Celebrant

The Confession

BCP 360

Celebrant: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let us kneel and confess our sins against God and our neighbor.
(Silence is kept)

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and 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 Absolution

The Celebrant

Celebrant: 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.

The Peace

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

A Musical Selection

St. Thomas Chancel Choir

The Holy Eucharist

Offertory Sentence and Offering

The Gordon and Quetant Families

Offertory Musical Selection

St. Thomas Gospel Choir

The Great Thanksgiving

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. For you are the source of light and life; you made us in your image, and called us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. 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 Celebrant

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all. He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, 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 we proclaim the mystery of faith: (Sung)

Jesus Christ has died.

Jesus Christ is risen.

Jesus Christ will come again.

Celebrant

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. 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

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray, (Sung)

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, forever and ever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant: Alleluia, Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People: Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia

The Agnus Dei (Sung)

Celebrant: Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

People: Have mercy upon us.

Celebrant: Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

People: Have mercy upon us.

Celebrant: Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world

People: Grant us thy peace.

Let us pray:

Celebrant and People: We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy; Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. AMEN

The Celebrant: 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.

(All baptized persons are invited to receive communion. If you have not been baptized, please still come to the altar to receive a blessing. For those not baptized, please indicate by crossing your arms on your chest.)

Post- Communion Prayer

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.

(Congregational candles will now be lit)

Post Communion Meditation Hymn - "Silent Night"

1982 Hymnal # 111

1.) 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.

2.) Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

3.) 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 Blessing

The Closing Hymn- “Jesus, The Light of the World”

1.) Hark! the herald angels sing.

Jesus, the light of the world.

Glory to the newborn King,

Jesus, the light of the world. [**Refrain**]

2.) Joyful, all you nations, rise.

Jesus, the light of the world.

Join the triumph of the skies.

Jesus, the light of the world. [**Refrain**]

4.) Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace.

Jesus, the light of the world.

Hail, the Sun of righteousness!

Jesus, the light of the world. [Refrain]

Refrain:

We'll walk in the light, beautiful light.

Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright.

Oh, shine all around us by day and by night.

Jesus, the light of the world.

3.) Christ, by highest heav'n adored.

Jesus, the light of the world.

Christ, the everlasting Lord,

Jesus, the light of the world. [**Refrain**]

The Dismissal

The Postlude

The St. Thomas Music Ministry