

*St. Mark's Episcopal Church*

*Christmas Eve*

*December 24, 2020 6:00 pm*

**Holy Eucharist Rite II**

**THE WORD OF GOD**

**Hymn 83**

**O come all ye faithful**

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:  
Refrain O come, let us adore Him, (3×)  
Christ the Lord.

God from God, light from light eternal,  
Lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Only begotten son of the Father:  
Refrain

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of Heaven above!  
Glory to God, glory in the highest:  
Refrain.

See how the shepherds, Summoned to His cradle,  
Leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;  
We too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;  
Refrain

Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,  
We would embrace Thee, with love and awe;  
Who would not love Thee, loving us so dearly?  
Refrain

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory given!  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!  
Refrain.

The people standing, the Celebrant says

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
People *And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.*  
*Amen.*

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**

*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.*

### **The Lessons**

#### **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*

### **Psalm 96**

1 Sing to God a new song; \*  
sing to God, all the whole earth.

2 Sing and bless God's holy Name; \*  
proclaim the good news of salvation from day to day.

3 Declare God's glory among the nations \*  
God's wonders among all peoples.

4 For God is great and greatly to be praised; \*  
more to be feared than all gods.

5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; \*  
but it is God who made the heavens.

6 Oh, the majesty and magnificence of God's presence! \*  
Oh, the power and the splendor of God's sanctuary!

7 Ascribe to God, you families of the peoples; \*  
ascribe to God honor and power.

8 Ascribe due honor to God's holy Name; \*  
bring offerings and come into God's courts.

9 Worship the Most High in the beauty of holiness; \*  
let the whole earth tremble before God.

10 Tell it out among the nations: "That God reigns! \*  
God has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;  
and will judge the peoples with equity."

11 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.

12 Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy  
before God, who will come, \*  
who will come to judge the earth.

13 God will judge the world with righteousness \*  
and the peoples with truth.

### **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*

### **Hymn 89**

#### **It came upon a midnight clear**

It came upon a 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

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

Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;  
Beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong;  
And warring humankind hears not the tidings which they bring;  
Oh, hush the noise and cease your strife and hear the angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold  
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,  
and all world give back the song which now the angels sing.

The Holy Gospel of our Savior, Jesus Christ according  
to Luke.

People *Glory to you, Lord Christ*

### **Luke 2:1-14(15-20)**

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.]

The Gospel of the Lord.

People *Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

## **The Sermon**

**The Rev. Nancy L Threadgill**

Merry Christmas! Christ is born! A new light has come into the world bringing hope while the angels proclaim peace on earth! Most, if not all, of you have heard tonight's reading from the Gospel of Luke many, many times. I bet that if asked to tell the story of Jesus' birth, you would be able to without much trouble. It would not be word for word but it would be pretty close. Some of you would use the contemporary language we just heard while others would describe the baby lying in swaddling clothes instead of bands of cloth as the story is presented in the King James Version. If you watch "A Charlie Brown Christmas" every year, you hear the story as told by Linus. I marvel at that especially now that I know that when asked to write a Christmas story, Charles Shultz insisted that the story of Christ's birth be included or he wouldn't do it. That's one way to evangelize or proclaim the Gospel.

There are three choices in the lectionary for readings for Christmas. The first two choices include the reading from Luke that we heard today. The third choice has the beginning of the Gospel of John. You know the one -- "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Each priest has the option of choosing what is read and preached. We will hear John later in the Christmas season so I usually pick Luke.

Today, however, I want to look at the reading from the Letter to Titus. I doubt that any one of you can tell me what you heard even though it was read just moments ago. That's OK. After all these years as a priest and even as a lay person, I didn't pay much attention to it either. In fact, Christmas is the only time Titus is even found in the lectionary readings. It is short, let's hear it again: "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."

At Christmas, God's grace appears in the flesh in the body of the baby born in Bethlehem. Christ is God's gift to us. He is the image of grace that we can see, hear, smell and feel as a mother knows her baby when she counts every finger and toe after its birth. We may catch the occasional glimpse of grace in other places: the rainbow after a rainstorm, the music of birds in the trees, the beauty as leaves turn colors in the Fall or in the giggles of a child. But all such moments of grace are happenstance, fleeting, sheer coincidence. But grace appearing in flesh? That is with us always. Becoming one of us is God's way of telling us that our lives matter. It is to us, at this time and always, that grace appears.

