

Morning Prayer

The Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year B

December 20, 2020

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85887946777?pwd=eig4MEdsMUh6clV6b2dUblFOQ3I2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 858 8794 6777

Passcode: 782611

Prelude

Announcements

The Lighting of the Candles



Presider: Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

People's Respondent: **Thanks be to God.**

Presider: Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, in your resurrection you appeared as the Morning Star that knows no setting: Dawn upon the darkness of the human heart so that the darkness of this world may be overcome and your whole creation made new; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The number of candles is now lit according to the week of Advent, as the following is said:

God of hope, when Christ our Savior appears
**may he not find us asleep or idle,
but active in his service and ready for joy.**

Come, O Emmanuel,

You are the way, the truth and the life;

Come, living Savior,

come to your world, which waits for you. Amen

Opening Sentence

The Officiant says

Watch, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning, lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. *Mark 13:35, 36*

Opening Hymn

Hymnal 56

O Come, O come Emmanuel



O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind in one the
O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som



hearts of all man - kind; bid thou our sad di - vi - sions
cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile



cease, and be thy - self our King of Peace. Re - joice, re - joice!
here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Confession of Sin

The Presider says

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to set forth God's praise, to hear God's holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship, let us keep silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by God's infinite goodness and mercy.

Silence is kept.

The People's Respondent, the Presider, and the 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 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 Invitatory and Psalter

Presider Lord, open our lips.

People **And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen. Alleluia.

Our God and Savior now draws near:

O come let us worship.

Venite: Psalm 95

Come, let us sing to the Lord; *

let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

**Let us come before God's presence with thanksgiving *
and raise to the Lord a shout with psalms.**

For you are a great God, *

you are great above all gods.

**In your hand are the caverns of the earth, *
and the heights of the hills are yours also.**

The sea is yours, for you made it, *

and your hands have molded the dry land.

**Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee, *
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.**

For you are our God,

and we are the people of your pasture and the sheep of your hand. *

Oh, that today we would hearken to your voice!

Canticle 15: The Song of Mary

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *

for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: *

**the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.**

He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm, *

he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *

for he has remembered his promise of mercy,

The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Lessons

First Reading

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

A reading from the Second book of the prophet Samuel.

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, “See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.” ³Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.”

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and

will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Canticle 16: The Song of Zechariah

Benedictus Dominus Deus

Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel, *
you have come to your people and set them free.

You have raised up for us a mighty Savior, *
born of the house of your servant David.

Through your holy prophets you promised of old
to save us from our enemies, *

from the hands of all who hate us,
To show mercy to our forebears, *
and to remember your holy covenant.

This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham, *
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship you without fear, *
holy and righteous before you,
all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *
for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,

To give God's people knowledge of salvation *
by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God *
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Second Reading

Romans 16:25-27

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made

known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn

Hymnal 59

Redeemer of the nations, come

Re- deem- er of the na- tions, come; re-
From hu- man will you do not spring, but
Your cra- dle shines with glo- ry's light; its

-veal your-self in vir- gin birth, the birth which a- ges
from the Spi- rit of our God; O Word of God, come;
splen- dor pier- ces all our gloom. Our faith re- flects those

all a- dore, a won- drous birth, be- fit- ting God.
take our flesh and grow as child in Mar- y's womb.
rad- iant beams; no night shall o- ver- come it now.

Third Reading

Luke 1:26-38

A Reading from Luke.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He 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. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.



Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

The Apostles' Creed

The People's Respondent, the Presider, and the People

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth;
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The Prayers

Presider The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Presider Let us pray.

The People's Respondent, the Presider, and the People

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

V. Help us, O God our Savior;

R. Deliver us and forgive us our sins.

V. Look upon your congregation;

R. Give to your people the blessing of peace.

V. Declare your glory among the nations;

R. And your wonders among all peoples.

V. Do not let the oppressed be shamed and turned away;

R. Never forget the lives of your poor.

V. Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you;

R. And your favor to those who are true of heart.

V. Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning;

R. So shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

The Collect of the Day

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A Collect for Grace

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Collect for Guidance

Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Prayer for Mission

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Intercessions and thanksgivings

Presider You astounded Mary with her invitation to bear your Son. Surprise us with your delight in us, with your invitation to do your will, with the light of Christ growing with in us. Surprise us, Lord, again and again.

