

CHRISTMAS EVE 4:00 PM, DECEMBER 24, 2023



# All Saints Episcopal Church

## Chelmsford, Massachusetts

"Upon this holy night a star appears and floods the Earth with light."

As we gather together to celebrate this Christ mass I am reminded of these words from the song Carol of the Birds. Tonight the earth is flooded with light. The light that casts out all darkness. The light of Jesus himself. And so it is that we hope that this light finds you, and fills you with the love of God made known this evening in Jesus Christ.

When we celebrate the birth of Jesus tonight it is not just about tonight. Like any birthday it isn't just the birth that we celebrate. What we gather to be reminded of and proclaim is the power that this life has in our lives and in the life of the world. You can feel this impact all around us. During Christmas the world just seems to be a better place. We begin to reach out to one another. We begin to reach out to those less fortunate. We feed the homeless, cloth the naked, befriend the friendless. We draw closer to family and loved ones to tell them what they mean to us. In each one of these actions we spread the light of Christ into the corners of our lives. This is a holy, life giving, and blessed task.

It is our sincerest of hopes that tonight is the beginning of something exciting in your life. Please know that we want to be part of that excitement. We want to walk with you as you discover where this baby Jesus is calling you to place your light. We want to rejoice with you as you do his holy work. We want to mourn with you when the people that have been inspirations to you go to be with God once again. We want to lift you up when you fall, encourage when you are discouraged. We want to be there when you rejoice, cry, and everything in between.

So it is that we wish you the most glorious Christmas and invite you to join us weekly as we seek to transform the world and ourselves into the people that God believed we could be!

Peace and Merry Christmas,

Fr Sean+

## PAGEANT & HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

Prelude: Messiah: For unto Us a Child is Born

Silent night, Holy night

G.F. Handel/Dan Edwards
Arr/Arnold B. Sherman

Hymns are at the end of the bulletin

#### Opening Hymn

Hymn 83: O come, all ye faithful omit \*vs

The people standing, the Celebrant says

Celebrant The people who walk in darkness

People have seen a great light.

Celebrant Behold I bring you good news of great joy to all people

People unto us a Savior is born: Christ the Lord.

Celebrant His name will be called wonderful, counselor

People mighty God, the Prince of Peace.Celebrant Glory to God in the highest

People and peace to his people on earth.

Hymn 96: Angels we have heard on high (verse 1)

Tune: Gloria

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant: Together let us pray.

#### The Christmas Collect

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.

## **Church School Pageant**

**Narrator 1**: Welcome to our telling of the Christmas Story. If there are any kids who would like to come forward and sit in the front to see, you can come down now.

Narrator 2: We will be telling our story with scripture and song and some dance, so we ask that you please keep the aisles clear for traveling families and shooting stars. The words of the pageant are included in your bulletin if you would like to read along. We ask for your help in singing the Christmas Carols. Thank you.

#### FIRST ACT: THE WORD

Narrator 1: A reading from John, Chapter 1, verses 1-5.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

#### SECOND ACT: THE ANNUNCIATIONS

Narrator 2: The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman who was engaged to a man by the name of Joseph. The woman's name was Mary. The angel came to her.

**Gabriel:** Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you. 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: How can this be, since I am not yet married?

**Gabriel:** 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.

Mary: Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word. My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me.

#### Hymn 265, "Most Highly Favored Lady" verses 2 & 3 sung by Lily Marshall

Narrator 1: When Mary was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream.

**Gabriel:** Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

**Joseph:** Let it be according to your word.

Narrator 2: The Angel Gabriel had told Mary that her cousin, Elizabeth, had conceived a son in her old age, as proof that nothing was impossible with God. So Mary set out to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went to Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.

Mary: Dear Cousin! I've come to visit!

**Elizabeth:** Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! Why should I be honored with a visit from the mother of the Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes! Blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.

Narrator 1: Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months, and then went back home.

#### THIRD ACT: THE BIRTH

Narrator 2: At that time, Caesar Augustus was the ruler of the Roman Empire.

Caesar Augustus: I, Caesar Augustus, do decree that all the world should be counted. To that end, all must return to the city of their ancestors.

**Joseph:** I am glad that you are home, for I have heard that there is a decree from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be counted. We must go now to Bethlehem, for my family is of the house of David, and we will register for the census there.

Mary: But I am with child, and Bethlehem is so far away. How will we manage?

**Joseph:** We have a donkey to carry our things and if you tire, you can ride on him. We can travel slowly, and I will help you.