The life that God's grace makes possible for us is a life in which we, as Christians, operate from a place of compassion and love. It is a life in which we recognize the turmoil and the tragedy, the trauma, and the deep grief of the world, especially this year, and simply ask how we can help. "What do you need? How can I support

you and your family? How can I share what I have?" The world cries out for a response rooted in the grace of God in Christ. Let us ask: "Given these circumstances, where do we go from here? How do we walk forward together?" That is grace in the flesh. That is what the world needs. That is what God offers us in Jesus: the grace of gifts given, not gifts earned; grace that comes to us in our own image and inspires us to live the Christmas life. Amen

### **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**

#### **Form I**

Deacon or other leader

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying "Lord, have mercy."

For the peace from above, for the loving-kindness of God, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.  
*Lord, have mercy.*

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the Holy Church of God, and for the unity of all peoples, let us pray to the Lord.  
*Lord, have mercy.*

For our Michael, our Presiding Bishop, Dorsey, our Bishop, and for all the clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.  
*Lord, have mercy.*

For our Donald, our President, for Joe, our President-elect, for Tom, our Governor, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord.  
*Lord, have mercy.*

For this city of Johnstown for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.  
*Lord, have mercy.*

For seasonable weather, and for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord, have mercy.*

For the good earth which God has given us, and for the wisdom and will to conserve it, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord, have mercy.*

For those who travel on land, on water, or in the air [or through outer space], let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord, have mercy.*

For the aged and infirm, for the widowed and orphans, and for the sick and the suffering, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord, have mercy.*

For \_\_\_\_\_, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord, have mercy.*

For the poor and the oppressed, for the unemployed and the destitute, for prisoners and captives, and for all who remember and care for them, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord, have mercy.*

For all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, and for all the departed, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord, have mercy.*

For deliverance from all danger, violence, oppression, and degradation, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord, have mercy.*

That we may end our lives in faith and hope, without suffering and without reproach, let us pray to the Lord.

*Lord, have mercy.*

Defend us, deliver us, and in thy compassion protect us, O Lord, by thy grace.

*Lord, have mercy.*

In the communion of [\_\_\_\_\_ and of all the] saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life, to Christ our God.

*To thee, O Lord our God.*

Silence.

Almighty and eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth: Mercifully accept the prayers of your people, and strengthen us to do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*Amen.*

### **Confession of Sin**

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

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.*

### **The Peace**

All stand. The Celebrant says to the people

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People *And also with you.*

Then the Ministers and People may greet one another in the name of the Lord.

## **The Holy Communion**

O Lord our God, you are worthy to receive glory and honor and power; because you have created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being. *Revelation 4:11*

### **Hymn 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?

Chorus:

This, this is Christ, the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

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.[Chorus]

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.[Chorus]

### **Eucharistic Prayer B**

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 God thanks and praise.*

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

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.*

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 [\_\_\_\_\_ 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 As our Savior Christ  
Christ has taught us, has taught us,  
we are bold to say, we now pray,

People and Celebrant

<i>Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.</i>	<i>Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.</i>
<i>Give us this day our daily bread.</i>	<i>Give us today our daily bread.</i>
<i>And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.</i>	<i>Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.</i>
<i>And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.</i>	<i>Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.</i>
<i>For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.</i>	<i>For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.</i>

## The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread.

A period of silence is kept.

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

Facing the people, the Celebrant says the following Invitation

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.

For those unable or unwilling to receive the physical Communion at this time please pray the following with me:

*My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I desire to offer you praise and thanksgiving as I proclaim your resurrection. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, 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.*

## Communion Hymn 96

## Angels we have heard on high

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

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo,  
gloria in excelsis Deo.

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why these songs of happy cheer?  
What great brightness did you see?  
What glad tidings did you hear? [Refrain]

3 Come to Bethlehem and see  
him whose birth the angels sing.  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. [Refrain]

4 See him in a manger laid  
whom the angels praise above.  
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,  
while we raise our hearts in love. [Refrain]

Let us pray.

Celebrant and People

*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.*

## Post Communion 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 dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

Blessing

May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts  
and minds in the knowledge of God and of God's son Jesus Christ,  
our Lord, and the blessing of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with  
you now and always. Amen.

**Hymn 100**

**Joy to the world!**

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare him room,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns;  
Let us our songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
People        *Thanks be to God.*

From *Book of Common Prayer 1979*  
Psalm from *the Saint Helena Breviary*  
Hymns from *Hymnal 1982*