Intercessor We are your children. Increase the faith in us, day by day, season by season. Empower us to seek and do your will. Cause us to surprise ourselves by opening up our hearts to find that you are always there. **Surprise us, Lord.**

Silence is kept.

We pray that the leaders of all the nations demonstrate wisdom, and a heart for the good of their people, and peace between neighbors. **Surprise us, Lord.**

Silence is kept.

We pray that the peoples of all the nations realize freedom, and an end to hunger and poverty. Enable a spirit of generosity to flow throughout the world. **Surprise us, Lord.**

Silence is kept.

We pray for our neighbors with whom we work and live. Surprise us with what can be accomplished when we work together for the common good. Open our eyes to see you

in each person we meet. Open our hearts and hands to each need we encounter.
Surprise us, Lord.

Silence is kept.

We pray for healing for those with troubled spirits, who suffer from addiction, loneliness, and despair. We ask for healing for those who struggle with the consequences of illness or recovering from surgery. [We pray for _____]. Reveal to us how to join in your saving and healing work through the power of your Spirit. **Surprise us, Lord.**

Silence is kept.

We pray for those who have died and now rest in your eternal embrace [remembering _____]. May the light of your love surround them and comfort those who grieve their deaths. Surprise them with the sure hope of the Resurrection. **Surprise us, Lord.**

Silence is kept.

We are your people. Increase the faith in us day by day. Surprise us with your loving, liberating, and life-giving presence. **Surprise us, Lord, again and again.**

Silence is kept.

The Presider then says

In union, O Lord with the faithful at every altar of your Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, we desire to offer our praise and thanksgiving. We present to you our souls and bodies with the earnest wish that we may always be united to you. And since we cannot now receive you sacramentally, we beseech you to come spiritually into our hearts. We unite ourselves to you, and embrace you with all the affections of our souls. Let nothing ever separate us from you. **Amen.**

My brothers and sisters, I invite you- wherever you are- to take into your hands the gifts you offer today. Gifts of food, gifts of money, gifts of whatever form, and join me as we offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good our vows to the Most High.

Let us pray.

Loving God and merciful Creator, whose hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: we come to you with thanksgiving and praise. We offer to you this day our gifts of time, talent, and possessions, knowing that all we are, and all we have, is a gift from you. Please accept these gifts, and help us to reach out to others as you, our God, have reached out to us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them:

Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

Concluding Hymn

LEVAS 14

Soon and very soon



1. Soon and ver - y soon _____ we are goin' to see the King,
2. No more cry - in' there _____ we are goin' to see the King,
3. No more dy - in' there _____ we are goin' to see the King,
4. Soon and ver - y soon _____ we are goin' to see the King;



1. Soon and ver - y soon _____ we are goin' to see the King, _____
2. No more cry - in' there _____ we are goin' to see the King, _____
3. No more dy - in' there _____ we are goin' to see the King, _____
4. Soon and ver - y soon _____ we are goin' to see the King; _____



1. Soon and ver - y soon _____ we are goin' to see the King, _____
2. No more cry - in' there _____ we are goin' to see the King, _____
3. No more dy - in' there _____ we are goin' to see the King, _____
4. Soon and ver - y soon _____ we are goin' to see the King; _____

Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah, we're goin' to see the King!

Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah.

Dismissal and Blessing

The priest blesses the people, saying

May our hearts be filled by our long-awaited Savior. May our community be graced with patient expectation. May Christ be with us in all the chaos. **Amen.**

May we learn to live in the Way of Emmanuel. May we have listening hearts, open minds, and generous spirits. **Amen.**

And may the blessing of God Almighty, ✚ the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**

Postlude



REGARDING OFFERINGS TO ST. BARNABAS CHURCH

To make an offering to St Barnabas, please mail your check to the church: 20500 W Old US-12, Chelsea MI 48118-1309. Mail is being collected daily.