Narrator 1: And so they set out on their long journey.

#### \*\*\*\*\*PARISH PLEASE SING\*\*\*\*\*\*

#### Hymn 78, "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem" verses 1 & 2

- 1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by; yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
- 2. For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above, while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love. O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth! and praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

Narrator 2: Because of the census, all of the Inns were full when Mary and Joseph arrived.

**Joseph:** Excuse me, Innkeeper, we have traveled all day, and the night is coming. Do you have a room for us?

Innkeeper: My Inn is full. I'm sorry, but you will have to go somewhere else.

Mary: But we have been to all the other Inns, and no one has a room. Is there no place we can stay?

Asst. Innkeeper: There is room in the stables, with the animals. It's not much, but it is shelter...

Innkeeper: They wouldn't want to stay in there. It's not very clean. And the smell of the animals...

Asst. Innkeeper: It's something...

Innkeeper: If you would like, you can stay in the stables.

Joseph: Thank you. We will stay there.

Innkeeper: Very well, I will lead you to the stables, while my cousin gets you a blanket.

Joseph: I am sorry I could not get us a room in the Inn.

Mary: Don't be sorry. We have shelter, and the animals will help us to stay warm. It is enough.

**Innkeeper**: Come now, for I am busy!

**Narrator 1:** That night, Mary gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manager. In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

**Shepherdess:** The stars are so bright tonight, but it is also so cold!

Shepherdess: Have you noticed that we have more than just sheep in our flock tonight?

#### \*\*\*\*\*PARISH PLEASE MAKE ANIMALS NOISES\*\*\*\*\*

**Shepherdess: That does sound unusual.** We have all kinds of animals in our flock.

**Narrator 2:** Then an angel of the Lord, with a multitude of angels, stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

Gabriel: Do not be afraid, for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people!

Posse 1: To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

Posse 2: This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.

Junior Shepherd: Hark! A star is rising in the East!

Junior Shepherd: Lo! He is right...a star is shooting across the sky! Junior Shepherd: WOW! LOOK!

#### \*\*\*\*\*PARISH PLEASE SING\*\*\*\*

## Hymn 109, "The First Nowell," verses 1 & 2, sung by ALL.

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

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

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

#### FINAL ACT: THE LIGHT

**First King:** When wise men from the East saw the star rising, they rejoiced, for they had heard of the prophecies of the birth of the Messiah and they set out at once to follow the star.

**Second King:** For it was said, "The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them." They traveled many miles to see him. But that is a story for another day.

**Third King:** The Christmas story is not about a baby who grows up to be God, but about the God of Israel who enters creation as the helpless child of Mary, becoming like us, so we may become like him, the Beloved Children of God.

#### \*\*\*\*\*PARISH PLEASE SING\*\*\*\*

## Hymn 99, "Go Tell It On The Mountain," verse 1 sung by ALL

\*Chorus: Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere; go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!

 While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night Behold throughout the heavens There shone a holy light repeat chorus\*

AMEN.

Sermon

The Nicene Creed

Spoken by all, standing.

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.

Prayers of the People— Form III
The Leader and People pray responsively

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church; That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons; That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;

That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake; That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble; That they may be delivered from their distress. Give to the departed eternal rest.

Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

Silence

The People may add their own petitions.

The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

#### The Peace

#### THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory: Baby, What You Goin' To Be? Natalie Sleeth (1930-1992)

Eucharistic Prayer B BCP p. 367

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 God thanks and praise.

#### 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 S-127



The people stand or 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;

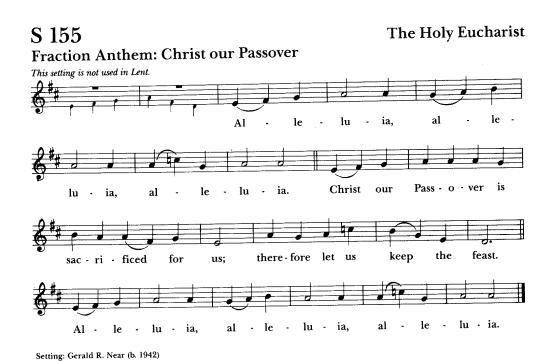
#### The Celebrant continues

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 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**.

## The Lord's Prayer BCP p. 364

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.

FRACTION: Christ our passover S-155



#### The Communion

Whoever you are, wherever you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome to receive the communion of Christ.

Non-wheat bread is available at communion for those who are gluten intolerant. Please ask the server for a rice wafer host.