CONTINUING OUR DONATIONS OF FOOD AND FUNDS TO FAITH IN ACTION

Faith in Action is continuing to provide leadership in collecting donations to support households in need in the Chelsea and Dexter areas. They will be in need of our continuing help in the weeks of winter to come.

Needed right now: Shelf-stable groceries and financial donations; cleaning products and personal products are always needed, as these items cannot be purchased with food stamps. You may bring your donations to FIA, or to Nancy who will see that they get there. **If you bring food directly to FIA**, please let Nancy know, so she can continue to keep our records of donation. Arrangements will be made for those who need to bring donations to the church; contact Nancy for details upcoming.

Donations to help us combat the continuing effects of the pandemic can be made by PayPal at www.faithinaction1.org, by Facebook, or by mailing a check to *Faith in Action, 603 S. Main Street, Chelsea MI 48118*. **If you need help, please call FIA at (734) 475-3305**

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Enrichment for Our Spiritual Journey

Compline: Night Prayer for Advent every Wednesday in Advent at 7:00 p.m.
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81714578183?pwd=ZkhuMmoxTkh5N09nQ2V4SFlxeUMzQTo9> Meeting ID: 817 1457 8183 Passcode: 335034

Join St Barnabas' twice-weekly Zoom check-in! Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. Contact Marion if you need the link.

Watch Washington National Cathedral's live-streamed Eucharist and Daily Office services, <https://cathedral.org/calendar/>

Join in a short, weekly, meditation with Presiding Bishop Curry here: <https://episcopalchurch.org/habits-of-grace>

Watch Bishop Bonnie Perry's sermons, <https://www.edomi.org/whatshesaid/sermons/>

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Upcoming Commemorations

- Dec. 20 Katherine Von Bora, Church Reformer, 1552
21 Thomas the Apostle
22 Henry Budd, Priest, 1875;
and, Charlotte Digges (Lottie) Moon, Missionary in China, 1912
26 Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

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Advent 4B December 20, 2020

**2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Canticle; Romans 16:25-27;
Luke 1:26-38**

During Advent and Christmas, we will be using study prompts and other activities tied to the sermon for the week. Read the sermon aloud and follow-up with spoken responses to the two questions at the end. Find our full sermon compilation for individual, small group, or congregational use, *Sermons for Advent and Christmas 2020* at www.sermonsthatwork.org.

Here Am I

by the Rt. Rev. Frank S. Logue

“Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” With these words, the Angel Gabriel announces God’s call to Mary. Mary is unique in all creation with the young woman from Nazareth being offered a pivotal role in the redemption of all creation. We see in Mary’s faithfulness the model for the way the grace of God can and will, albeit in smaller ways, use each of us.

Look at the many ways God had already acted in scripture. God used Miriam’s bravery as she kept an eye on her brother Moses, floating in a basket. She would go on to lead her people in praising God after they were brought out of Egypt. God raised up Deborah to free her people from the Canaanite king, Sisera. Esther discovered that she had been placed in King Xerxes’ palace in order to rescue her people from death. The prophetess Anna saw the infant Jesus in the Temple and praised God, speaking of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. An unnamed woman at a well in Samaria heard Jesus speaking and became an evangelist, bringing her village to faith. The wealthy businesswoman Lydia heard the Good News from Paul and became the first of her people to follow Jesus, using her means to support the new faith taking root in the Roman Empire.

Mary’s call came through the appearance of the Angel Gabriel. Even in biblical times, hearing God speak audibly or having an angel appear with a message from God was a rare event. While her call was singular, Mary’s response of “Here am I” is part of a pattern woven into scripture. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, and others heard God’s call and responded with those words.

Isaiah was in the temple when he had a vision of God on the throne with seraphim, six-winged angels, flying around the throne, calling out, “Holy, Holy, Holy.” The voice of the Lord calls to Isaiah and says, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Isaiah responds, “Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:1-8).