#### Communion:

Still, Still, Still Song of the Manger Arr/ Richard Shephard
Arnold B. Sherman

## The Post Communion Prayer

BCP p.365

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.

The candles will be lit

Lit candle stays upright

Hymn 111: Silent night, holy night

#### **Christmas Blessing**

(respond "Amen" after each sentence)

May the radiance of the Father's splendor shine upon you, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your hearts with the light of divine holiness. **Amen**.

May Christ, the Word made flesh, Jesus the Son, who forever joins heaven to earth and earth to heaven, mold you into his image. **Amen**.

May the Spirit, by whose power Mary submits to be the bearer of God, make us all heralds of the tidings of peace and joy. 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.** 

Hymn: Hark! The herald angels sing

Dismissal

Postlude: Christmas Suite Arnold B. Sherman



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



Hymn 111: Silent night, holy night





Tune: Mendelssohn

#### **Pageant Cast**

Narrators 1: Chris Ducharme Narrator 2: Fia Bevington Gabriel: Kate Dwyer

Gabriel's Posse 1: Des Maloney, Gabriel's Posse 2: Julia Hannaford

Dancing Angels: Ava Mae Gauvin, Maggie Dwyer

Angels: Sage and Hazel Leczynski

Mary: Lilly Herlihy Joseph: Emily Condor

Donkey: Omowonoluwa Obafemi Caesar Augustus: Dean Allen Elizabeth: Mela Bevington

Baby Jesus: Emersyn Adams (with brother Liam)

Inn Keeper: Fiona Ducharme

InnKeepers's Assistant: Paige LaRochelle

1 Shepherdess: Hailey McCusker 2 Shepherdess: Lena Felzani

1 Junior Shepherd: Dideoluwa Obafemi
2 Junior Shepherd: Teddy Bevington
3 Junior Shepherd: Henry Strunk
4 Junior Shepherd: Colton Allen
5 Junior Shepherd: Martin Maloney

Tumbling Star: Maeve Ward
Twirling Star: Samantha Crafts
First King: Owen McCusker
Second King: Scarlett Barry,
Third King: Ore Obafemi

#### Stage Crew:

Lilly Felzani, Jackson Crafts, Liam Adams, Joan Thomas, Emily and Charlie Strunk, Allie, Erin, Jen and Dan Dowd.

Scene Designers: April Cunha, Zoey Cunha, Anna Condor, Emily Condor, Mirna Cunha, Sapphire Feliciano, Maya Barry, Lilly Herlihy, & Youth Group

Piano: Maggie Marshall Soloist: Lily Marshall

Handbells Conductor: Debbie Sullivan Ringers: Ann Dean, Katie LaRochelle, Sean Seyffert,

Assistant Director: Mathew Gauvin

Director: Laura Marshall

## A Note from Maggie Marshall, Interim Minister of Music

Many people have worked hard to prepare the music you have heard this week. I am especially grateful for Debbie Sullivan's faithful volunteer leadership of our Bell Choir and for their beautiful ringing. Connie Pawelczak, volunteer Youth Choir accompanist has been a vital part of this music program also, and deserves high praise. In addition to our Parish Choir members, we were enhanced by a group of seasonal singers, which helps to add richness and warmth to our music. Abby Warren deserves special mention for being song leader at the 10a service on December 24, and by writing out and playing a clarinet part for Lessons and Carols. Jayden LaRochelle has been our reluctant, but competent percussionist throughout Advent and Lessons and Carols, with an assist by instant Advent percussionist Erik Forsberg, and Matt Cole at Lessons and Carols. Leah Cole joined me at the 4pm service to reprise our mother/daughter 4 hand piano music. Thank you, all!

Maggie Marshall, Interim Minister of Music

## **Christmas Offering**

If you would like make a special Christmas Offering above and beyond your pledge, there are special envelopes in the pews or on the table in the narthex. This is a wonderful way to show God's love for others and share your blessings.

## **Year End Contributions**

To have your contributions to be recorded for the 2023 tax year, they must be received in the office or be postmarked by the post office by December 31, 2023.

Office will remain closed from 25th December '23 until 2nd January '24

## Pew Art

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#### STATEMENT OF INCLUSION FOR ALL SAINTS' PARISH

All Saints' Episcopal Church welcomes all people who seek the love of God

without regard to ability, age, color, economic circumstance, ethnic background, family configuration, gender, nationality, or sexual orientation.

We promise to "seek and to serve Christ in all persons ...strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being" (From the Baptismal Covenant).