Then we come to Mary in our Gospel reading for today. Gabriel lays out the plan for Mary, explaining how she is to be the mother of the Messiah. Mary’s response is the time-tested response of those who answered God’s call before her: “Here am I.”

The people of faith whose stories we named share the common attribute of making themselves available to God. God calls and they reply, “Here am I,” before they even know what God has in mind for them.

In this, Mary is part of an ongoing pattern: God’s plan always involves using ordinary people to bring about extraordinary changes. In a dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics, a statement emerged that named how Mary forms a template. *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* explains, “The pattern of hope and grace already foreshadowed in Mary will be fulfilled in the new creation in Christ when all the redeemed will participate in the full glory of the Lord.”

Mary’s call to be the *Theotokos*—the God-bearer—was unlike any other in all creation, with the exception of the fact that God calls and uses ordinary-and-flawed me and ordinary-and-flawed you, fitting the pattern we see working its way through human history. Every Christian shares a common call to use the gifts God has given us toward the reconciliation of all the world.

But how might *we* hear God’s call? What is it like to discern how the Holy Spirit might use you? First, know that this is common. Your own life has been shaped by those who were in some ways responding to how the Holy Spirit was moving in their lives.

But how do you know when it is the Holy Spirit who is guiding you? After all, we know that God can use your own interests and desires to call you, but your own interest and desire alone are not God’s call.

Second, know that a call happens in community. If you are being led toward something, test whether or not it is God calling you – with prayer, by surrounding yourself with godly people who are also praying for your discernment. Then ask God to make a way or close the way. This is not about ordained ministry, certainly not that alone. God may call you to something – a vocation, whether as a teacher or physician or real estate agent, or as a foster parent or scout leader, or even just to reach out to one person on a given day. In fact, the Holy Spirit can use you anywhere to touch the lives of those around you.

It takes some spiritual discernment, though, to determine when it is God and when it is just our own desires at play. When the Holy Spirit is really working to get your attention, God will use others to affirm what one is hearing. Ask your priest or a trusted friend to pray about it with you. God speaks in stereo, using more than one method at once—God will use what you read, hear on television or the radio, and the passing comment of a friend. God will also use those various means to show that it is not the Holy Spirit. If I come up with a great idea, or a terrible idea I think is great, I can try to baptize my idea as God’s.

Ask God to direct your path. Attend to what that might be. When something arises, test it and continue to listen. If something is of God, ask for the Holy Spirit to open doors, even though it seems impossible. And also ask God that if it is not of him, to close the doors, no matter how promising that path seems, and make it impossible, even if it had been a sure thing. It is important when discerning God’s will to surround yourself with godly people and to ask them to pray as well.

Praying for God to close doors is hard. After all, the thing you are praying about may be just your own will and desires talking. Still, you should pray for the opportunity to fall through if it is not God’s will.

But what if you have never experienced God calling you to do anything – ever? Fear not. Every Christian has been there. The appropriate response is still, “Here am I.” Offer your life to God and let the Holy Spirit guide you. While none of us will experience a call as world changing as the one Gabriel announced to Mary, the effect of each follower of Jesus listening and discerning how God will use them is what the Holy Spirit uses to reconcile all creation to God. Amen.

The Rt. Rev. Frank Logue is the Bishop of Georgia. He previously served on the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church and was the church planter for King of Peace Episcopal Church in Kingsland, Georgia.

1. Who in scripture inspires you with their faithfulness? Draw a picture below of the moment in their ministry you find particularly moving.

2. Tear a bit of this page off and write, “Here am I.” Carry this message with you this week – perhaps in your wallet or your pocket or even your shoe! – to remind you that God’s call can (and will) happen at any time. Listen attentively for the call and consider using the discernment ideas mentioned in this sermon.

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Our Mission:

We seek to grow as diverse disciples of Jesus Christ,
and to serve Jesus by serving others
in the world, guided by the values of
Ancient Rites, Open Minds, and Affirming Hearts.



St Barnabas Episcopal Church
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